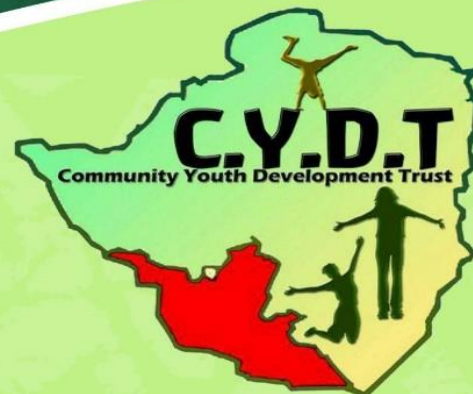


# MAT-SOUTH BULLETIN



## WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

CSOs Efforts in Democracy Consolidation.....	2
Matobo ready for the By-Election but youth participation still significantly low.....	4
Elections Roadmap: Challenges and Interventions.....	6
Hon Sipho Mukoni commends CYDT efforts to improve youth participation.....	8
Breaking the Leadership Bias:Using Social media to End Youth Underrepresentation in Decision Making....	10
Approaches for Supporting Youth Participation in Democracy, Human Rights and governance program.....	13

A black and white illustration of a feather quill with a small swirl at its base.

# *Editorial*

## Note

The participation of youths in both local and national governance enhances their inclusion and strengthens their effective contribution to the consolidation democracy. However, in Matabeleland South, young people continue to face structural and institutional barriers that limit their meaningful participation in decision making arenas. With the 2023 elections fast approaching, there is need to develop strategies that will help improve the number of young people registering to vote, taking into consideration that the current statistics of the number of youths that have registered to vote are so far below expectations. In this newsletter, CYDT discusses in detail, the barriers affecting youth participation in electoral processes as well as highlight the key approaches that could potentially improve the participation of youths. Some of the approaches discussed are the Three-Lens Approach and the Youth Development Framework. Other issues included in this newsletter are; the use of social media in carrying out voter education initiatives and the efforts made by CSOs to expand democratic spaces that support youth participation.

After reading this newsletter, remember your feedback is always important to us!

***Zwakalantanga!***



## CSOs Efforts in Democracy Consolidation

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Matabeleland South have been strengthening and consolidating democracy to ensure that young people's voices are heard and well represented in decision making. To be able to understand the work done by these CSOs towards democracy, there is need to unpack the concept of democracy.

While there is no universal definition of democracy, its meaning can be best explained by unpacking and understanding its principles. There are five key principles of democracy which leaders and policy makers must be aware of before the making of decisions, these are citizen participation, equality, accountability, transparency and enjoyment of human rights.

**Citizen Participation:** This principle entails that all groups of people that includes young people and women must participate in both local and national governance. In other words, citizen participation means that

young people and women are involved in all civic processes which include participating as candidates or voters in elections, attending public policy and budgets consultations. By involving young people in the development of policies, budgets and legal frameworks, the likelihood of their interests being met is increased which is the main aim of democracy. In other words, the participation of young people and women in civic processes builds a better democracy while the failure to recognise their participation blocks democracy values.

**Transparency:** Transparency demands that community leaders to effectively communicate, update and share their current plans, strategies and spending to ensure that the public is aware of what is happening to maintain trust and confidence as well as prevent corruption. Most of the times, the root causes of corruption are lack of transparency as deals and decisions are made without any public

consultation. In a sense, democracy requires leaders to give the public a chance to evaluate deals that have an effect on their lives before their approval to prevent the execution of suspicious deals that exacerbate corruption.

**Equality:** Democracy entails that all groups of people are equal. This means that the young and the old have access to equal opportunities and they are not discriminated on the basis of their age, origin, gender or language. In addition, a democratic society is the one that recognises different age groups, languages, gender and cultures.

