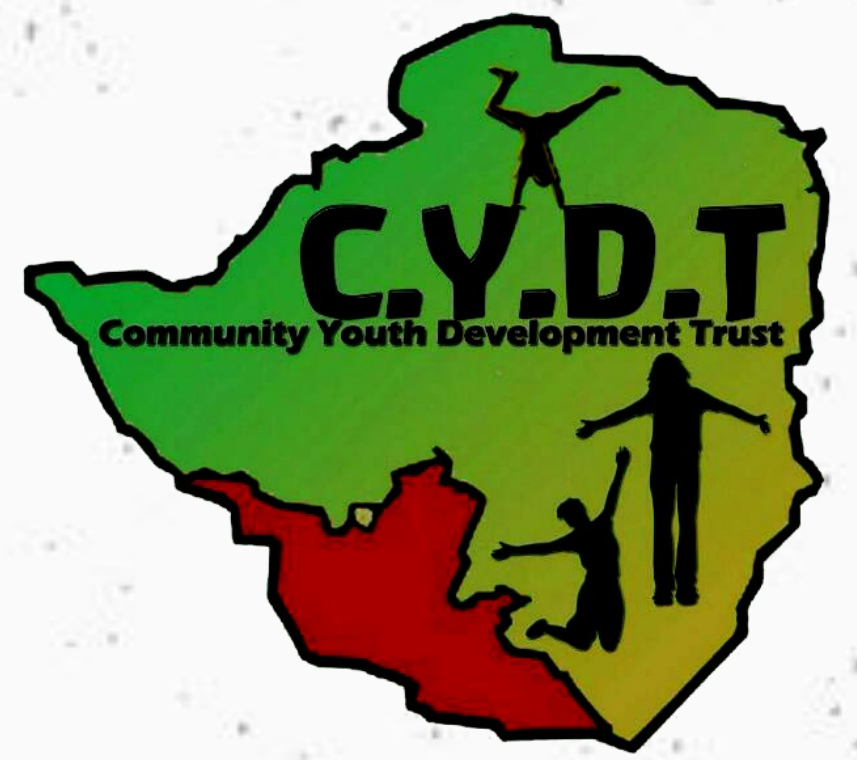


**- SPECIAL EDITION -**



# MAT SOUTH BULLETIN









**#ZwakalaNtanga**  
**October 2023**



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# Editor's Note

The much anticipated August 2023 elections have come and gone; what is left is the historical achievement made by the youths who turned out to vote while others successfully ran as candidates. As it stands, several Wards in districts like Gwanda and Matobo are represented by youths who were duly elected as councilors in the August 2023 elections. Young people showed that they are more

than willing to participate in electoral processes as long as the playing field is safe and conducive for them to meaningfully participate. This newsletter consists of stories that speak on the participation and performance of young people in the August 2023 elections as well as stories that provide information on ways to keep young people active and engaged in decision making spaces.





# Elections have come and gone...

## ...time for youth to evaluate, introspect & forge ahead

**T**he much-hyped August 2023 general elections have come and gone. They were one of the most hotly contested elections as they featured young people that participated as candidates.

With no fees required for anyone who wanted to contest the available local authority positions, many young people participated as aspiring councillors in their respective Wards across Matabeleland South.

Not only did young people participate as candidates but they also turned out to vote on Election Day. This was after they had carried out successful campaigns in which they mobilised their peers to register to vote, and encouraged them to vote on Election Day with the help of Matabeleland South CSOs like MYDI and CYDT.

Youth participation in the 2023 harmonised elections was far much better than the previous electoral processes in the province as young



people showed that they were extremely determined to make their voices heard by registering to vote, engaging candidates in activities like the Battle of Ideas conducted by CYDT, and standing long hours in voting queues where polling stations were reported to have opened late.

With the candidates voted by the youths now in office, young people need to sit down and explore ways in which they can continue being actively involved in spaces where critical decisions and policies that affect their lives are made.



