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YOUTH PULSE

PUSHING THE YOUTH AGENDA

Youth, the Greatest Asset in Peace building Efforts in Zimbabwe

Owen Dhliwayo

Zimbabwe is an extremely young country as those who are less than 35 years constitute 62% of the general population. It becomes imperative for the leaders to harness the demographic dividend of the youth for the socio – economic and political transformation of our local communities. Youth are the greatest assets that Zimbabwe can tap from due to their vitality and significant roles in communities, and their potential is positively correlated with the development of the country.

On 20 December 2018, the Chief Secretary to President and Cabinet, Dr Misheck Sibanda and the UN Resident Coordinator Mr Bishow Parajuli signed a US$3.15 million agreement allocated by the UN Secretary General to kickstart Peace Building Fund for Zimbabwe. The Peace Building Fund for Zimbabwe is a mechanism for strengthening coordination and providing a dedicated space to interface between various stakeholders on peace, reconciliation and governance reforms. At the signing ceremony, the UN Resident Coordinator pointed out that the fund is key in advancing constitutionalism, peace, respect for the rule of law, gender equality and the protection of human rights for the realization of growth and sustainable development.

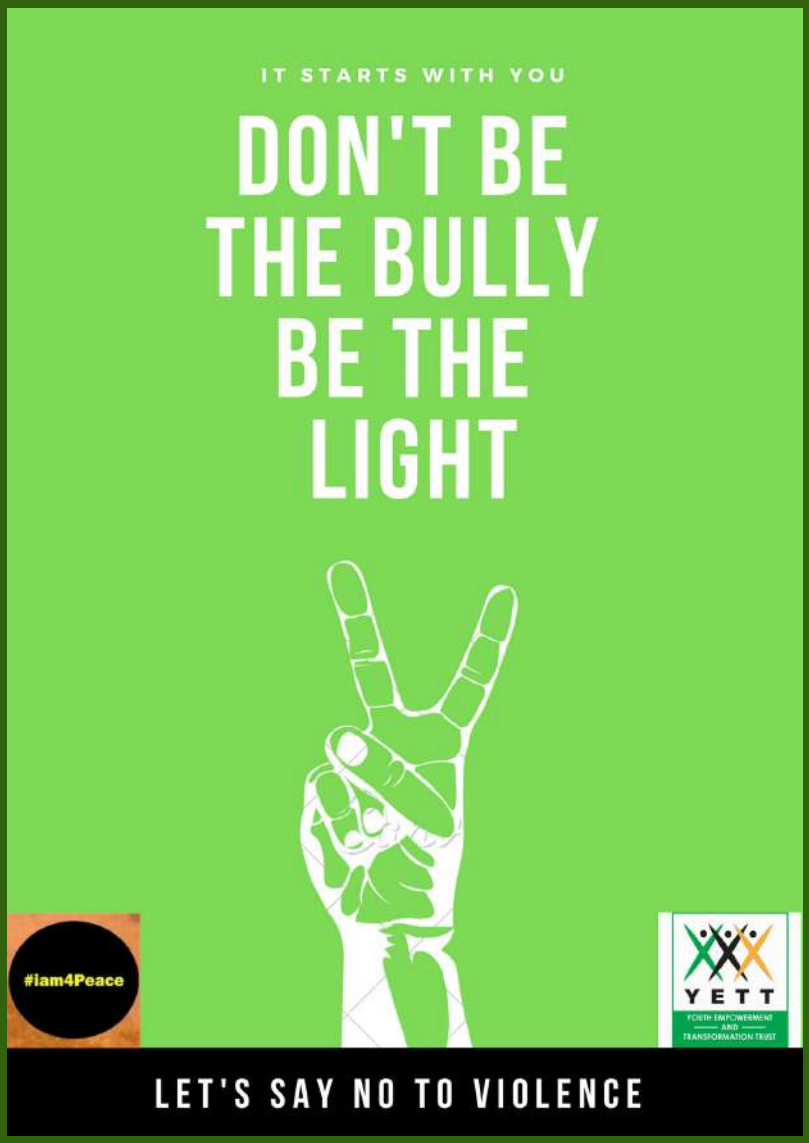
One of the key objectives of the Peace Building Fund for Zimbabwe is to promote meaningful engagement of women and youth in national peace and reconciliation dialogue. Thus, putting the youth at the forefront as agents of social transformation.

They are the soul of the commitment to peace, gender equality, social justice and community transformation. Community instability has been a result of a political culture that is marred by propaganda in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the youth and women became victims in a cultural and structural context of oppression and power in our communities. The young women and young men should be given an opportunity to act as agents of social transformation.

For a long period of time, Zimbabwe has been described as a country with a punitive culture of intolerance towards divergent political views. Local communities have been witnessing politics of intolerance which has led to an increasing destabilisation of rural communities. The youth are key agents in the process of national peace, reconciliation dialogue and will empower those around them.

The United Nations (1963) defined community development “as the process by which efforts of the people themselves are united with those of the government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of the communities to integrate them into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress”. Therefore, the United Nations definition of community development implies the participation of both the members of the community, youth included and the government. The Peace Building Fund for Zimbabwe should ensure that youths are fully integrated into the peace building efforts through stimulating the youths to be active participants of the national peace and reconciliation dialogue process. The national peace and reconciliation dialogue process should be interpreted within the context of community development. Peace within a community enhances community development. (SDG 16)

In 2016, the rural population was reported to be about 67.7% according to the world Bank collection of development indicators. This signifies that rural development can only succeed when the youth are contributing significantly to the socio – economic and political transformation of local communities. Youths have a pivotal role to play in peace building because most youths live in the rural areas and the aim of the Peace Building Fund for Zimbabwe is to improve rural development. The dire need for peace in our communities is a matter that calls for great and urgent concern from various stakeholders. Community disputes, violence and youth marginalization represent the greatest challenge to peace, security and stability.



Are you interested in writing articles?
YETT is calling upon interested young people to write articles to be featured in the next newsletter - The Youth Pulse.
Email us @ progress@yetzw.net
or
call us on 263 242-496889

Young Women's Submit

Progress Sibanda

Young women's chair is missing at the decision-making table that is they are not participating and occupying positions in the civic space because of various challenges. These challenges range from the patriarchal system, women's portrayal in the media, institutional barriers, resources and discrimination based on gender, age, race, background etc. Young women' lack of participation in civic process does not only limit their capacity to demand accountability but also reduces their access to socio-economic rights and services. It is under this background that the Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust (YETT) hosted the Young Women's Summit (13 &14 February 2019) as a way of creating a safe space for young women to engage, design concrete strategies and plan on how they can strengthen their constructive and active engagement in civic processes.

Minister of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation Hon. Kirsty Coventry poses for a photo with young women from around Zimbabwe during the Young Women Summit

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YETT REGIONAL CONFERENCE

On 'Strengthening Constructive and Active Youth Engagement in Civic Processes

Progress Sibanda

Despite their potential and enthusiasm, young people in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region continue to be sidelined in processes of civic engagement and participation. It is against this backdrop that the Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust (YETT) hosted a two-day Regional Conference on Strengthening Constructive and Active Youth Engagement in Civic Processes from the 25th to the 26th of April 2019 as a way of promoting young people's participation and leadership in civic processes for sustainable development at the local, national and regional level. Young delegates from the Southern African region (Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe) converged at YETT offices in Harare to learn and share experiences on promoting youth civic participation and leadership beyond political representation and to establish regional solidarity on promoting youth participation in civic processes. The conference leveraged on regional and global campaigns and movements to provide solidarity and encourage more young people to participate and influence how they are governed.

ZITF 2019 HIGHLIGHTS