



YOUTH SERVICE DELIVERY GAZETTE

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Editor's Note

Greetings

Welcome to our exciting edition of the Youth Service Delivery Gazette newsletter. In a quest to achieve marginalised groups representation and participation in local government, the Community Youth Development Trust (CYDT) carried out a project sought to strengthen youth voice in local governance for further grassroots development. This edition is a celebration of achievements over the year. As a result of this project, there has been a change of attitude among community leaders who now value youth voices and are holding meetings that involve youth representatives.

The project implemented also managed to instil courage among marginalised female youths as they are speaking out against repressive norms that negatively influence their rights and freedoms. There is also a change of attitude from the youths in general as they are no longer waiting for duty bearers to deal with the challenges facing their respective communities; but they have become critical players in uplifting their native by being actively involved in the service delivery processes. Mat south youths are also challenging political processes that have indirectly affected service delivery such as the recalling of councillors by the Movement for Democratic Change that is currently led by its interim leader Dr. Thokozani Khuphe.

Happy Reading!

Bongi



CYDT PROJECTS IMPROVES FEMALE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN WARD 4



Young women social accountability forum

For a long time, women have been left out in decision making in traditional oriented communities that still champion and follow gender stereotypes that relegates women to mere household materials, however, Community Youth Development Trust (CYDT) is gradually changing that narrative by being involved in critical programs and projects that seek to uplift the lives of female youths in Matabeleland South Province.

CYDT's projects encourage female youths to step out of their comfort zone and penetrate the socio-political sphere that is dominated by their male counterparts. The organisation is pushing for the girl child's voice to be heard and respected in local and national governance. CYDT's efforts are bearing notable positive results in Mat South province for instance in Ward 4 that is located in Jahunda Township, the oldest township of Gwanda.

Ward 4 residents were facing public toilets shortages since the few available toilets have been closed more than three weeks due to renovations. While it was necessary that the toilets are renovated since they were in bad shape, the process was taking too long to finish.

As a result, a group of women from Ward 4 in which three of them were youths approached Ward 4 Councillor, Njabulo Siziba and the Town Clerk Priscilla Nkala to inquire about the reopening of the toilets. These determined women put

pressure on the authorities, and their determination paid off as the toilets have so far been reopened.

This is evidence of women and youth standing up for the development of their respective communities. As a result of CYDT's interventions, women especially female youths are now motivated to question responsible authorities on service delivery. They are no longer the back benchers who usually just sit back and watch their male counterparts doing all the decisions.

Jahunda women and female youths did not only push for the reopening of the toilets but they also pressured the Gwanda Town Clerk to install a toilet tap that will ensure that the toilets are properly cleaned by members of the council. The toilet tap has so far been installed as a result of their engagement with the authorities.

Female youth participation in critical areas in Mat South is sharply improving. CYDT remains committed to continue engaging Mat South female youths to take part in local governance; make female youths to be always ready to hold leaders accountable when they fail on service provision.

COMMUNITY LEADERS EMBRACE YOUTHS PARTICIPATION



ABOVE PICTURES: Youth engaging with community leaders from Wadco and Vidco

As a result of CYDT's programs on service delivery and accountability, local leaders have started engaging youths in decision making. Community leaders in Gwanda, Mangwe and Bulilima are reportedly identifying youths with potential to lead and give them community tasks such as being secretary for the main Ward or Village development Committee, a move that could cultivate youths' interests and mentor them to take the lead in local governance.

These community leaders and policy makers are creating a public space in which the youths can meet and discuss issues that will help influence, shape, design and contribute to policy and the development of services and programmes which can be attested by the ability to develop a range of formal and informal mechanism for youth participation from Youth Advisory Groups to focus groups and ongoing consultations on how they can support youths who were appointed to local structures since year one of the project.

As a result of community leaders embracing youths participation in local governance, the Plumtree Town Council's Town Clerk is involved in youth briefing meetings which are held every month since March 2020.

In one of these meetings, the council treasurer was open enough on income and expenditure and gave out youth printed copies of such reports and budget which CYDT also has a copy. This was after a concern was raised on failure to publicize income and expenditure. As a result, the project has

successfully managed to build confidence and trust between stakeholders. This has made it possible for the organization to record an increased representation of youths in local decision making, which contributes to impact indicator.