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The rationale behind discussing and prioritising youth engagement matters after the just ended general elections is that there is life after elections. Young people need to understand that when elections conclude, it is time for the duly elected candidates to fulfill the promises they made before they were voted to office while being closely monitored by the public and the youths. This means that the continued involvement of youth in decision making spaces is critical in ensuring that the elected candidates fulfill their mandate in the next five years.

There are safe spaces and structures in which young people can come together, discuss pertinent matters, engage leaders and hold duty bearers to account. The following are some of the structures and spaces relevant for youth engagement and participation beyond elections: Parliament, Council/Community Halls, Online Platforms (Social Media), Radio, Television and Sports Grounds. In Parliament, elected youth representatives must start pushing for improved representation in parliament for example raising the

idea of having at least 4 youth representatives per province considering the fact that young people constitute the largest population in the country. With regards to TV, Radio and online platforms, young people can use these spaces to call for youth friendly policies as well as encourage duty bearers to fulfill their expected duties. In sports ground spaces, young people can conduct social dialogues in which they will be discussing the progress made by leaders and duty bearers from the time they were voted into office.





# Youths celebrate youth quota gains...

...Meanwhile, CBOs continue to call for a constitutional supported youth quota

While young people's involvement in processes like demonstrations, protests, public consultations and rallies is common, the inclusion and participation of young people in formal political institutions like the parliament has been limited for a longtime.

For years, the organisation has pushed for improved youth representation in parliament; partnering relevant stakeholders like the Ministry of Youth to develop ways to increase youth participation, and petitioning the parliament in 2018 on the need to set aside seats for youth representatives. Today such efforts are being celebrated as 10 youths representatives are now Parliamentarians under the Youth Quota!

While 10 youth representatives is still a relatively low number, young people view the success of the current youth quota as a step in the right direction. They said decision making spaces need fresh minds that have the capacity to come up with strategies



that can match the needs of the modern world, hence their support of the youth quota system that clearly sets aside a certain number of seats that must be occupied by young people beneath a defined age-limit. In other words, young people view the development and application of the quota system as a great approach to close down imbalances in parliament.

Speaking during a radio programme at Skyz Metro FM organised by CYDT in collaboration with MYDI, Ignatious Mambo said, "The quota system is a welcome approach that has helped improve youth representation and participation in decision making."



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In line with Mambo, Constantine Mpofu also said the youth quota was critical for young people's inclusion at parliamentary level where decisions and laws that affect their lives are usually made.

Young people made it clear that they were not against the idea of young people working together with non-youth leaders but were mainly concerned with the lack of youth representation despite the fact that young people constitute the largest population in the country.

Young people noted that, while they can participate in demonstrations or protests, this approach has often resulted in violence and deaths in their respective communities hence their push to be included at the formal decision making table where they can engage and influence ideas without the risks of violence and physical conflict. They said when the number of youth representatives is improved in parliament, it means that their issues can be effectively heard by leaders without having to resort to demonstrations.

While celebrating the gains brought by the current youth quota,

Community Based Organisations from Matabeleland South province continue to encourage youths and like-minded organisations to never stop pushing for an apolitical and constitutional supported youth quota with gender balance. The current quota is not accessible to young people who want to run as independent candidates. In a sense, if they do not belong to ZANU PF, CCC or any other political party, they cannot contest the seats under the youth quota clause, hence CYDT's call for an apolitical youth quota.

Another shortfall of the current quota is that there are only 3 young women of the available 10 youth quota seats. There is need for the youth quota to strictly and clearly champion gender equality. In addition, there is need for the number of seats to be improved considering the fact that the prospects of a single youth representative successfully looking out for the needs of all young people per province are extremely low.





