



**NEWSLETTER
SEPTEMBER TO
OCTOBER 2021**

Advocacy on Systems
Change for Economic
Justice and Decent Work
towards a feminist and
just society



THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR'S WELCOME NOTE.

ActionAid Zimbabwe's
Country Director, Joy
Mabenge.



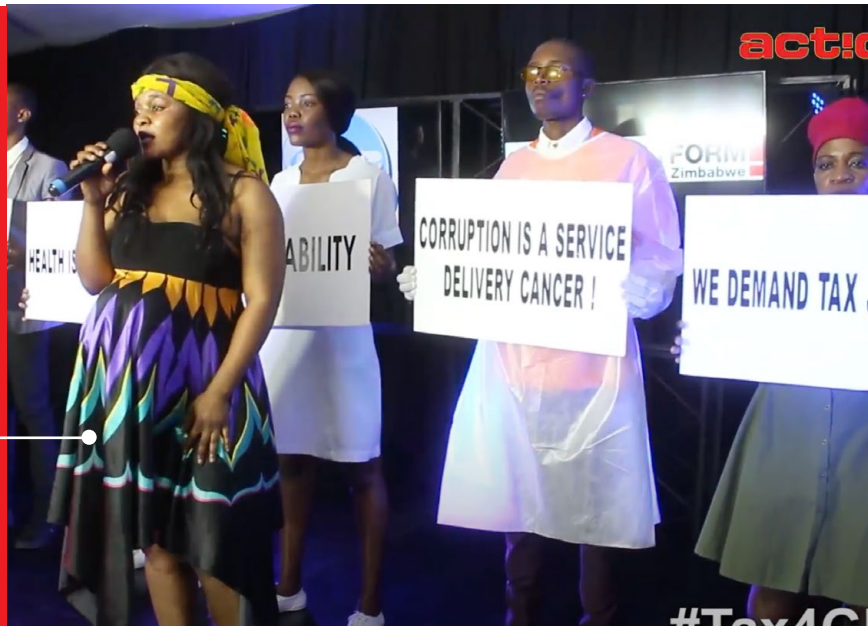
Following a 3-month level 4 lockdown, Zimbabwe finally moved to level two in early September 2021 following a significant decline in COVID-19 transmissions and an increase in the uptake of the vaccination programme. This is a welcome development as ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ) is easing back into physical programming in our programme areas. During the period under review, we adapted very well to digital programming and held the bulk of our advocacy initiatives online. The broad focus of the current newsletter is on “Advocacy on Systems Change for Economic Justice and Decent Work towards a feminist and just society”. From the 30th of August to the 1st of September 2021 ActionAid held its inaugural Tax and Gender Responsive Public Service (GRPS) Summit that attracted policy makers, civil society, and academia. This is a policy advocacy and learning space created by the organization to put a face to broad public services delivery issues and encourage accountability by policy makers and service providers. Linked to Tax and GRPS issues is the Campaign on curbing illicit financial flows in the Gemstone Sector. The campaign aims to facilitate women participation in the value

chain for the Gemstone sector. AAZ launched the curbing of illicit financial flows campaign in the Gemstone sector in partnership with the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) and the Publish What You Pay during the Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba (ZAMI) held in Bulawayo from 4-8 October 2021.

Through several online and mass media engagements, the Women's Rights and Economic Justice Programme was also busy with advocacy actions on decent work for health and education workers, gender responsive public service provision and tax justice. There was a broad call for improved public service delivery through tax justice and baseline data was collected to support self-sufficiency in the Zimbabwean economy to support the initiatives. During a Policy Dialogue on the Decent Work Agenda for education and healthcare workers, parliamentarians committed to enhance their oversight role on public finance management for improved working conditions. Through support of Activista and AAZ, stakeholders in Chitungwiza came together to advocate for the construction of Muda Dam, a move which will see the water challenges in the city being addressed.

