

National Students Conference 2023
ZESA National Training Centre, Belvedere, Harare
01 December – 03 December 2023

We RISE: Amplifying Education & Health Actions by students and young people (Realizing. Investing. Strengthening. Expanding.).

Acknowledgements

The Students and Youth Working on reproductive Health Action Team's (SAYWHAT) 13th edition of the National Students Conference (NSC) was a success due to the support of delegates who included government representatives, development partners, academic fraternity, college authorities, representatives from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and private corporations and the SAYWHAT secretariat.

SAYWHAT would like to thank the government representatives who graced the occasion and addressed the students and young people.

- Arumendo Julius, representing the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
- Andrew Nyambo, Advocacy Communication and Social Mobilization, Ministry of Health, and Childcare.
- Chipo Kunaka, representative from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Small and Medium Enterprises Development.
- Dr Lucia Gondogwe, Deputy Director Reproductive Health, Ministry of Health, and Childcare.
- Dr Munashe Chimene, Public Health Specialist, HIV/TB programming, Ministry of Health, and Childcare.
- Mrs. Kausiyo, Human Capital, and Skills Development Officer, Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Innovation Science and Technology.
- Ms. Nhengo, Director Gender mainstreaming, Inclusivity and Wellness, Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Innovation Science and Technology.
- Mr. Pasipamire a representative from the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training.

The valuable contributions of the government representatives emphasized the importance of collaboration between the government and SAYWHAT in fostering youth empowerment. SAYWHAT extends its appreciation to John Mazanhi, Clerk of Parliament on Environment Climate and Tourism Portfolio Committee and Climate Change Activist Sydney Chisi who sacrificed their time and steered discussions on

emerging issues plaguing the education sector in Zimbabwe and associated impacts.

We are grateful to the Ambassador of the Swedish Embassy in Zimbabwe, Ambassador Per Lindgärde who presided over the first SAYWHAT Research-based book launch. The Ambassador reiterated the Embassy's commitment to continue supporting SAYWHAT programming which champions healthy lifestyles for students and youth.

Acknowledgements are also extended to Joseph Katiyo, the Research Council of Zimbabwe, Dr Ncube, Director of Research & Internationalization at National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Dr Eng. Garikayi, Harare Institute of Technology (HIT) and Pro-Vice Chancellor of Research, Innovation and Commercialization, Dr Mangombe, University of Zimbabwe (UZ) who played a fundamental role in guiding the budding research fellows enhancing their research skills and acumen.

Our deepest gratitude goes to the college authorities, deans of students, and focal persons from 48 tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe who were present during the conference. The college authorities' support in the mobilization of students and young people for youth led advocacy and a solution-oriented conference is highly appreciated.

SAYWHAT is humbled by the level of commitment from other CSOs including Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI), Farming Community Education Trust (FACET), Hope Resurrect Trust, Mudiwa Foundation, Mwanasikana wanhasi, National Aids Council (NAC), Padare, Population Services Zimbabwe (PSZ), Topodzi Foundation and Young People Mental Health Trust. The collaborative inputs of the CSOs, contributions enriched discussions and ensured the conference deliberations go a long way in developing actionable strategies that prioritize the health rights of young people and bring about sustainable improvements in health policies and programs at national level and beyond. Appreciation is also extended to

Dr Mkhokheli Ngwenya, National Professional Officer, TB and Leprosy, World Health Organization (WHO) who contributed to actionable strategies to strengthen TB programming.

SAYWHAT is also grateful to the partners from Southern African Region who took the time to participate in the 13th edition of NSC including National Action for Quality Education in Zambia (NAQUEZ), University of Botswana host to the 2024 SARSYC conference, MULEIDE, Mozambique and from Malawi Girls Activist Youth Organization (GAYO) and the Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education (CYECE).

The commitment shown by private corporations such as ECONET Wireless promotes accountability and strengthens the implementation of institutional commitments in shaping the education, professional and health agenda of young people.

SAYWHAT would also like to thank Dr McDonald Lewanika a friend of SAYWHAT who delivered a keynote address during the anniversary celebrations for 2 decades of championing of championing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) for students and youth.

Our heartfelt gratitude is extended to our funding partners Amplify Change, Education Out Loud GPE, Norwegian Students' and Academics' International Assistance Fund (SAIH), Stop TB Partnership, Embassy of Sweden in Zimbabwe, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) who supported the conference. The unwavering support enabled SAYWHAT to make a profound and lasting difference in the lives of numerous young people.

Planning and organizing the NSC is a challenging task and the dedication demonstrated by the SAYWHAT secretariat and its leadership to ensure the conference was a success is invaluable. A special thanks to Esinathy Sibanda, the Conference Convener.



Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AGYW	Adolescent Girls and Young Women
CRIF	Child Rights In Full
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECOZI	Education Coalition of Zimbabwe
EOL	Education Out Loud
GAYO	Girls Activist Youth Organization
GEAR	Girls Education Advocacy in the Region
FACET	Farming Community Education Trust
FOCASS	Forum of College Authorities Platform on Students Sexual reproductive health
HIT	Harare Institute of Technology
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICASA	International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa
NAC	National Aids Council
NAQEZ	National Action for Quality Education in Zambia
NSC	National Students Conference
NUST	National University of Science and Technology
RCZ	Research Council of Zimbabwe
SAIH	Norwegian Students' and Academics' International Assistance Fund
SARSYC	Southern African Region Students and Youth Consortium
SASI	Speak And Solve Initiative
SAYWHAT	Students And Youth Working on reproductive Health Action Team
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SET	Sexuality Education for Transformation
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TB	Tuberculosis
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
WUA	Women's University in Africa
YOUTHS	Young people Organized for Universal access to Tuberculosis and HIV Services
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation

Executive Summary

The 2023, 13th edition of the National Students Conference (NSC) was hosted at ZESA National Training Centre in Zimbabwe on the 1st – 3rd of December 2023 ahead of the International Conference on AIDS and STIs (ICASA) which was held from the 4th - 9th of December 2023 at Rainbow Towers Harare.

The NSC was a dynamic and inspiring event that facilitate the convergence of students and college authorities from 48 tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe, with policy makers, civil society organizations (CSOs), development partners and private corporations for youth development. Key emerging issues affecting young people brought into the fray include:

- Accessibility of illicit drugs and its contributions to gender-based violence, and mental health particularly of the young men.
- Zimbabwe national budget education allocation in comparison with the threshold spelt out in Sustainable Development global Goal (SDG) 4 and its impact towards inclusive and equitable quality education to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- Actionable strategies for tuberculosis (TB) prevention, diagnosis, and treatment to complement the national and SAYWHAT TB champions achievements.
- The need for meaningful participation by students and young people in climate change action to complement Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) advocacy.

The 3-day conference that began on the World Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) Day commemoration conference recognized the evolving role that young people play in advocating for education, public health, accountability, and transparency in line with commitments made in the nation and beyond through showcasing of the 2023 youth-led advocacies.

In addition, conference delegates participated in solution-oriented discussions in the form of

plenary sessions where stakeholders were encouraged to foster shared responsibility and collaborate on actionable strategies that addresses the existing gaps in public health programming for students and young people. Plenary sessions took place during the opening ceremony and the conference 8 side sessions.

The first day of the conference began with a keynote address from Climate Activist, Sydney Chisi, and continued to host 4 side sessions - the Web for Life symposium for girls; the Mugota/Ixhiba Young Men's Form; the 3rd edition of the Research Indaba; and the Forum of College Authorities Platform on Students Sexual and reproductive health (FOCASS). The day was concluded with the screening of the GBV short-film CHOICES and a candle-light memorial in solidarity of the students and young people born and living with HIV/AIDS who are currently pursuing their tertiary education. Key Highlights from the first day of the conference were:

1. The launch of the first SAYWHAT research-based book titled **“Empowering Young Voices: Unveiling the hidden realities of young people in Zimbabwe”**.
2. The Launch of the **#KeeptheGIRLSsafe** campaign focusing on inclusive and equitable education for girl children in marginalized communities.

The second day of the conference hosted the opening ceremony where keynote addresses were delivered by four key delegates - the SAYWHAT Executive Director who unpacked the theme of the conference - **“We RISE: Amplifying Education & Health Actions by students and young people (Realizing. Investing. Strengthening. Expanding.)”** and Ms Nhengo, Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education; Dr Gondogwe, Ministry of Health, and Childcare; and Ambassador Per Lindgärde of the Embassy of Sweden in Zimbabwe. The three emphasized the nexus between students and young people's health and education and their commitment to support SAYWHAT in advancing youth development.



Following the opening ceremony, delegates had the opportunity to attend 4 solution-oriented track sessions - Young people Organized for Universal access to TB and HIV (YOUTHS) and TB dialogue; Reintegration Framework – Strengthening Child Justice system and coordination; Bridging Education divides – Advancing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 in rural and farming communities; and nurturing potential, recognizing excellence of the SAYWHAT Graduate Internship Program.

The second day of the conference ended with a dinner celebration of SAYWHAT 20th Anniversary. Former Secretariat members joined the celebrations and Dr McDonald Lewanika delivered the keynote address highlighting the growth and challenges overcome by the youth movement in 2 decades. Key highlights from the evening include:

1. The screening of 20 stories that reflect the milestones of SAYWHAT in 20 years!
2. The launch of the SAYWHAT @20 book titled – **A team in Action**.
3. Stakeholder Appreciation.