In Gwanda, the council management rides on the youth desk and CYDT to keep youths informed and engaged in all processes. Recently they posted in CYDT social groups updates regarding available residential stands and encouraged interested youths to come forward and negotiate how they can pay for the stands.

Ten Gwanda councilors are working closely with established youth ward development committees. The Youth Ward Development Committees (YWDC) are a critical stakeholder that gets to advise the council on the service delivery gaps basing on youth perspectives. The top three members of the YWDC automatically sit in the main ward development committee.

Five youths are seating at the Gwanda District development committee, a committee that seek to consolidate development plans from all the wards to come up with a solid plan. If community leaders continue to engage or work with the youths in matters of local governance, the future of Matabeleland South communities will be in safe hands.

"WE ARE TAKING THINGS INTO OUR OWN HANDS..."

Datata youths speak on dam construction



YOUTH IN ACTION:

Young people from Datata Village mobilised themselves and are seen here digging a dam which they believe will ease the water challenge in their community



Low levels of rain fall being experienced in Gwanda North as a result of drought and climate change, had resulted in prolonged water woes for communities living in the district. After having conducted activities and programs, that sought to enhance youth capacities, to effectively participate in local governance towards improving the quality of service provision in their communities.

Youths have come to be influential and play active roles in improving service delivery in their communities. As a way of mitigating the prolonged water challenges in Datata, ward 2, youths in Gwanda North, took the initiative to construct a dam in their community. According to the youths, the dam is important because it would play a crucial role in alleviating water woes in their villages as well as reduce flooding whenever strong rains are received.

"The initiative of having to dig a dam came after one of the training that was conducted by Community Youth Development Trust on social accountability tools in Nkashe," said one Datata youth, Butholezwe Ndlovu "After having formed a committee, we went to our ward and engaged the councilor on issues that need immediate action", he further said.

"Dam construction was one of those activities that needed action. We realised that Rural District Council was taking long to dig a dam. So we mobilized members of the community to start constructing a dam", said Nkululeko Sibanda, one of the youths in ward 2 who was elected to be in the committee. The youths together with their elders saw it crucial that there was need to take things into their own hands to save their communities from the situation they found themselves in.

"Our domesticated animals are dying because of water shortages," said Ndlovu. "We must understand that it takes hard work to build and develop a community. While we need external support to achieve various activities, we must also understand that majority of the work and commitment needed must come within us", he further postulated.

"We are the ones who will determine whether we successfully protect our communities or lead them to gradual extinction." Ward 2 councilor, Zwelibanzi Mpofu said that meetings carried out by Community Youth Development Trust and other organizations, in the district were central in increasing youth participation in governance issues and development initiatives in their communities.

"The meetings conducted with the youths enlightened them to play an active role in improving service delivery," said Cllr. Mpofu. "Challenges such as access to water had seen many youths migrating, living their wards undeveloped. Once the dam has been dug it will alleviate water challenges in ward two, hence more youths would benefit from the project as they would start their gardening projects."

Cllr. Mpofu said she had tabled the dam project to a full council meeting of the Rural District Council where she raised a concern on the need to facilitate the process of digging the dam.

She further commended the volunteerism by the youths and residents, who brought in their own tools to facilitate the construction of the dam for water harvesting.

When The Rural District Council (RDC) was contacted for comment, they shared that there were numerous challenges around the dam construction project. The RDC said it was constrained by lack of equipment and funds to facilitate the construction of the dam on time, though the construction of the dam was one of the priority projects that was within their 2021 budget plans for Gwanda North.

Water challenges in Matabeleland South have been exacerbated by drought and climate change that has resulted in siltation of many dams, hence affecting the capacity of the dams to hold adequate water for most rural communities. There is need for the government to adopt technological and innovative ways to alleviate water challenges in rural communities.

PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IMPROVES

IMPROVED YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN GWANDA NORTH

For a longtime, youth representation and participation has been a challenge in Matabeleland South rural communities. Young people have constantly been left out in critical decision making platforms as a result of traditional cultures that have been trivializing the youth potential.