**Accountability:** In a democracy, elected and appointed leaders must demonstrate high levels of responsibility and accountability of their actions which builds trust between them and the people. Many people have lost confidence with local and national leaders due to lack of accountability. In other words, democracy requires that the people who are responsible for looking after young and old people's interests must hold themselves accountable for their actions as it maintains trust.

**Human Rights:** A democratic society is the one that recognises, respects and protects the human rights of citizens. In a sense, democracy means that all groups of people have access to their human rights that include freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, the right to equality and

the right to education. When young people are allowed to freely express their opinions in civic processes without any threats and violence, democracy is championed.

**CSOs Efforts in Democracy Consolidation in Matabeleland South:**

In Matabeleland South, organisations that are part of the Alliance of Community Based Organisations (ACBOs) that include CYDT, Nkomwa Foundation, Young Women Alliance and Matobo Youth Development Initiative have been carrying out activities that foster youth involvement and participation which is one of the key principles of democracy.

The ACBOs came up with the best practices that include voter education and registration campaigns, peer to peer voter mobilisation campaigns and tell a friend campaigns designed to increase the number of young people taking part in electoral processes.

Realizing that young people have the creativity to better their societies by participating freely in conducive and democratic environments, tell friend to tell a friend campaigns were conducted to increase youth voter registration. This initiative enabled young people to take the lead in mobilising their friends and families to go and register to vote.

**....TO BE CONTINUED ON PAGE 08**



## **Matobo ready for the By-Election but youth participation still significantly low**

**M**ATOBO District is warming up for the 2023 harmonized elections with a by-election in ward 2 where a vacancy opened after the death of the ward councillor Tom Moyo in August 2022.

Aspiring candidates from ZANU PF, ZAPU and Citizen Coalition for Change were nominated after submitting their documents in the nomination court on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2022.

As the country is getting ready for the harmonized elections in 2023, the election mode in Matobo is concentrated in ward 2 where political players are campaigning to win votes.

However, the majority of young people failed to register to vote because of voter apathy, lack of documentation and the long distance to the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) district offices.

ZEC conducted the mobile voter registration exercise in two phases, the first in February and the second in April, to ensure that eligible citizens were able to register to vote in different areas within their wards.

Access to information on the electoral process and the inadequacy of voter education material has kept many young people in the dark about the electoral process. Khulekani Ndebele said he and other peers in his community have no knowledge of

the by-election in ward 2 or the pending delimitation process.

“This is my first time to learn that there is a by-election in ward 2, yes I have heard about the delimitation process but I do not understand it and what it means to me as a voter” he said.

In ward 2, the youths are found at the gold mines at Legion Mine and Sun Yet Sen, however, only a few are registered voters.

“You find that in mines like in Maphisa and Sun Yet Sen, there is a high concentration of youths but they are not registered, these are artisanal miners and many of them do not have documentation so they cannot participate in the electoral process.” Said Awakhiwe Phuthi.

According to Shakespeare Ndlovu, young people are nowhere to be found in communal areas because there are no employment opportunities to make them stay.

“You can only find youths in mines where they work as artisanal miners but most of them migrated to towns

and neighbouring countries to look for jobs” Ndlovu said.

Young people have a history of being involved in election violence particularly in mining areas, so election watchdogs have called for peace and encouraged political players to prioritize peace during the campaign period.

Sasha Ndebele said political players are offering to transport young people with national IDs to register to vote in Kezi. “People know that voter registration is in Kezi but the challenge of money to travel makes it difficult to go and register” she said.

“There are some young people who fail to go and get their National IDs in Kezi because of transport costs.”

Between April and September 2022, the Department of Civil Registration carried out a six months long mobile registration blitz countrywide to help people get birth and death certificates and national IDs. Some people

**Ends//**



## Elections Roadmap: Challenges and Interventions

**F**OR the 2023 harmonised elections to be democratic and inclusive, there are critical steps that must be comprehensively done to ensure that all groups of people that include young people and women participate as voters or candidates. These steps include the registration of all new voters and the expansion of democratic spaces that are free from violence and conflict.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) must ensure that everyone who is above the age of 18 and wants to take part in next year's elections is registered to vote. The Biometric Voter Registration Blitz conducted by the ZEC in February and April failed to reach the targeted goal in Matabeleland South as majority of young people had no IDs that are needed for one to register to vote.