The 3rd and last day of the conference saw SAYWHAT join the global 16 days of Activism against gender-based violence on girls and women with its flagship event **Orathon** aimed at encouraging the community that the fight against gender-based violence takes a collective effort from both men and women who run separate 8km routes and continues another 8km route together to total 16km. As SAYWHAT celebrates its 20th Anniversary, the 2023 Orathon added a 20km route to the mix.

The conference not only saw stakeholders present pledge to enhance the wellbeing of students both on and off campus but strengthened SAYWHAT 2021-2050 strategic framework that is aimed on expanding SAYWHAT programming to include public health alongside its traditional focus on SRHR, education and child protection. The conference also received accolades from several media houses such as the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Television (ZBCTv), The HERALD, the Standard, ZIMNOW and Zim Review.

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1. Introduction

Annually, Students and Youth Working on reproductive Health Action Team (SAYWHAT) host the National Students Conference (NSC) in Zimbabwe an effort to amplify students' voices on health rights issues. The conference serves as forum for students to interface with policy makers and development practitioners. Against this backdrop, SAYWHAT held its 13th edition of the NSC from the 1st to the 3rd of December 2023 at ZESA National Training Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe.

The 13th edition of the SAYWHAT NSC reflects the organisation's continued call for students' wellbeing in the Southern African Region. The conference ran under the theme, **We RISE: Amplifying Education & Health Actions by students and young people (Realizing. Investing. Strengthening. Expanding)**. In attendance were students delegates and college authorities from 48 tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. Representatives from the Zimbabwe Government, SAYWHAT development partners, and Civil Society Organizations from the Southern African Region and private corporations also graced the occasion, participated, and contributed to the youth development agenda.

To achieve the broad goals of the 13th NSC edition, the conference programme was guided by the following the objectives:

1. To foster youth-led advocacy by providing a platform for young advocates to plan, showcase and celebrate their tangible actions.
2. To facilitate solution-oriented discussions and collaboration among stakeholders and develop actionable strategies that prioritize the needs and rights of young people considering the emerging issues and bring about sustainable improvements in health policies and programs at national level and beyond.
3. To promote accountability and strengthen the implementation of institutional, national, and regional commitments, by recognizing and amplifying the instrumental role of young people in advocating for transparency,

accountability, and shaping the health and education agenda.

The conference objectives inform the structure of this report.

The report highlights the 2023 youth led advocacy that was showcased and celebrated during the conference.

Solution-oriented discussions that complemented the youth-led advocacy is outlined drawing out resolutions brought forward on several panel discussions that took place during the conference. The report gives emphasis to the actionable strategies proposed with stakeholder collaborations to prioritize the needs and rights of students and young people at institutional, national, and regional levels. The conference provided a safe environment for young people to share their experiences on their health and wellbeing with particular focus on the following thematic areas:

- The nexus between Drug and Substance Abuse (DSA) and Mental Health
- Equal access to Education: Safeguarding Adolescent, Girls, & Young Women Rights Tuberculosis (TB) prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.
- Climate resilience: Young people and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

The focus on the above-mentioned thematic areas during the 2023 conference strengthened the SAYWHAT 2021-2050 strategic framework that expands the organization framework from SRHR, Education, and Child Protection programming to include public health otherwise known as SAYWHAT+.

Further, the report gives spotlight to keynote address and remarks made by key delegates to promote accountability, and strengthen the implementation of institutional, national, and regional commitments to shape the health and education agenda of students and young people. Lastly, highlights from the SAYWHAT Graduate

Internship Program, the World AIDS Day Candlelight Memorial, the SAYWHAT 20th Anniversary celebrations and the flagship Orathon event are outlined. SAYWHAT 2024

resolutions informed by the actionable strategies developed during the conference and the media coverage on the conference concludes the 13th edition of the NSC report.

1.1 Conference Structure

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Main Conference	Welcome Remarks	Opening Ceremony	The Orathon
Side Sessions	1.The 3 rd edition of the Research Indaba 2.The Web for Life symposium 3.The Mugota/ Ixhiba Young Men’s Forum 4.Forum of College Authorities Platform on Students Sexual and reproductive health (FOCASS)	1.YOUTHS and TB Dialogue 2.Reintegration Framework: Strengthening the Child Justice Systems and coordination. 3.Bridging Education Divides: Advancing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 in rural and farming communities 4.Nurturing Potential, recognizing Excellence: SAYWHAT Graduate Internship program	
Main Conference	Candle-light Memorial	SAYWHAT @20 Celebrations	



2. Unpacking the Conference Theme

Addressing the conference delegates, the SAYWHAT Executive Director Jimmy Wilford connoted that there has been the realization of students and young people's potential over the past 2 decades as well as investment towards the potential. For instance, the Speak and Solve Initiative (SASI) Debate and the National Quiz Challenge are not just about winning but showcase young people's potential in advocating for their health rights through information dissemination.

