

YOUTH PULSE



YETT hosts the Multi-Party Youth Dialogue

Progress Sibanda

Many young people feel alienated and see politics as a game being played by politicians, opinion pollsters and media operators to their own financial benefit, and has nothing to do with them. Young people might have different opinions when it comes to politics and governance but the ultimate interest of the country must be their utmost priority. The willingness to engage in a political among young people despite their political differences is great and a dialogue between themselves as young people before engaging in intergenerational dialogue is of mutual interest to young people. As a way of offering space to youth leaders from different political parties to discuss on how to improve youth participation in this post electoral period and in other civic engagement processes, the Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust (YETT) in partnership with Victory Siyanqoba Trust (VST) hosted a Multi-Party Youth Dialogue in Bulawayo recently.

The dialogue also sought to share information on youth challenges and opportunities in political participation; devise a collaborative strategy for pushing youth issues; and to develop strategies for increasing influence of youth structures in the political parties. It attracted over 20 youth leaders from different political parties like Movement for Democratic Change-T (MDC T), MDC A, Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), National People's Party (NPP). Through its work, YETT continues to promote the development of a culture of dialogue among (youth-youth), (youth and duty bearers) (youth and policy makers) and (intergeneration) dialogue to better influence the country's political and social leadership. The Multi-party dialogue enhanced the youth leader's understanding of current youth issues and opportunities that political parties need to address. It also enhanced capacities of youth party representatives to articulate, effectively communicate and persuasively argue issues that affect them as active individuals and engaged citizens.



Youths from different political parties posing for a picture at the YETT multi-party dialogue

The outcomes of the dialogue included consensus on strategies of increasing youth participation in development and governance as well as the need to create strong political parties that focus on youth issues. The young leaders committed to increasing their influence on party policies and strategies, they also pledged for the eradication of all forms of violence, and continue being the ambassadors of Peace in their communities. *"Tolerance breeds democracy and diversity and young people believe in Policy based politics and not personality driven politics and that candidate selection in political parties should be skewed towards an agenda of propelling youth participation"* is a quote from one representative during the dialogue.

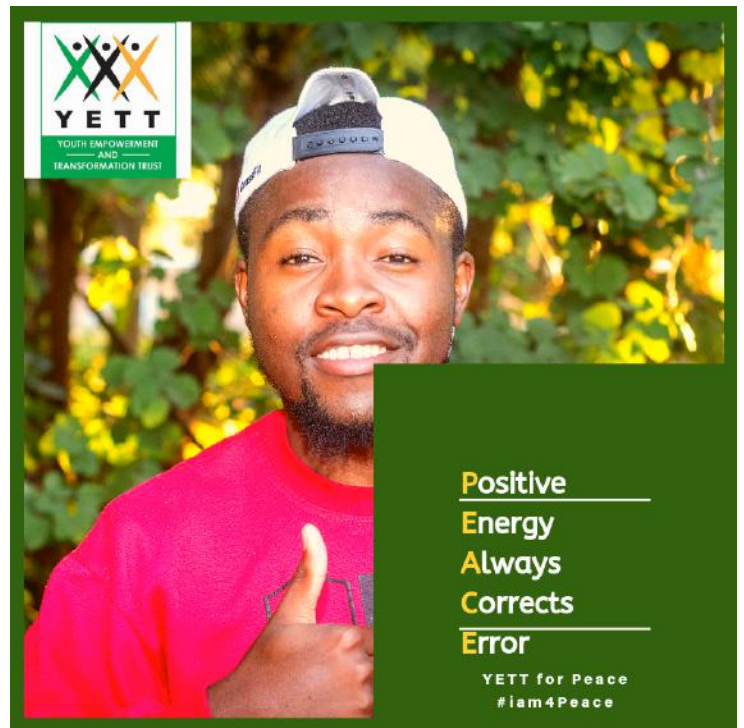
Devolution as a tenet of Democratic Local Governance and Youth Spaces

Owen Dhliwayo

Zimbabwe is a unitary state and the ideology of devolution of power as espoused in the 2013 Constitution will go a long way in repealing the erstwhile centralized system of government. The centralized system of government made local authorities become de facto appendages of central government and in the process promote partisan politics. This has created tension within communities. Devolution is a critical component of the 2013 Constitution that can enhance the 2030 agenda. However, in the face of increasing political polarization exacerbated by the centralized system, the local authorities are currently at odds with the growing insecurity and socio – economic uncertainty among the youth in our communities. Devolution must allow local authorities to execute local affairs, steer socio-economic development and promote citizen participation for effective democratic processes peace within our local communities.

Will it be feasible to have the real transfer of administrative, political and fiscal powers to local authorities and create spaces for the youth in local governance?

It is important to explore the broadened conceptualisation of inclusion into the implementation of devolution. Devolution provides an opportunity to address the social, economic and political exclusion of young people in governance systems and structures.



The 2013 Constitution came with hopes and expectations to Zimbabweans especially young people in local communities in respect to devolution. Devolution gives a greater attention to local communities' participation in economic policy formulation and implementation. At the same time, it allows the local authorities to promote transparency and accountability in governance and decision-making as well as management of local resources. In the current Constitutional set up, local government will have legal status that it lacked in the erstwhile centralized system due to the fact that it is now governed through a Constitutional provision as opposed to a mere statute.

The structural relationship between young people and the older generation have made respectful and honest dialogue about youth participation in governance processes extremely difficult. Unless devolution gives due emphasis on the need to ensure generational justice and equality, it will not be transformative. In essence, it will fail to address the question of political space domination and in the process act as a tool for pacification rather than for the achievement of genuinely youth participation.

Since independence in 1980, the government used decentralization as a way to entrench its grip on power. It enhanced its stranglehold over the local communities and national resource as a political tool to their political goals. Zimbabwean youth have experienced token participatory exercises in which their contribution has not always been taken seriously by the government.

Devolution should not be seen as a tool for older generations to expand their domination of the social, economic and political spaces but as a framework for intergenerational justice and equality. On the other hand, it is a moment for young people to bring their political exclusion into awareness then mobilise themselves into action. Young people need to mobilise themselves effectively through networks and articulate their common values and goals on participation in governance processes. Only when the young people have been able to increase their own relative power and acquired sufficient leverage will they make a positive difference in their claim for social, economic and political spaces.

The Urban Councils Act, the Rural District Councils Act and the Regional, Town and Country Planning Act form the principal legislative basis for the implementation of local government policy and establish the relationship between local authorities and central government. Due to the doctrine of ultra vires, local authorities are currently not allowed to perform functions not specifically mentioned in the legislation, which render them ineffective. This is because many of the functions are already performed wholly or in part by central government. It will be progressive if this anomaly is addressed.

Real power has not been transferred to local authorities, despite the fact that the aims of local government are to create participatory and democratically elected structures that identify need and ensure provision of services. In essence, local authorities have never been an independent sphere of community development. There are increasing administrative and political controls and oversight by central government.



Till you say: No more

Daphine Kufa

Baby hung
like a little monkey
One, two, three, four kids
And another one at the back!
Too many kids!

Stairs. Like
they ain't enough
A good wife must continue to bear children
Until the uterus says: No more

If not, suffer continue
Your health? Who cares, all wanted are children
Clothes? Never mind

HE WILL PROVIDE
Provide my foot!
All he cares for, are his own LABELS
Bear them, just do
And he will provide everything else?
Who will but me?

Can someone
lend me those sweets, the sweets of STOP
Or the so called injection
For mine body hast suffered
I'm getting too old

Old for my age...