A CALL FOR TAXES TO IMPROVE GENDER RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICES TAX AND GENDER RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICES SUMMIT.

Iyasa Theatre group emphasizing the promotion of transparency in taxation to improve provision of public services.



AAZ in partnership with civil society actors, researchers, legislators, and representatives from relevant government ministries held a three-day online/virtual Tax Justice and Gender Responsive Public Services (GRPS) Summit from the 30th of August to the 1st of September 2021. The summit discussed the current state of public service

provision in the health, education, and water sectors. The biggest message to government was the need to promote transparency in the handling of taxes in Zimbabwe which can be used for the provision of quality GRPS in these sectors. It was noted the absence of quality GRPS affect women and girls the most.

- The summit sought to dissect the challenges and opportunities along the whole value chain of service delivery. This entailed more public scrutiny on how public revenue is mobilised, allocated, disbursed, spent, and accounted for as required by the Constitution of Zimbabwe, Section 298, principle of public financial management. Music, poems, and drama were among the tools that were used to stimulate reflection on the state of public service delivery and how women are disproportionately negatively affected during the #TAX4GRPS Summit.

A woman from the Iyasa Theatre Group acting out lack of water, which affects mostly women.



Savana Trust drama performances depicting poor health services resulting high child mortality.

Pictures to the right: A heavily pregnant woman being comforted by her husband after losing a child due to poor health services.



2021 TAX JUSTICE AND GRPS SUMMIT PROFFERED THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The national purse must be nourished to widen opportunities for massive investment in the provision of public services – health, education, and water, for instance.
- To grow the size of the national budget, government must stop giving overly generous tax incentives.
- In line with Section 299 of the Constitution, Parliament oversight of all State revenue and expenditures must be enhanced through review and approval of tax expenditures as part of the national budget processes.
- Government must target sustainable finance for health instead of relying on Aid, an unpredictable source of finance.
- Prioritisation of public expenditure is required.
- Parliament and civic society actors must redouble efforts on budget tracking to hold more accountable the Treasury and ministries in charge of service delivery on huge unspent funds related to capital budgets.
- Civil society actors must work together to ensure that tax justice and GRPS issues are robustly raised during public hearings on the upcoming 2021 national budget making process.



Links for some of the media articles written on the Tax and GRPS Summit:

<https://www.humanitarianeye.co.zw/health/adopt-progressive-taxation-to-lessen-burden-on-poor-mabenge/>

<https://thevoiceagencyzim.com/2021/09/02/tax-justice-heavily-impacts-on-women-actionaid-zimbabwe/>

ACCOUNT FOR TAXPAYERS' MONEY, GOVERNMENT TOLD.

Honourable Dr. Ruth Labode, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Health and Childcare has committed to push government in particular the Ministry of Health and Child Care to be transparent in the way it uses taxpayers' money. She said this during a Mid-Term Health Budget Review Youth Interface Dialogue with policy makers and duty bearers that was organised by the Global Platform Zimbabwe and Activista Zimbabwe on the 29th of June 2021.

Dr. Labode said she would engage the Speaker of Parliament to request the Ministries of Finance and Economic Development, Health and Child Care, to submit relevant reports, required of them as enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe. This will enable the parliamentary portfolio committees, on public accounts, finance and economic development, and health and childcare, to play their oversight role and hold the duty bearers to account on the use of health funds.

This Midterm Health Budget review was a follow-up engagement to a Global Platform Zimbabwe post budget breakfast meeting with policy makers that was held in December 2020. Parliamentarians, who play a critical role in providing oversight on the implementation of the health budget had committed to update young people and discuss the budget implementation



Dr. Ruth Labode, Chairperson of the Parliament Portfolio Committee on Health and Child Care.

process by mid-2021. This engagement was thus driven by the motive to discuss the trajectory in which the health budget implementation process is headed, challenges faced and corrective measures from a youth perspective. For more information, visit:



<https://www.facebook.com/globalplatformzim/videos/128773759368310>

DECENT WORK KEY TO PROVISION OF QUALITY GENDER RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICES.