Further, through continuous nurturing of young people's potential, SAYWHAT is strengthened. Mr Wilford spoke of the recently launched online school, the Smart Learner's Hub which is rich in content and empowers young people to make informed decisions through modern and digital trends.

Lastly, Mr Wilford highlighted that SAYWHAT has identified linkages between SRHR and public health which has led to the expansion of SAYWHAT advocacy towards connecting issues such as mental health, drug and substance abuse, climate change and emergency and disaster preparedness.

Through the Action for Choice project Hub and Spoke Model, a group of young men based in Harare "SOOTHE Muzic" who uses music to amplify their voices on the health and wellbeing of young people were identified to deliver music interlude during the conference. Among their deliverables Soothe Muzic sang a customised a song based on the conference theme called "**SAYWHAT RISE**". SAYWHAT RISE encouraged all delegates to come together and raise voices for the health of young people to prevail. In vernacular language the young gents emphasized the importance nurturing young people's health:

*"utano hwedu hwakakosha hamawe,
ngauchengetwe"*



Jimmy Wilford
Executive Director

3. Youth-Led Advocacy

Youth-led advocacy is usually understood as the meaningful involvement of young people in advocacy processes, from developing advocacy strategies on a particular issue, to conducting advocacy themselves, and the monitoring and evaluation of the process. By advocating themselves, young people are empowered to take on responsibility for their own safety and well-being. SAYWHAT as a student movement has multiple structures where students and young people are meaningfully involved in the advocating for their health rights and wellbeing.

3.1 The nexus between drug and substance abuse and Mental Health

Beginning of the year 2023, saw students and young people in the major cities of Zimbabwe – Harare and Bulawayo being expelled or arrested due to drug and substance abuse. The emerging challenge of drug and substance abuse and its connection with the mental health and wellbeing of young people influenced youth led advocacy in SAYWHAT structures during the year 2023. Two structures who showcased drug and substance abuse and mental health advocacy during the conference is the Young Initiative Researchers' Program through the Research Indaba and the Mugota/Ixhiba Young Men's Forum.

3.1.1 The 3rd edition of the Research Indaba

The SAYWHAT Young Researchers' Initiative Program was established in 2021 after a stark realization of the need for young people to research on issues that affect them. The Research Indaba is a platform for young research fellows to disseminate their research findings. The first edition of the Research Indaba was in 2019, and the 2023 NSC was host to the 3rd edition of the Indaba. During the Indaba, four research fellows from the 2023 cohort of 35 students presented their research findings. The presentations unravelled the intricate complexes of emerging issues regarding drug and substance abuse and mental health in Zimbabwe.

“Drug and substance abuse are a time ticking bomb, that if left unchecked, it will tear away the very fabric of our society”. Martin Chirinda, University of Zimbabwe (UZ)

Chirinda's research focused on the prevalence rate of drug and substance abuse at the one of the state hospitals in Zimbabwe, Parirenyatwa Psychiatric Hospital. The research found a 63.5% rate of relapse because of peer pressures and relatively easy access of illicit drugs in the country. Chirinda recommended strengthening of mental health institutions, development of support groups such that drug and substance abuse survivors can manage peer influence and avoid relapsing.

“Zimbabwe is not a producer of illicit drugs; it is a transit point for smuggled drugs from neighbouring countries”. Ntombiyolwandle Dube, Harare Institute of Technology (HIT)

Dube's research was premised on identifying and exploring the sources of drugs and determining their distribution patterns. The research pointed out that illicit drugs are being distributed through social networks (peer to peer) on college campus taking advantage of security loopholes with transactions being organized through social media platforms.

Dube recommended capacitating tertiary institutions on drug and substance abuse response mechanism, improving campus security to thwart distribution, and sensitizing students during orientations to inculcate a culture that abstains from drug and substance abuse.

“Codeine, marijuana and alcohol are popular on the institution and students argue the usefulness of the drugs in coping with exam pressure and intimate relationship problems”. Tauya Chinama, Catholic University in Zimbabwe

Chinama's and Daisy Mhaka's research focused on a local university in Zimbabwe, Catholic University's performance in addressing drug and substance abuse. The presentation points out the accessibility and affordability of illicit drugs on campus, and the lack thereof of campus policy and capacity to curb drug and substance abuse. Dr Benhura, Dean of students, Women's University in Africa (WUA) in attendance seconded Chinama's findings noting tertiary institutions incapacity to deal with drug and substance abuse and the urgent need for capacitation.