However, following the programs that have been implemented by Community Youth Development Trust, youths have become vocal and influential in demanding accountability from their duty bearers, hence this has mitigated, the patriarchal norms that were hindrance to youth participation. CYDT has continuously planned and executed programs that seek to promote and uplift youth representation and participation in socio-political spaces.

The talk shows conducted by the organization in Gwanda North gave the youth an opportunity to interact with elders on issues affecting them.

Together with the elders, youths were able to deliberate and discuss on the challenges they face in regards to social services, so as to improve their local communities. One particular issue discussed was need for the increase of youth inclusion in Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) and Ward development committees (WADCOs). The youths appealed to the elders to include them in these committees.

As a result of these discussions, youths from ward 1 were thus selected from each village to seat with their elders at ward level, in order to get the buy in of the youths in community development. The following are some of the youths selected to be involved in decision making: Sandra Ncube from Matshiya, Bekithemba Moyo from Matshetsheni, Belinda Sibindi from Magedleni, Sithembinkos iNdlovu from Masholomoshe

It is encouraging to note that youths who are supposed to be the backbone of the communities because of their fresh and innovative ideas that would improve community development are being given the chance in decision making processes.

Involving youths in decision making is an imperative step towards fostering a democratic space where youths can freely express their views and concerns. CYDT is determined to continue pushing for more youth representation and participation; and creating spaces where youths engage with their community leaders, so that they influence development in their local communities.

MANY times, participation of people with disabilities in local governance has been trivialised. People with disabilities have been continuously left out in decision making processes or unfairly discriminated due to certain barriers such as widespread ignorance and common stereotypes about people with disabilities in society.

Some traditional societal myths and norms prevent people with disabilities from being employed or included in issues of community building. The implementation of various policies has had a marginal impact on the lives of the majority of people with disabilities in Zimbabwe in general despite the fact that people with disabilities can also assume social responsibilities that are pertinent in developing communities.

Community Youth Development Trust's programs have facilitated the inclusion of people with disabilities in local governance. Local authorities and policy makers have reportedly started promoting and upholding the rights and interests of people with disabilities in Matabeleland South as it is reported that various wards are eliminating barriers to social participation for people with disabilities by recognising youths with disabilities and appointing them to some committees at ward level.

In ward 5, 6, 8 and 10 in Gwanda councillors in February advocated for inclusion of youths with disabilities in these committees. Ward 8 councillor is currently working with 3 young men to fundraise for installation of water tank (jojo tank) at a recently built school in the ward called Phakama Primary School.

Notable youths living with different forms of disability are now vocal and call for inclusion in local governance processes for them to influence services that are key to them.

It is encouraging to note that about 28 youths with different forms of disabilities are reportedly part of WADCOs at local level. Six female and four males are from Gwanda, three females and four males are from Mangwe and five females and six males are from Plumtree.

Another good thing to note is that both females and males are taking part in local governance hence breaking down gender stereotypes that usually view women as incapable.

However, while the inclusion of people with disabilities in local governance is gradually improving, it is also important that the local authorities improve on the environment that will facilitate the social participation of people with disabilities.

For instance, improving accessibility of regular public transportation, along with the implementation of adapted transit option. Such developments will ensure that people with disabilities successfully participate in issues of local governance.



SERVICE DELIVERY AND ACCOUNTABILITY: PARTICIPATION OF YOUTHS IMPROVES

Issues of service delivery and accountability are pertinent for the development of communities as they are critical in terms of eradicating corruption and the misuse of resources while creating responsible authorities.

The youths who are seen as the able bodied are key to holding authorities accountable for their actions. While youths have a role of holding leaders accountable, they are also required to stand up in areas they are capable of partaking in.

Proper motivation for youths to play a role in developing societies has been a key challenge, however, CYDT has been involved in a number of projects on service delivery and accountability that have positively changed the attitude and motivated Matabeleland South youth to be involved in matters that seek to develop their respective communities.

Majority of youths now have the ability to seek answers and clarity on service provision. In the recent projects conducted, CYDT observed that youth are displaying signs of determination towards demanding accountability and transparency leadership all the time.