By Roselily Ushewokunze,
Activista Zimbabwe.



Rumbidzayi Makoni, AAZ Women's
Rights and Economic Justice Manager.

The government has been urged to ensure decent working conditions for workers in the health and education sectors to ensure the provision of quality gender responsive public services in these sectors. This was said by stakeholders during a Decent Work for Education and Health Sectors Policy Dialogue held on 7 September 2021.

AAZ organised the policy dialogue which aimed to stimulate discussion on how all stakeholders could contribute to the provision of decent work for those in the health and education sector by examining the current working conditions and offering solutions to alleviate suffering.

In the keynote address, AAZ Women's Rights and Economic Justice manager Rumbidzayi Makoni (top right) highlighted that the healthcare and education sectors are some of the least funded sectors in the Zimbabwean economy. This existing challenge has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic which facilitated the decline in real wages, loss in paid leave days as well as loss in value of contributions to NSSA social security scheme. She noted that the Government of Zimbabwe unlike other Governments has not introduced wage subsidies that are instrumental in mitigating the impacts of the pandemic. This has worsened the burden of unpaid care work for women working in the health and education sectors.

A research on Decent Work conducted by AAZ revealed that decent work has been affected by the recruitment freeze put into effect by government in 2017. This has led to overburden on the part of teachers, nurses and doctors resulting in their failure to deliver adequate services. The challenge coupled with economic hardships has resulted in the incapacitation of these critical sectors.

The Decent Work for Education and Health Sectors Policy Dialogue meeting was held virtually and was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Health and Childcare, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Members of the House of Assembly, Members of Parliament, the Parliament of Zimbabwe's secretariat, Parliamentary committees, Government Institutions and Activista Zimbabwe.



Read more here:

<https://www.humanitarianeye.co.zw/health/decent-work-key-to-realisation-of-sustainable-development-aaz/>

#GIVE MUDA DAM A LIFE CAMPAIGN TO EASY CHITUNGWIZA WATER CHALLENGES.



Chitungwiza Municipality has joined hands with Activista Chitungwiza Chapter in lobbying national government for the construction of Muda Dam and the setting up of a water treatment plant for Chitungwiza. This is expected to reduce the water challenges facing Chitungwiza residents. Women and girls, who sometimes must look for water at midnight, or other odd times of the night, bear the brunt of most of the water woes. They are at risk of facing gender-based violence as they look for water while the burden of doing unpaid care work increases.

Activista members organised a virtual stakeholders engagement meeting held on the 17th of June 2021. The meeting outcome was for the Activista members and Chitungwiza Municipality to jointly draft an advocacy letter for the Muda Dam Construction. This was to be submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement, and Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development.

Speaking during the meeting, the Mayor of Chitungwiza, His Worship Lovemore Maiko highlighted that Chitungwiza does not have its own water source and currently relies on the City of Harare for water. Chitungwiza only receives less than 100 mega litres of water per week instead of the allotted 490 mega litres. Chitungwiza is the country's third largest city in terms of its population with around 391 429 people. Mr Maiko said: "We

have tried our best to address the challenge through the drilling of boreholes as a stop-gap measure. However, they presented a challenge in the face of COVID-19. We hope the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development can allocate some funds for the construction of the dam as some areas can go for weeks without water which is detrimental to the health of our residents."

The Activista members organised yet another follow up meeting with the Chitungwiza Municipality on the 3rd of September 2021 where the push for Muda Dam construction continued. Activista Chitungwiza met with stakeholders to give feedback on efforts made and mapped a way forward to tackle the water problem faced by Chitungwiza residents.

Chitungwiza Municipality highlighted that the estimated cost for the construction of Muda Dam, including feasibility studies, is USD320 million.