Chinama recommended capacitating tertiary institutions on drug and substance abuse response mechanisms including the need for random drug test for suspected drug users.

“There is need to incorporate indigenous knowledge in curing mental health as they are proven locally brewed solutions”. Larry Chibike, National University of Science and Technology (NUST)

Chibike’s research focused on the potential of African Indigenous knowledge and practices in combating mental health problems. The presentation pointed out that mental prescriptions are largely influenced by western philosophies and traditional methods are often demonised in local communities leading to extinction. Chibike research found the motsi herb smoke that is believed to chase away spiritual forces and upheko song that is regarded essential for ridding stress and depression. Chibike recommended incorporation of indigenous knowledge in addressing mental health challenges.

In addition to the four presentations, the Young Initiative Researcher’s Program launched the first SAYWHAT research-based book during the conference.

The research book titled **“Empowering Young Voices: Unveiling the hidden realities of young people in Zimbabwe”** is a must read. The book covers the 10 research articles from the 2022 cohort with articles on various health challenges that students and young people face. Noteworthy are the research articles on the mental health challenges that young people face due to relationship problems a case study of a local community of Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe and drug, and substance abuse with case studies of another local tertiary institution, WUA, and a local community New Mabvuku Surub, Zimbabwe.

The publication of the book was made possible through the support of the Swedish Embassy in Zimbabwe and Norwegian Students’ and Academics’ International Assistance Fund

(SAIH). Ambassador Per Lindgärde of the Embassy of Sweden in Zimbabwe accompanied by Jimmy Wilford SAYWHAT Executive Director unveiled the book in the presence of other distinguished delegates and students. Lindgärde and Wilford congratulated the budding researchers and gave their first autographs for the book and the rest of the delegates followed suit in recognition of the publication.

Key stakeholders during the conference commended SAYWHAT and the young research fellow’s advocacy efforts in raising drug and substance abuse and mental health awareness to empower generations of young people.

“Research is the only thing that is going to lead us as a country to the desired destination because, it will inform advocacy and policy direction” Joseph Katiyo, Head of Marketing, Research Council of Zimbabwe (RCZ).

Katiyo praised the book for bringing to the fora contemporary issues and opined RCZs national mandate to provide funding for budding researchers and its capacity building programs that cultivate critical thinking and analytical skills. In addition, RCZ welcomes partnerships with development organizations to coordinate research that will inform evidence-based advocacy, policy direction and prescriptive to contemporary ailments within the society to effect behavioural change.

Seconding Katiyo was the Clerk of Parliament on Environment Climate and Tourism Portfolio, John Mazanhi who suggested that the book be brought to Parliament to garner support from the law makers/parliamentarians and advance youth development.

The youth led advocacy on drug and substance abuse and mental health showcased during the conference was reported by Zim Now and Zim Review online media houses and Herald a state-owned newspaper on the 2nd, 4th, and 5th of December 2023 respectively.

The Herald quoted the Ministry of Health and Childcare Deputy Director Reproductive Health

Dr Lucia Gondogwe who spoke during the Conference opening ceremony reiterating the Government commitment to eradication of drug and substance abuse among the youth. Applauding the historic event and SAYWHAT interventions in combating drug and substance abuse Dr Gondogwe said:

“It is high time we prioritize research on the youth and their relationship with the public health sector beyond sexual and reproductive health and rights”.

Zambia; the research indaba hosted a solution-oriented panel discussion that was moderated by Dr Magombe from UZ. The panel interrogated, reinforced, and complemented the research findings on drug and substance abuse and mental health.



3.1.2 Solution-Oriented Discussion: Reinforcement of the research findings by experts

Featuring Dr Ncube - Director for Research & Internationalization (NUST), Dr Agnes Benhura-Dean of Students (WUA), Tanaka Kashiri - UZ Student living with disability and Wankumbu Simukonda, Southern African Region Student and Youth Consortium (SARSYC) Coordinator

Topic	Discussion	Recommendations
The main actors involved in drug peddling	The elite, and foreigners protecting their foot soldiers are arguably main drug peddlers with politicians and law enforcement officers as accomplices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ effective implementation of the Zimbabwe National Drug Master Plan (2020-2025) policy, ✓ institution of checks and balances on political influence, ✓ strong border control systems, ✓ capacitating communities & security forces
Economic and social impacts of drug and substance abuse	The consumption of drugs arguably results in zero productivity, thievery, gender-based violence acts resulting in disintegration of family structures and escalation of mental health issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adequate remuneration of law enforcement officers complemented with ethics and moral capacity building to reduce bribery tendencies by peddlers.
Evidence-based strategies successful in addressing mental health issues among adolescents	Mental Health is a developing phenomenon not fully comprehended resulting in lack of strategies. There are, however, institutions offering drug tests, psychosocial support, and medical attention such as Parirenyatwa Hospital.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Further research into mental health ✓ Development of evidence-based strategies.