They now have the ability to engage on community level evidence based advocacy, where they first research and compile evidence before engaging stakeholders in the local government field.

Various efforts made by the youths have ensured improved water supply and sewage management despite the prevailing environment as a result of COVID-19.

As a result of youths engagement with the Rural District Council on water challenges, three boreholes in ward 14 that were not functioning have been repaired with the assistance of the Gwanda Community Share Ownership Trust.

Youths in Mangwe are also reportedly taking initiatives at local level to work towards promoting conducive environment for improved service provision while youths in Plumtree town jointly advocated for urgent upgrading of water and waste management systems, which the local authority confirmed to have started working on.

Ward 4 youths (Gwanda Rural) have taken initiative to fix chairs and desks from Stanmore secondary school, while youths from ward 14 also Gwanda Rural are working towards rebuilding a block at Sengezane Primary school. All this helps in building confidence on youths as responsible citizens.

The youths have played a key role in helping local authorities in Gwanda, Mangwe and Bulilima manage to have a conclusive and objective service delivery report that was produced in consultative with the community through random score card sampling.

In ward 8, Sitezi Village, youths are reportedly working hard to repair a local bridge which was destroyed during the January rains. All this points to the maturity and the assumed responsibility by the youths from all project areas.

YOUTHS IN WARD 7 DEMAND REDRESS ON THE RECALL OF COUNCILLORS.



Youth participating in service delivery and social accountability forum

him about our various challenges and found the way forward effective immediately.

Now we are having a challenge of having prolonged service delivery gaps, that are not addressed in our ward, hence affecting the fundamental rights of people such as the right to water and electricity street lights which are the main challenges in the ward” another Ward 7 youth lamented.

As an organization that has been working towards improving service delivery in the communities through youth active participation in local governance processes, CYDT organized a Forum where the current Mayor and the Town Clerk were invited to engage with the youths, to discuss on the plight of residents in ward 7 on service delivery.

A political legitimacy and leadership wrangle within the Movement for Democratic Change Party has seen many elected members of the MDC Alliance Party led by Nelson Chamisa being recalled from their respective posts by MDC-T interim leader, Thokozani Khupe.

Former councillor for Ward 7 and mayor for Gwanda, Mr Justone Mazhale was recalled and replaced with Mr Njabulo Siziba. Since Mr Siziba is not from Ward 7, the councillor position has been left vacant in the ward.

Ward 7 youths, laments that, the dismissal of their former councillor, has resulted in the lack of representation and gap in addressing the service delivery challenges experienced in their ward. The youths are of the view that, the recalling of their councillor paralyzed the functions of a council in having a councillor representing the concerns of the residents from their ward.

“Not having a councillor has turned out to be a disadvantage; no one attends to the ward challenges since no one plays the role of a councillor, it’s been a week now without electricity and of which our complaints turn out ineffective without a councillor responsible for representing us. We have not had a ward meeting for some time now of which our matters remain unaddressed,” said Fortune Ndlovu from Ward 7.

“We are faced with different challenges of which we need someone such as a Ward councillor who can listen to our concerns. If the councillor was available, we would have told

The duty bearers bemoaned that, the interference of national leaders on local governance, was hampering council operations in addressing issues of service delivery in wards as some wards were without councillors to foster coordinated engagement between duty bearers and residents. The duty bearers bemoaned that, they were at the mercy of the local government ministry and such issues were political matters, which they had no jurisdiction to address or preside over hence leaving them paralyzed.

The Town Clerk, Mrs Nkala, however shared to the youths that, as a local authority they would not deviate from their mandate of ensuring improved service delivery for residents, hence they would address the gaps in ward 7, regardless of the absence of the councillor in the ward.

The Mayor, N Siziba shared that the government was anticipating to conduct by-elections that were initially slated for December 2020, though they were cancelled in order to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The cancellation of by-elections means that several wards will remain without councillors for a longer period. As an organization that has a goal toward increasing meaningful participation of youths to play an active role in influencing the type of service delivery that they would want to get, the youths concurred that they would continue to lobby and mobilize their communities to demand accountability from the local authorities on improving service delivery, in spite of the recalling of councillors in their wards.