For more information, visit:

<https://thevoiceagencyzim.com/2021/09/06/muda-dam-project-endorsed-stakeholders-await-swift-release-of-funds/>

PROJECT TO NOURISH WOMEN AND MARGINALISED GROUPS' PARTICIPATION IN THE GEMSTONE AND GRANITE VALUE CHAINS COME INTO BEING.

By Clarity Sibanda, Media and Communications Officer, Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association.



Poor mineral resources governance is one of the major causes of the disconnect between mineral extraction and development causing economic instability, poor service delivery and poverty among a cocktail of challenges. It is also saddening to note that despite its vast mineral deposits, Zimbabwe continues to lose potential revenue due to smuggling of minerals especially in the diamond, gold, and gemstone sectors.

In May 2021, the media was awash with news of a 33-year-old Zimbabwean who was nabbed at the Oliver Tambo International Airport with 23 pieces of gold estimated at R11 million. Illicit minerals are some of the issues that need to be addressed in search of social and economic justice. AAZ Country Director, Joy Mabenge said during the Fair Green and Global (FGG) III All Stakeholders Inception Meeting in May 2021, “There is little attention being paid to the gemstone industry now. We are however glad that the Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe has recently started to improve policies in the gemstone value chain. The value of the black granite sector is also understated, and this remains a cause for concern.”

“The National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1) correctly points out that Zimbabwe’s mineral resources are under explored. The country is endowed with over forty minerals including gold, Platinum Group Metals (PGMs), diamonds, coal, gemstones, granite, manganese, chrome, lithium, asbestos, iron ore, copper, nickel, cobalt,

limestone, coal-bed methane (CBM) and rare earth minerals but these are under explored,” said Mabenge.

The NDS1 further points out that weak governance in the sector has been the major limiting factor. To achieve increased and sustained growth in the mining sector, the NDS1 stipulates that priority will be to improve the ease of doing business in the mining sector and this will be realised through finalisation and implementation of mineral specific policy frameworks and a comprehensive review of the Gold Trade Act, Precious Stones Trade Act and amendment of the Mines and Minerals Act.

FGG III, which will be implemented by the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) in partnership with AAZ in Mutoko, Hurungwe and Karoi Districts of Zimbabwe will focus on women’s participation in the gemstone and black granite sectors.



Read more here:

<http://www.zela.org/project-to-nourish-women-marginalised-groups-participation-in-the-gemstone-granite-value-chains-comes-into-being/>

<https://www.herald.co.zw/ngos-support-govt-in-implementing-nds1/>

TOWARDS IMPROVED GEMSTONE VALUE CHAIN AND TRADE TO CURB ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS.

From left: Darlington Chidarara, AAZ Projects Coordinator, Civic Participation and Accountability, Mutuso Dhlwayo, Executive Director for ZELA, Joyce Machiri, Publish What You Pay Coordinator and Mukasiri Sibanda, Stop The Bleeding Campaign Coordinator during ZAMI 2021 held in Bulawayo.



AAZ participated in the 10th edition of the Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba (ZAMI) held in Bulawayo from 4-8 October 2021 whose theme was :

“Development Speaks: Amplifying Community Voices for improved accountability and transparency in the natural resources’ governance in Zimbabwe”. As part the five-year Fair Global Green (FGG) III programme running from 2021-2025, AAZ in partnership with the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) and the Publish What You Pay initiative, launched the campaign on curbing illicit financial flows in the gemstone value chain and trade with the broad goal of promoting women and marginalised groups’ participation in the sector. Running under the #StopGemsIFF, the following were some of the key takeaways from the Gemstone Side Session:

- There is need for the country to come up with a gemstone policy to guide the producers and investors into the gemstone industry.
- Women miners should form syndicates as this would make it easier for them to access information, funding, and markets for gemstone production.
- The Gemmology Centre should be established in Mashonaland West and not in Mutare given that most of the gemstones are produced in Mashonaland West Province.