Thousands of young people most of them from rural areas who showed their interest in registering to vote had to wait for the IDs Blitz so they can obtain the crucial document of

which by the time some of them got their IDs, both the first and second phases of the BVR had been completed.

While ZEC's District Offices are still open for registration, many rural youths that live faraway need transport fares to be able to go and register to vote in their nearest ZEC office of which most of them are financially incapacitated.

After the voter registration issue, there is need for stakeholders to also expand spaces that support youth participation in the electoral process. Youth involvement and participation in electoral processes has been far from convincing owing to the disturbing violent past that continues to haunt them. Past violent conflict and human rights abuses have not been forgotten by many youths who are still afraid of taking part in civic processes. Currently, cases of violence are increasing in districts like Matobo and Gwanda which is also the main reason many youths are not

registering to vote. They need to be guaranteed of their safety and freedom to participate in electoral processes as stipulated by the Constitution of Zimbabwe before they can participate in elections and other civic processes.

### **Interventions:**

The mentioned challenges need creative and well planned interventions that will enhance youth participation in the electoral processes. In this section, CYDT identifies some of the strategies and initiatives that can be utilised to improve youth participation in electoral processes by June 2023

- There is need for ZEC and other key stakeholders to intensify civic and voter education among youths. Such initiatives will make young people to be aware that it is their Constitutional right to take part in the electoral process. The initiatives could also build a much needed relationship between the electoral commission and youths which will enhance their active participation. From the activities conducted by CSOs and CYDT, civic and voter education has shown that it increases youth participation as it enables young people to access critical information that motivates them to actively participate.
- The national identity cards blitz that was recently concluded entails that young people who

failed to register to vote during the first and second phases of the Voter registration blitz due to lack of documentation now have IDs. Therefore, there is need for another phase of the Mobile Voter Registration Blitz by ZEC which will cater for youths that got their IDs after the completion of the first and second phases BVR especially those from rural areas.

- There is need to support peer to peer voter mobilisation by the youths. Evidence shows that when young people encourage their friends and colleagues to register to vote, the likelihood of them agreeing to register to vote are high.
- There is need to engage youths through social media as most of them are online. The media has so far proved that it is a critical platform to conduct initiatives that enhance youth electoral participation. However, it is essential to also use traditional media to engage youths especially those from rural areas with no internet connectivity and smartphones.
- It is also imperative to think about young people with disabilities when developing strategies to ensure that the registration and voting centres are easily accessible to them.

**...From Page 03**

Other initiatives like the peer to peer voter mobilisation were closely related to the Tell a Friend campaign as they also gave young people a chance to encourage and convince their friends and colleagues to take part in the upcoming electoral process. These practices have seen each youth champion managing to convince more than 10 peers to register to vote.

Civic and Voter education programs have received support from the government for instance, the Initiate Civic and Voter Education Initiatives conducted by CYDT that was broadcasted on Skyz Metro FM was supported by the Member of Parliament Siphso Mukoni who said the government has also initiated programs to improve voter education and registration among youths using the flexible digital spaces.

CYDT's petition demanding a 30% youth representation in parliament in 2020 has facilitated engagement between government officials and is also one of the key factors that led to the approval of the Electoral Amendment Act 2022, which seeks to, among other objectives, create seats to be contested only among women and youths. All this serves as evidence of the pertinent role being played Mat South CSOs in expanding democratic spaces where improved youth participation will be realised.