## Below is a Full list of the 10 Elected 10 Youth Representatives

<i>Province</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Party</i>
Bulawayo	Zana Sivina Evidence	F	CCC
Harare	Ngadziore Takudzwa Godfrey	M	CCC
Manicaland	Sakupwanya Stanley	M	ZANU PF
Mashonaland Central	Raradza Emmerson	M	ZANU PF
Mashonaland East	Mudowo Tawanda Titus	M	ZANU PF
Mashonaland West	Ziyambi Mutsawashe Carl	M	ZANU PF
Masvingo	Maunganidze Naledi Lindarose	F	ZANU PF
Matabeleland North	Sibanda Lovejoy	F	CCC
Matabeleland South	Mushipe Tinashe Tafadzwa	M	ZANU PF
Midlands	Mhangagwa Kudakwashe David	M	ZANU PF

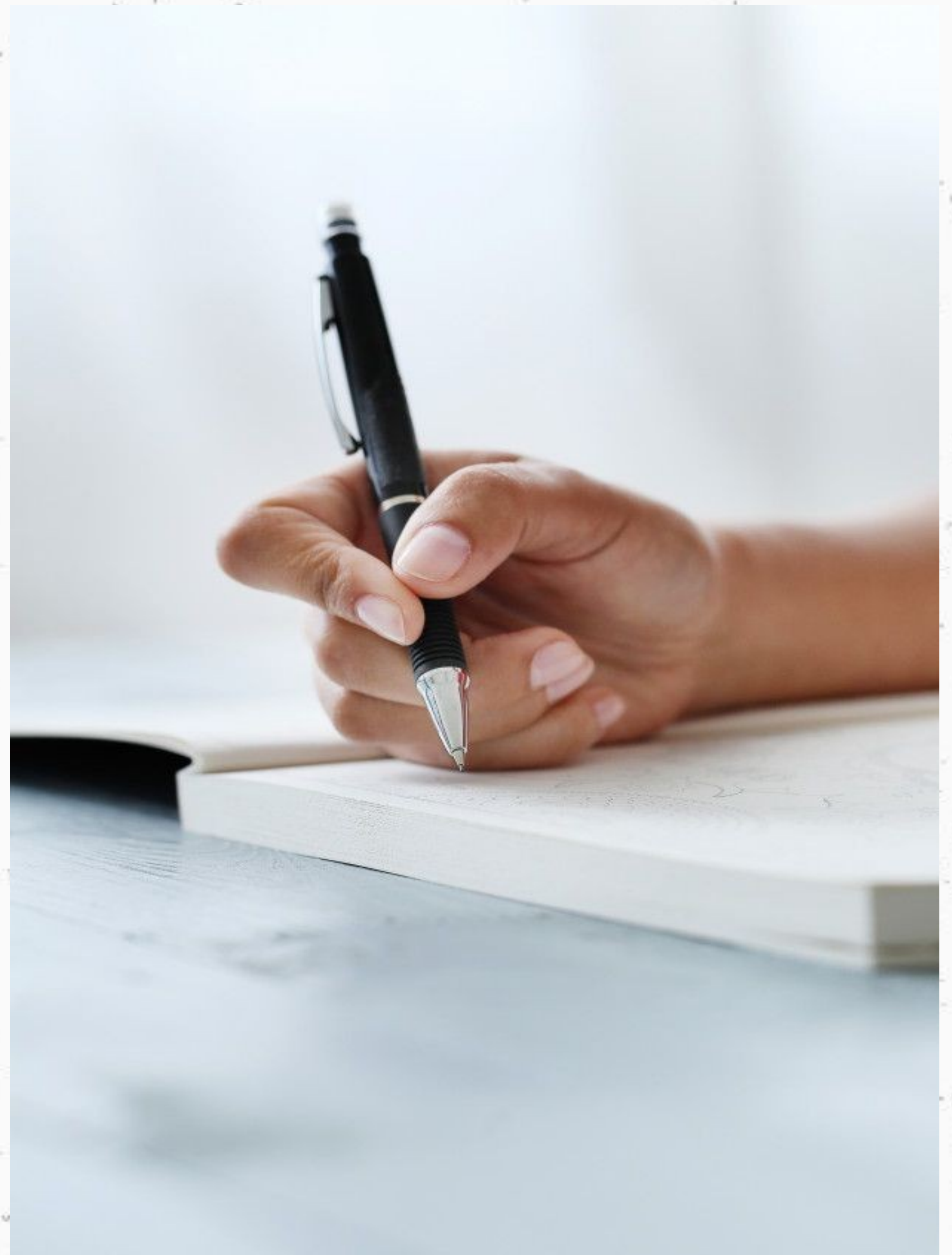


# Reflections on youth participation throughout the 2023 electoral process: Lessons Learnt

**T**he election victory of young people that ran as candidates in their respective areas has served as evidence of the power of youth participation in electoral processes while raising hope among residents who are desperate to see positive development in Matabeleland South province.