- There is need to support women to actively participate in the cutting and polishing of gemstones mined in Zimbabwe. This will create more jobs and wealth for the country.
- Government departments CSOs need to work together to address the challenges faced by women miners in the gemstone sector.
- Government should decriminalize the trading of gemstones so that precious stones are traded through the formal market. This in turn will curb the smuggling and leakages of gemstones to other countries.

Here is an article published in the media about the Gemstone campaign: \$2bln Gemstone mining sector in quandary.



<https://www.humanitarianeye.co.zw/livelihoods/2bln-gemstone-mining-sector-in-quandary/>

YOUTH PROJECT TO ADVOCATE FOR GENDER RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICES LAUNCHED.

Youths From Hopely During A Meeting Supported By AAZ.



A Youth Empowerment project aimed at the improvement of youth's livelihoods and ability to interact with power holders and influence gender responsive public service delivery was launched on the 1st of September 2021 in Hopely.

The main objective for the project is "By April 2024, at least 3000 young people (2500 females, 500 males) in Hopely are socially and economically empowered with skills and knowledge to make informed choices and collectively assert their rights." The project is running from May 2021 to April 2024 and is being funded by the Danish Television Network.

The project is meant to promote youth advocacy skills through active participation in planning and

development of programmes that affect them. This will be hinged on the community youth hub which will be built in Hopely. The youth hub will be a center of youth activities meant to support their community wellbeing and development of economic options.

Many young people in Zimbabwe are engaged in risky behaviors which include commercial sex work, theft, drug and alcohol abuse, early marriages, organized crime, cyber bullying, manipulation by politicians to suite individual political agendas and are used as instruments of violence. This has provoked the need to support skills development, dialogue between youths and solution holders and also the creation of entertainment as an avenue for development among young people.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES SAFEGUARDING IS PART OF OUR CONCERN AT AAZ

ActionAid Zimbabwe is committed to preventing and responding to any form of sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse (SHEA) as well as child abuse and abuse of adults at-risk, whether carried out by staff/representatives or resulting from our work. Read more from below what the SHEA and Safeguarding Policy is all about:



PLEASE REMEMBER

- **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**
- **All have a duty to report concerns**
- **Action aid's values and feminist principles**
- **Dignity and respect**

ACTIONAID SEXUAL HARASSMENT, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT AND HOW ARE WE WALKING THE TALK?

ActionAid is committed to working with others to end injustice and eradicate poverty, and to build a world which upholds the rights and dignity of all. We recognize that to work with integrity we must “walk the talk” and ensure that anyone who comes into contact with ActionAid is protected from any form of injustice, discrimination, or abuse.

At ActionAid we are committed to raising awareness about sexual harassment, exploitation, abuse, and other harms – and to taking action to prevent harm.

Safeguarding refers to the policies and processes that an organisation puts in place to prevent and respond to harm of a sexualised nature including sexual harassment, abuse, and exploitation carried out by staff or those working on our behalf.

Action Aid has four global Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (SHEA) and Safeguarding policies. They outline our commitment to challenging, preventing, and responding to sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse in all its forms whether this is carried out by our staff/representatives or results from our work.



The four policies are:



- **The Global overarching SHEA and Safeguarding Policy**



- **The Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy**



- **The Child Safeguarding Policy**



- **The Sexual Harassment, Exploitation, and Abuse (SHEA) at Work Policy**

At ActionAid we are committed to ensuring that every child who comes into contact with our work is safe, and able to realize their rights. Our Child Safeguarding approach is about making sure that our staff/representatives, or programmes and processes, do not cause harm to children.

ActionAid will not tolerate any form of abuse, exploitation, or harm carried out towards children (defined as anyone under the age of 18).”

The Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy outlines the different forms of harm and abuse that can be carried out towards communities by representatives of ActionAid. We have highlighted three below.