---

### **Hon Siphso Mukoni commends CYDT efforts to improve youth participation**



**M**ember of Parliament Honorable Siphso Mukoni has commended the Community Youth Development Trust (CYDT) efforts to improve youth involvement and participation in both local and national governance.

Speaking in an Initiate Civic and Voter Education Initiatives radio programme broadcasted by Skyz Metro FM and was brought by CYDT, Hon Mukoni said CYDT interventions complement the work of the government that is also conducting

online initiatives to encourage young people to go and register to vote. "There are social media initiatives that have been introduced to help young people understand the importance of registering to vote taking into consideration the fact that majority of them are available on social media."

Hon Mukoni also said the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission is also conducting voter education programs to challenge young people to register to vote. She raised concern on young people's slow response to initiatives that encourage them to register to vote. She said, "While some youths are willing to take part in decision making arenas, many of them have shown massive lack of interest." This could be due to the fact that the environment has for a longtime been hostile to youth participation. Instead of being

welcomed in civic spaces, young people have been largely ignored.

Hon Mukoni also spoke about the youth empowerment bank. She said after realizing that for young people to effectively take part in politics they must be financially stable, the government is setting up structures where young people can access loans to fund their campaigns.

On women participation, Hon Mukoni said the government has also been working on improving young women participation by coming up with policies and legal frameworks that support their participation. She said in parliament, they have a Women Caucus with the responsibility of tackling issues affecting women in Zimbabwe. She added that one of the topics discussed in their parliament women caucus was the need for gender sensitive budgets.

## Breaking the Leadership Bias: Using Social media to End Youth Underrepresentation in Decision Making



**T**he bias against young people as leaders in local and national governance as a result of over generalised beliefs that young people are immature, inexperienced and incapable has seen only a few young people involved in leadership spaces where policies, laws and developmental strategies are made. To break this bias, young people working with CYDT have identified social media as one of the central

tools to empower youth with information about their rights and freedoms as well as encourage them to take part in all decision making spaces.

They said social media was an innovative tool to facilitate the process of informing young people about their civic rights as it was one of the leading sources of information to help both urban and rural youths know their rights to participate.

Ntandoyenkosi Sibanda from Bulilima said, “the usage of digital platforms are key to developing long-term strategies to keep youth informed and engaged on pertinent governance issues that are extremely relevant to them.”

As supported by the Constitution of Zimbabwe, extensive dissemination of relevant and critical information on the electoral process and other civic issues to young people who are also citizens of the country is necessary as it enables them to exercise their voice and successfully monitor and hold leaders to account.

When young people are equipped with information, there are better positioned to participate meaningfully in decision making processes. Beauty Dube told CYDT that since she started following CYDT’s Twitter accounts, she is now ready to take part in an informed dialogue about decisions and policies which affect her life. “The updates shared by CYDT keep us aware of the things that are

happening around us. This is critical for democracy. Now I can effectively participate in policy consultation meetings and share my own thoughts and opinions,” she said.

She added that social media was vital for empowering young people and women who have for a longtime been left out in governance matters. She said it was imperative that stakeholders continue to teach young people ways to effectively use online avenues to access information as well as participate in policy and election discussions that are being conducted online. “Pertinent issues are being tackled on Twitter spaces. Activities encouraging people to register to vote are being done on daily basis. There are young people who need to be told about these online arenas,” she said.

Young people emphasised on the need for CSOs and institutions like the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to intensify activities and campaigns that seek to ensure that young people and women are



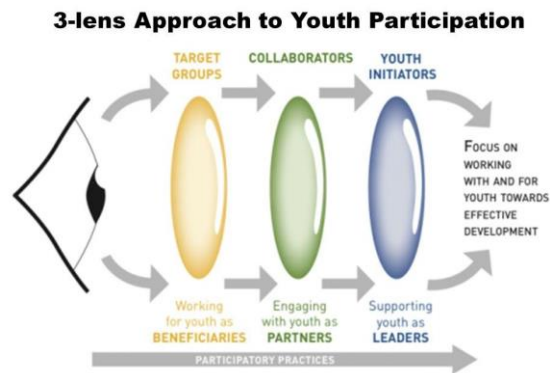
aware of their legal right to access information and participate freely without fear of being persecuted. They said these stakeholders had the task of encouraging and satisfying young people that taking part in civic processes will not result in them being arrested and jailed.