On the 23rd of August 2023, Zimbabwe went to the polls with thousands of youths turning out to cast their votes. This proved to be the game changer as some youths were successfully elected as councilors which was a rare sight in the province where non-youths candidates and incumbents have always dominated the ballot papers.

A few months before the general elections, it was quite inconceivable that a number of young people will become councillors in the province as they faced several challenges which include the lack of support from local leaders, traditional leaders and religious leaders. However, with the help of the organisation, MYDI and



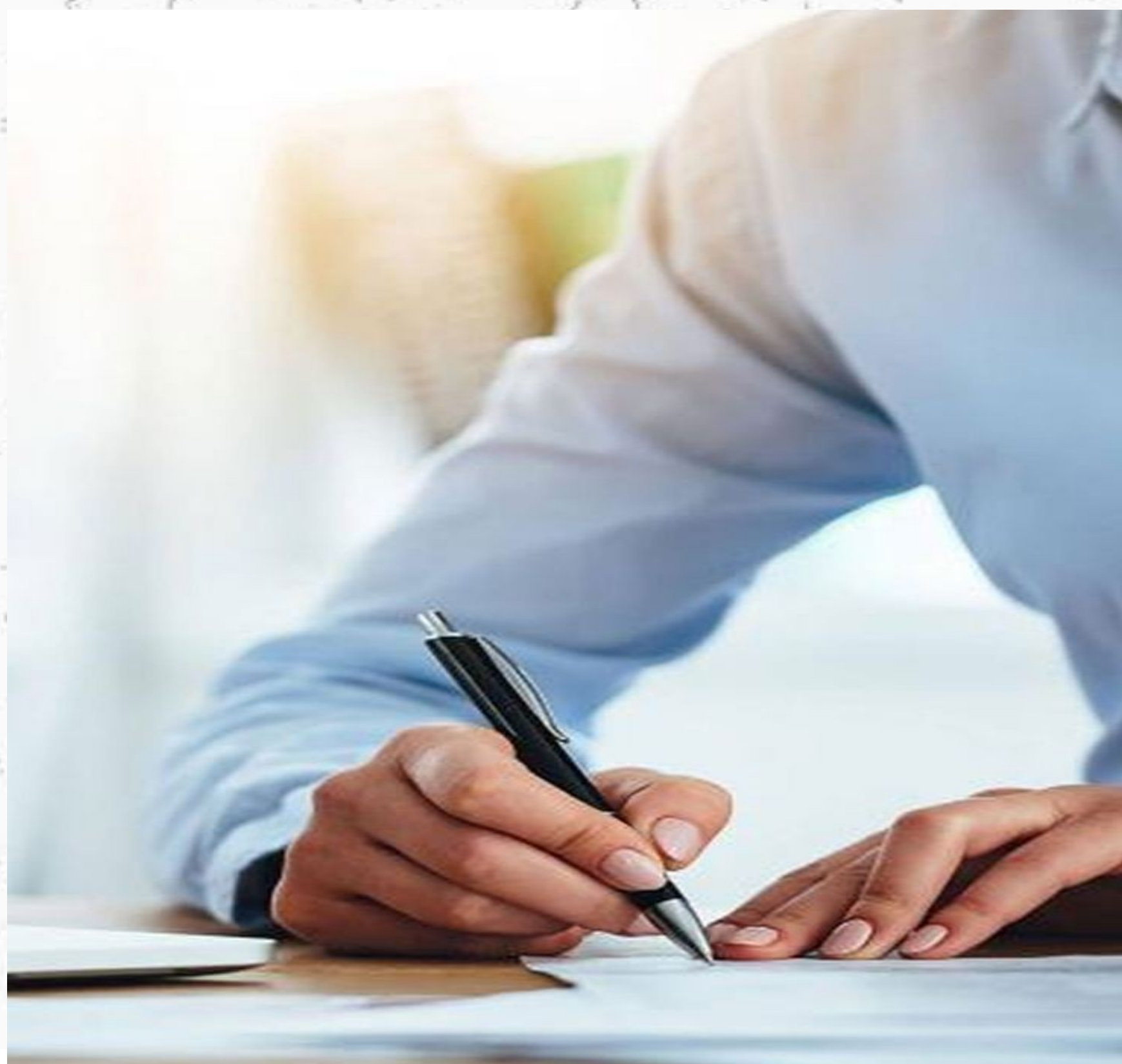
other likeminded CSOs, young people utilised the voter registration blitz conducted by ZEC to carryout voter mobilisation campaigns in which they went around their communities encouraging their peers to register to vote.