3.1.3 Solution-Oriented Discussion: Make a Noise About Men

With severe consequences, including risky behaviours, addiction, and suicide; young men were encouraged to seek help as opposed to using alcohol and drugs to cope with depression. Drug and substance abuse and mental health survivor – Tinashe (pseudo name) speaking at the Mugota/Ixhiba young men’s forum lamented his experience stipulating the stigma surrounding men’s mental health, its nexus to drug and substance abuse and the prescriptive antiquated ideas about gender. The trauma of a car accident was the trigger for Tinashe’s drug abuse and his mental health was exacerbated by the disintegration of his family structure (divorce of parents). From using drugs such as marijuana, broncleer and crystal meth Tinashe became aggressive, depressed, contemplated suicide, and ultimately deferred his studies.

Young People Mental Health Trust representative, Tawanda Muripa and Populations Services Zimbabwe (PSZ), Mr. Phiri seconded Tinashe’s sentiments. Muripa stated that young men also fall victim to drug and substance abuse and mental health challenges due to relationship problems and unemployment considering the responsibility associated with being male in the community. Phiri added reproductive challenges such as erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation, and low sperm count as factors that can exacerbate mental health and drug addiction for young men. Young men were therefore encouraged to not only adopt healthy seeking behaviours but grab the opportunity to gather, discuss and develop interventions for their rights and wellbeing just as there is advocacy for girls and young women. Padare representative Paul Sauti and National Action for Quality Education in Zambia (NAQEZ) director Aaron Chansa challenged young men with a **#MakeNoiseAboutMen** advocacy campaign. The campaign would include review of national and regional commitments towards the rights and wellbeing of the boy child particularly his mental health, noting the gaps and making recommendations to both the national parliament and the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF).

During the FOCASS session, college authorities expressed concerns over high rates of drug and substance abuse among students resulting in academic dropouts and contributing to unplanned pregnancies, STIs and HIV. College authorities emphasized the need for comprehensive DSA education, psychosocial support, and rehabilitation for addicted students.

3.2 Equal Access to Education: Safeguarding Adolescent, Girls, & Young Women

SAYWHAT is playing its role towards the Global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development to ensure equal access to education for all (SDG4) through its Girls Education Advocacy in the Region (GEAR) Alliance, the Web for Life Network for Girls, and its Child Protection Unit Interventions. The three structures showcased its 2023 youth-led advocacy aimed on increasing the number of young people who have relevant skills for employment, and entrepreneurship through inclusive and equal access to education during the conference.

3.2.1 Child Rights In Full (CRIF)

“Together with psychosocial support, SAYWHAT helped me find a school, paid my school fees and bought my uniform and books” CRIF Beneficiary During the Reintegration Framework: Strengthening the Child Justice System side session; the Child Protection Unit showcased its interventions towards capacitating communities to accept the re-entry of children in conflict with the law. The 2023 CRIF project was implemented in Epworth, a township in the city of Harare Zimbabwe.

Efforts to reduce the risk of children committing another crime included:

- Counselling sessions offered to children who have been in conflict with the law and children’s parents.
- Capacitating communities to accept children in conflict with the law as they re-enter the community.

Director Chirimuta, Mudiwa Foundation asserted the prevalence of underage sex workers in the

town of Epworth. Chirimuta highlighted that more work is needed to capacitate children particularly girls as victims of sexual violence with legal education so they can be willing to report the perpetrators, only then can law enforcement hold perpetrators accountable. In addition, recreational activities will empower children and young girls to keep them from committing crimes. Mr. Pasipamire, Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training seconded Chirimuta stating the importance of educating the girl child such that her actions can complement policy and law enforcement efforts.

3.2.2 #KeeptheGIRLSSAFE Campaign

During the Web for Life Symposium, #KeeptheGIRLSSafe a campaign that sought to ensure creation for safer inclusive environments for Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) in marginalised communities to amplify their voices and stand for their rights was launched. The plight of the girl child, compared to the opposite sex, has been under the spotlight and issues surrounding gender imbalance in Zimbabwe have, for decades, remained unsolved. The girl child is generally the victim of child marriages, unequal opportunities, gender-based violence, and discriminative religious and cultural practices.