- **Sexual abuse**
Sexual abuse is sexual contact that is unwanted or forced. Examples include rape; inappropriate language towards rights holders; inappropriate touching.
- **Sexual exploitation**
Sexual exploitation of rights holders is when an ActionAid representative uses their position of power for sexual purposes. For example, asking a rights holder to have sex in order to get on a distribution list; buying sex, even if legal in the country.



REPORTING

PLEASE REPORT IF YOU SUSPECT THAT HARM MAY HAVE TAKEN PLACE OR COULD TAKE PLACE.

PLEASE REPORT IF YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT SOMETHING YOU HAVE SEEN OR HEARD ABOUT. IT IS BETTER TO REPORT EVEN IF IT TURNS OUT THAT EVERYTHING IS OK. THAT IS BETTER THAN SAYING NOTHING, WHICH COULD ENABLE HARM TO CONTINUE. WHEN YOU REPORT WE WILL WORK WITH YOU TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED AND WHAT WE CAN DO.

PLEASE REPORT ALL YOUR CONCERNS TO THE FOCAL POINTS WHOSE MOBILE NUMBERS ARE GIVEN BELOW:

CRESCENCIA: 0780247033

BETTY: 0780247034

**OR REPORT USING THE FOLLOWING EMAIL ADDRESSES;
SAFEGUARDING.AAZ@ACTIONAID.ORG.**

+SAFEGUARDING@ACTIONAID.ORG

EXCERPTS FROM A STAFF MEMBER WHO ATTENDED THE SAFEGUARDING COURSE.

Pepukai Muchazondida, Value Chain & Business Development Specialist under the AAZ Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP).



Pepukai Muchazondida was one of the AAZ staff members who completed the ActionAid facilitated online SHEA and Safeguarding course in July 2021. The completion of the training boosted his confidence and knowledge on attending to SHEA and safeguarding issues at the office and in the field.

“I am now able to identify persons who might be vulnerable, recognise signs of abuse and neglect, record and report abuse and neglect appropriately. I would like to encourage fellow ActionAid staff and partners to attend this enlightening and refreshing course as it is now a priority cross cutting area to improve and guarantee duty of care”.

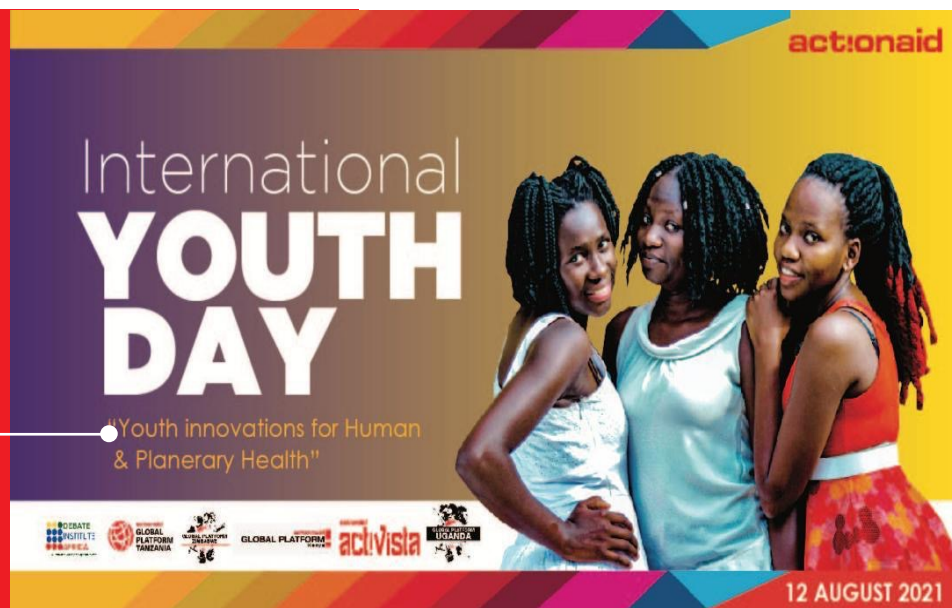
Pepukai (above) is the Value Chain and Business Development Specialist under the Zimbabwe Agricultural Growth Programme (ZAGP) being implemented by AAZ and other consortium members.

