



Youth centered programming”

My Age Zimbabwe Trust has developed expertise in using performance arts and social media, to promote positive behavior patterns among young people. The thrust has been on youth friendly social behavior change communication approaches that include information communication technologies, volunteerism and edutainment.

A child marriage prevalence rate of 39% has given reason for My Age Zimbabwe Trust to implement the Girls Choose project that is aimed at raising awareness on early and forced marriages as well as creating an enabling environment for the elimination of child and forced marriages in Masvingo Province. Girls Choose targets youth aged between 13 and 24 years. The project empowers girls to influence policy makers and stakeholders in their constituencies to enact and enforce laws against child marriages. Girls Choose is in support of Target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Program to Accelerate Action to end child marriages, an initiative by UNICEF and UNFPA aimed at protecting millions of girls from child marriages. This came about after the realization that there is a plethora of challenges which befall girls once they are exposed to premature marriages. Young girls dropping out of school leads to perpetual poverty, vulnerability to gender based violence, increased maternal mortality rate and heightened HIV infection rates amongst girls.

To contribute towards the creation of a democratic society where young people participate in community governance and collaborate with local authorities and leaders for their own development My Age Zimbabwe Trust is implementing the Youth Engage project. The project also seeks to ensure that young men and women are able to work together with their fellow youths constructively whilst positively impacting their communities.

There is also the I-Pad campaign which seeks to engage communities in Masvingo urban and rural to come up with sustainable strategies for meeting the needs of girls with regards to menstrual hygiene management. The campaign seeks to mobilize disposable sanitary pads to be distributed to vulnerable girls and young women. This is in response to the fact that girls and young women have challenges in terms of access to comprehensive information and services on menstrual health. It is disheartening to note that the affected girls miss at least four days of school every month, which is over a month in a year inevitably having a negative impact on their learning progress.

My Age Zimbabwe Trust also has a project that seeks to encourage young people especially young women to register and to vote during the 2018 election. The project is dubbed “Bio Buddys18”. It took a community participatory nature of training champions. The individuals were trained and encouraged their fellow peers in the community to register. This is still an ongoing project that seeks to ensure that young people are registered. It is imperative to note that this project came about after the realization that Masvingo has the highest female registered voters compared to any other province in Zimbabwe (ZEC Registration February 28 2018).

In a bid to focus on strengthening youth leadership skills and enhancing youth participation in Network for Youth Development (Malawi) and My Age Zimbabwe and exchange program has been created. This project seeks to foster development through idea sharing and capacity building. Through this, skills and attitudes that young people need to positively contribute towards community development are imparted. Positive youth development occurs when young people have the opportunity and support to contribute to society in a way that is valued and respected. The current phase is focusing on girls’ rights.

My Age Zimbabwe Trust has other various projects and activities that it does within and around Masvingo and Mashonaland East Province. Its core values are ensuring youth leadership and participation in decision making processes and advocating for improved sexual reproductive health and rights, HIV/AIDS and inclusivity of young people.

My Age Zimbabwe Trust is a youth led non-profit organization which focuses on innovative youth engagement and empowerment with emphasis on sexual reproductive health and rights, HIV and AIDS, mentorship and leadership, governance and democracy for young people in Masvingo and Mashonaland East Provinces. The organization has a dynamic, passionate and committed team of youths who believe in the power, potential and future of the young people. My Age Zimbabwe’s comparative advantage lies in the elaborate network of key stakeholders comprising of media houses, government departments, youth-serving organizations and networks as well as volunteers.

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The views expressed in this article are My Age Zimbabwe Trust’s and not necessarily those of National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO). My Age Zimbabwe Trust is a member of NANGO.