5 young mothers from rural and farming communities mobilized by Farming Community Education Trust (FACET) strengthened the launch of the campaign with real life experience of school dropout because of teenage pregnancies. The young women spearhead pledges by delegates and stakeholders to fight socio-cultural imbalances which perpetuate abuse of the girl child. For instance:



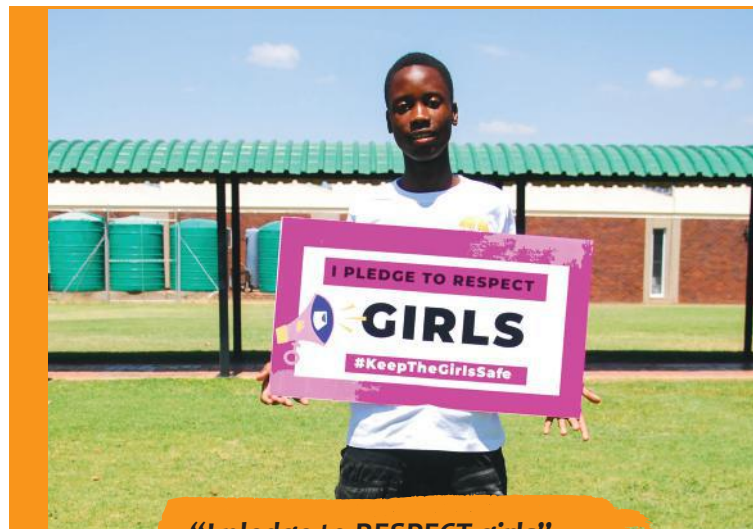
“I pledge to protect my sister from sexual exploitation”

Adolescent girls complemented the young women with pledges such as:



“I do not want to be a mother at 14”.

The young men from the Mugota/Ixhiba Forum present at the conference pledged their allegiance to fight child sexual violence in institutions and communities. The campaign saw young men with pledges such as



“I pledge to RESPECT girls”.

In addition, a vibrant group of young girls and boys (House of Talents) from the city of Chitungwiza in Zimbabwe strengthened the #KeeptheGIRLSSafe campaign in the main conference with creative arts exemplifying abuse in the home setting for the girl child.

Director of Hope Resurrect Trust, Florence Mudzingwa encouraged the AGYW to engage and collaborate with policy makers for the full realization of their advocacy efforts.

Chipo Kunaka, Ministry of Women Affairs, Small and Medium Enterprises Development seconded Mudzingwa stating that it is the Ministry’s mandate to promote gender equality and empower girls and young women.

Mrs Mudhombo, National Aids Council (NAC) and Ruvimbo Topodzi from Topodzi Foundation, also commended the campaign as a step to end HIV, vision 2030 and ending the fight against Gender-based Violence respectively. Girls and young women are affected and infected more than men, they said. It is therefore imperative to empower girls and young women not only to make informed decisions but to be independent and protect themselves from toxic relationships.



“I am a woman, I am Powerful” mantra was chanted throughout the Web for Life Symposium.

3.2.3 UNITE! Invest to prevent violence against women and girls.

The “UNITE! Invest to prevent violence against women and girls” was the 2023 theme for the annual international campaign 16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. The 13th edition of NSC took place during the 16 days of activism and SAYWHAT joined the global movement with its flagship Orathon during the conference. With the 2023 theme SAYWHAT recognized the consequences that gender-based violence have on developmental-impacts of girls and young women resulting in adverse impacts on their education such as low academic performance, aggressive behaviours towards peers, disturb on their mental health, school dropouts and early child marriages.

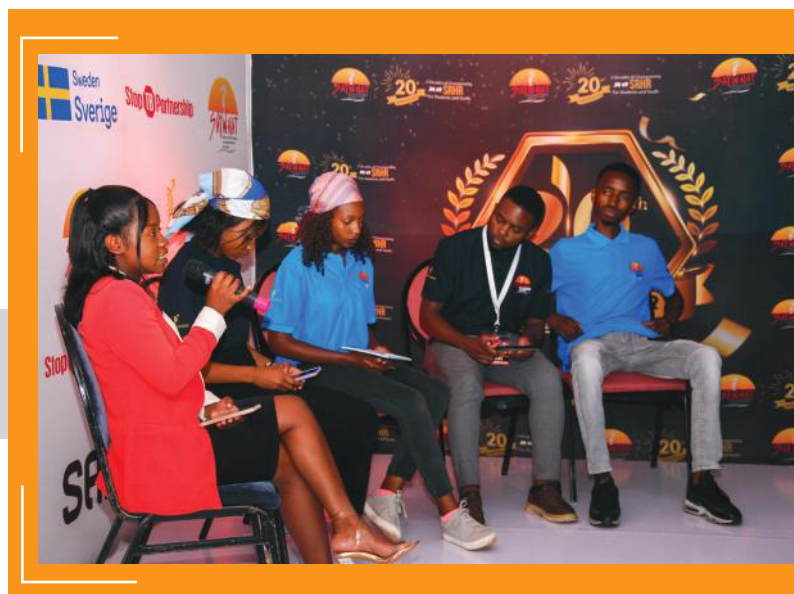
The Orathon a title that came from the colour theme ‘orange’ and ‘marathon’ was launched in 2018 and the flagship event calls upon both men and women to participate in a 16km run. The Orathon concept has men and women participating in 8km runs from separate routes and continuing the remaining 8km together showing a collective effort that is needed from both genders to prevent violence against women and girls. As SAYWHAT celebrated its 20th anniversary a 20km route was added to the 2023 Orathon.