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Not only did young people mobilise their peers to register to vote but they also managed to convince the general public to register to vote, and to also support the youths that were running as candidates. This shows that young people's victory was not by chance but hard work and determination to make their voices heard.

As it stands, there is hope for a brighter future among Mat South youth as the winning candidates have already started showing signs of commitment by attending youth engagement meetings that were organised by CYDT. It is young people's hope to see the elected local



leaders working together to achieve better economic results.

### **2023 Elections Lessons Learnt:**

- Massive youth voter turnout influences the outcome of any election
- Youth voter self-mobilisation campaigns are the way to go when encouraging young people to register to vote, and turnout to vote on Election Day.
- Young people have the capacity to participate and lead their respective communities.
- Young people are not violent as always claimed but they are rather coerced into acts of violence by powerful people/politicians.
- Young people need financial backup/help to run as MP candidates.
- The internet and social media platforms are powerful promoters of youth voices during and beyond elections.
- In areas where internet connectivity is bad such as rural areas, radio and television remain critical information providers in an election season.



## Youths candidates put-up a good fight as some are elected councillors...Seek more community support in elections

Using previous elections to support their analysis, many electoral pundits did not expect to see young people running as candidates to do well in the August 2023 polls. Some of them even dismissed the idea of youth running as candidates, claiming youths were generally political apathetic. These analysts expected to see the incumbents returning their positions with little challenge from the youth candidates. Their analysis did not age well!

As the local authority results started to trickle-in after a huge voter turnout

by the youths in Matabeleland South, the results showed that young people had proved doubters wrong as most of them who ran as candidates in districts like Gwanda, Matobo and Umzingwane were announced winners. Areas like Ward 1, 17 and 25 in Matobo have youths as duly elected councillors which shows the power of youths if they are given the chance to lead. In addition, 4 young women below the age of 35 were duly elected as councillors. Since being elected to office, these elected youth candidates have already received positive feedback from the community especially with regards to their availability whenever the people serve want to communicate with them.

While celebrating the victory of other youth candidates, young people said there was need for communities to trust the youths who want to represent them in elections. Some of the losing youth candidates said due to limited community support they had lack of access to resources which limited their capacity to effectively campaign.







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Zihlobo Ncube, 28, a youth who contested in ward 19 in Matobo said he failed to campaign effectively due to the lack of financial resources to reach out to people in the ward he was contesting.