By attending the training, Pepukai’s experience will improve his duty of care during day-to-day interaction with fellow staff, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. The completion of the online course is an endorsement of AAZ’s emphasis on ‘walking the talk’ to ensure anyone who comes into contact with staff is protected from any form of injustice, discrimination, or abuse.

The online training course covers five (5) modules namely introduction (Module 1), power relations (Module 2), SHEA and Safeguarding (Module 3), Responding and Reporting (Module 4) and summary and next steps (Module 5). Thumbs up to ActionAid for initiating such a brilliant, simple, and easy to follow online training program.

DAY: A VOW TO TRANSFORM FOOD SYSTEMS.

Flier used to advertise the International Youth Day.



COMMEMORATIONS

Various youth networks from Eastern and Southern Africa, under the auspices of the Global Platform Zimbabwe in August organized various virtual initiatives to commemorate the 2021 International Youth Day (IYD). The IYD 2021 ran under the global theme: “Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health.”

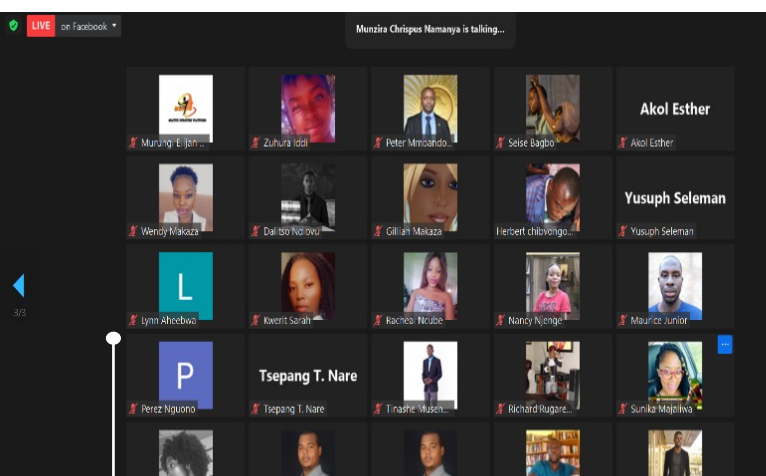
The Eastern and Southern Africa IYD theme for 2021 is entitled: “Young People at a Crossroad: Realizing the right to adequate food and decent living amidst COVID-19 and climate change”. The youth networks from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe came together to share their lived realities, amid climate change and COVID-19. They sought to spearhead strategies to cope with

the effects of climate change, proffered solutions for decent livelihoods during pandemics and reflected on their role in transforming food security and building a sustainable future.

The International Youth Day Virtual Commemorations took place through a series of online events including debate contests and creative arts, ahead of a virtual conference on the 12th of August. From the 7th – 10th August. On display were debates, poetry and speaking competitions that brought yet another amazing online competitive experience for the youth. The creative art platform gave young people a platform to use their talents to advocate for more resilient food security systems and to depict their lived realities in Africa.

If young people are given correct platforms at the correct time, they can play a very big role for strategic activism.

Young people were implored to invest and actively participate in the agricultural value chain by collectively and actively taking part in environmental conservation through sustainable agricultural practices, proper use of land and other practices if we are to ensure food security over time.



Screenshot of participants who attended the IYD commemorations

Climate change is now one of the biggest challenges facing Zimbabwe and other African countries as human activities have become a threat to food security. Read more about the IYD commemorations from the following media articles:



<https://bulawayo24.com/index-id-opinion-sc-columnist-byo-208176.html>

<https://bulawayo24.com/index-id-opinion-sc-columnist-byo-208179.html>



What to watch out in the next few months:

ZRBF Zambezi Valley Alliance Radio Shows on “Increasing capacities of communities to protect development gains and achieve improved well-being in the face of shocks and stresses.”

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