Young people said it was crucial that institutional and structural barriers blocking youth participation are successfully removed. For example they pointed out that there is need for the reviewing of internet data costs which were keeping many young

people in the dark as they are extremely financially handicapped to meet these data costs. In addition, they said in most rural communities, internet was still slow for young people to access issues on time hence the need for the government to work on expanding network coverage in rural areas.

They added that it is also imperative that officials responsible for improving youth participation must be reminded of their obligations.

## Approaches for Supporting Youth Participation in Democracy, Human Rights and governance programs



Since youth participation is critical in democracy and governance programs, it is imperative to highlight some of the best approaches that can be adopted to improve and protect youth participation. Taking into consideration the challenges faced by the youths in Matabeleland South, this article looks at the Three Lens Approach and Youth Development Framework as two approaches that can be used to increase youth participation in all governance programs.

Youth are not sufficiently involved in decision making processes that directly affect their lives in districts like Matobo, Gwanda and Bulilima due to several reasons that include but not limited to lack of community support, no youth sensitive budgets, cultural myths and financial challenges. Their involvement as leaders continues to be suppressed as shown by a series of by-elections that took place this year in Matabeleland South. In all these by-elections, there were no youth who ran as candidates. The limited recognition of young people as leaders in civic spaces is what drove CYDT to petition the parliament



demanding 30% youth representation in 2020.

To increase the prospects of youth participation in all governance programs, CYDT demands the adoption of the Three Lens Approach and Youth Development Framework. The Three-Lens Approach involves engaging with young people as key partners or stakeholders, targeting young people as beneficiaries of different projects and youths taking the lead in decision making. In a sense, this approach categorise three significant practices that enhance youth participation in every community. It champions young people's capacity to act and contribute to effectively change their own lives and careers. In other words, the model fosters young people's informed involvement in local and

national decision making spaces so as to ensure that the decisions made are in tandem with their needs and human rights.

Young people as partners implies that the community must equally collaborate with young people in the development of community interventions that affects their lives. It means that before the implementation of any intervention strategy or plan, young people must be fully consulted and informed. In other words, this model practice demands mutual cooperation in the development of any community activity. By working as partners with existing leaders, young people gradually gain experience to become effective community leaders in the near future. This is the reason, the third practice of the



approach demands the support of youths as leaders. This practice seeks to give an opportunity for youths initiated programs and interventions. It demands the supporting of youth led initiatives in the different sociopolitical spaces with the belief that young people have the skills and information to develop strategies, plans and ideas that can stimulate community building and development.

The three lens model is closely related to the Youth Development Framework which outlines that youth participation can be increased by involving them in the formulation, execution, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of decisions, policies, strategies and budgets. Like the Three Lens Approach, this approach demands the active involvement of

young people as partners or stakeholders in community practices. It challenges the largely held beliefs that young people have limited skills and capacity to take part in governance and democratic programs by demanding the creation of a conducive and enabling environment that supports and protects youth activities in communities. In a sense, the Youth Development Framework demands that youth be involved or be consulted before the passing of policies and laws which will ensure that these documents recognises their rights and freedoms.

In the context of human rights, the Youth Development Framework implies that young people have the right, the means, the space and the opportunity to participate in actives



that lead to community building and development. It is the right for young people to be involved or take part in processes that directly influences their lives. Some of the critical activities which young people must actively participate include registering to vote and voting on

Election Day, taking part in policy formulation and implementation, running as candidates for public office and attending budget consultation meetings.



(C) 2022 PRODUCTION