“Campaigning is really expensive because it involves travelling around, organizing meetings, printing and distributing flyers and posters, all this was a challenge for me so I could not reach all the villages in my ward” said Ncube.

He also highlighted that society does not believe in young people in leadership positions and are labelled as inexperienced.

“It was difficult to convince the

community that I am capable to lead and represent them in the Council, because they said I am too young” said Ncube.

“I believe that I lost in the primary elections because the people believe that I am too young to lead them, so it was difficult for me to convince the community that I have the capacity”, Awakhiwe Phuthi, a young person from ward 8 in Matobo who lost at his party nomination process.

“I believe that if all the young people in my ward are able to participate in politics, it will be easier for the electorate to select a young person because as the youths we are the majority” Phuthi said.





**1**



- Make sure that you are registered to vote
- Check your Name on the Voters Roll by dialing \*265# or visiting your Polling Station
- Make sure you bring your ID/Passport on election day

**2**



- When your details are authenticated inside the polling station, you will be provided with ballot papers (National Assembly, Local Authority & Presidential)

**3**



- Your left little-finger will be marked with indelible ink then directed to the empty voting booth to vote secretly

**4**



- Mark with X your preferred candidates,
- Fold the ballot papers and place them in their respective labeled ballot boxes.

**5**



- Leave the Polling Station quietly and wait for the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to publish or announce official results



# Youth experiences on Election Day

## Testimonies from project areas youths

**T**he 2023 harmonized elections were a testimony of youth participation in the electoral process as they participated as polling agents, ZEC polling officers, local observers and voters on Election Day.

Young people who had self-mobilised to become election observers in their respective polling stations noted that the voting process was officially opened on time in many ZEC polling stations across Mat-South. They said queues were long in the morning and by afternoon, only few polling stations had queues.

Youths who were in the queues waiting to cast their votes appreciated the efficiency of the ZEC polling station officials as they did not wait long for them to cast their votes.

Khulekani Ndebele, a youth from Ward 8, said he took about 30 minutes in the queue for him to cast his vote. "There were a lot of people and the queue was long but I didn't have to wait too long for me to cast my vote" he said.

Voters were travelling in groups as

some were coming from areas that were far from the polling stations where they were supposed to cast their votes.

"I organized women and youths in my neighbourhood so that we go to Mzola polling station together because it is too far from my home, so for safety and to make the journey to be easier to bear", said Ndebele.





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The voter education campaign in the pre-election period played a key role in ensuring that people know their polling stations following the change of boundaries due to the delimitation process.

Andile Ncube, a youth from Bidi village in ward 8, says she travelled to St Anna polling station which is about 10 km from Bidi polling station which is closer to her home.

“When I checked my name at the polling station which is close to my home I could not find it, so I was advised to travel to another polling station which is far.” She said.

Youths who were inside the polling stations as local observers also had the opportunity to understand the process as the day progressed during the Election Day.

“The day progressed normally and the ZEC officials acted professionally as they explained all the activities that were being done which we did not understand” said Sakhile Ndebele, a local observer at Marinoha polling station in ward 10.

“The challenge that we faced is that the counting of votes took a very long time as they started close to midnight

which led to results being announced early morning.” Sakhile said.

The majority of results at polling stations were announced in the early hours of the 24th of August.

Sakhile said the process was an experience to learn and appreciate the electoral process and how it is conducted.

“Even though I was inside the polling station for more than 24hours, I am happy that I participated because now I know in detail how the elections are conducted at polling station level,” She said.

However, there were youths that raised concern on the late opening of some polling stations. They said there were stations that failed to open on time forcing the electorate to stand in the scorching sun for hours. For example, in Mzola Polling station in ward 9, the polling station delayed by an hour while in Ward 8, Sasha Ndebele, a youth from Hlababomvu village had this to say, “We were told that they were waiting for a stamp which was the reason they were not opening, so we waited and they eventually opened at 8 am.”