The 2023 Orathon saw participation from 120 community members who joined 147 conference delegates to total 267 runners.



Male	140 participants	52.4%
Female	127 participants	47.6%

Impressive was not just the gender ratio on participation which was only differentiated with 13 participants but over 50 community members beyond the age of 40 who showed their commitment and solidarity to preventing violence against girls and women. Participants received race packs, medals, and an opportunity to participate in a Zumba session upon completion of the race.



3.2.4 Solution-Oriented Discussion: Interrogating Women Empowerment on Campus

Featuring 4 young women, 2 from SAYWHAT structures an SRHR Defender, and a TB champion and 2, 1 women rights and 1 disability rights advocates; the SAYWHAT Web for Life Symposium solution-oriented panel discussion brought forth the challenges female students faces on college campus.

Topic	Discussion	Recommendations
Stigma accompanying female empowerment roles.	Concerns over leadership roles and women getting soft roles a façade of gender equality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Capacitation of the AGYW in skills that promotes gender equality in leadership roles at institutional and national committees.
Transactional sex	Women engaging in “blesser” activities due to socio economic imbalance between men and women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ business, vocational and life skills training, and provision of opportunities where skills can be utilized – helping girls and young women take control of their finances
Sexual Exploitation	Young women were not aware if there were any sexual harassment policies at their institutions to protect them from sexual abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Capacitation of the AGYW to take space and participate in policy developments, budget reviews to have a say on issues that concern them. ✓ Institutions to develop and make sexual harassment policies accessible
Access and utilization of SRHR services	The need for sensitization of clinical personnel to preserve the confidentiality of patients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Capacitate girls and young women on their rights to privacy and confidentiality and ability to demands the rights where necessary

Concerns over gender-based violence, sexual harassment and transactional sex in tertiary institutions was also deliberated during the FOCASS session, with college authorities recommending clear reporting structures through strengthening accessibility of available policies and shorter resolution processes such that victims are not discouraged from seeking justice. In addition, college authorities proposed introduction of evidence-gathering programs to curb lack of evidence and power dynamics between lecturers and students, whistle-blowing systems as well as the need to combat cult and ritualistic activities as integral in addressing sexual exploitation issues.

3.2.5 Solution-Oriented Discussion: The state of Education in SADC region

Featuring Clemence Nhliziyo, Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI), Arumendo Julius, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, and Dr Aaron Chansa (NAQEZ) as the moderator; the Bridging Education Divides: Advancing SDG4 in rural and farming communities panel discussion assessed the efforts and impacts of the GEAR Alliance Project highlighting the state of education in the SADC region. The project regional CSOs – FACET, Girls Activist Youth Organization (GAYO) and NAQEZ shared knowledge and best practices from their different nations. Audience delegates who contributed to the discussion included students from Teacher Training Colleges, representatives from University of Botswana and the GEAR Alliance, Sexuality Education for Transformation (SET) partners - Centre for Youth Empowerment and Civic Education, Malawi (CYECE), Mwanasikana Wanhasi Zimbabwe, and MULEIDE Mozambique.



Country	Progress on SDG4	Best Practices and Recommendations
Botswana	<p>Free primary and secondary education for all. Tertiary students are awarded grants to finance their education repayable through working for the government for three years.</p> <p>Unemployment, however, remain high resulting in rise of risky behaviours and drug and substance abuse.</p>	
Malawi	The government has allocated over 20% of national spending to education. The skills curriculum being adopted is however expensive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Rally advocacy support through social media, be visible and make noise. ✓ Mobilization of resources to fund education to complement governments efforts.
Mozambique	Free primary and secondary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The key to change is placing young people at the centre of Education advocacy to speak and influence issues that affect them.
Zambia	Free education for all since 2021 and a steady increment in national budget allocations to education moving from 11.9% in 2022 to 13% in 2023. Gender parity ratio is also improving however, the quality of education has however been compromised due to overcrowding and understaffing of teaching personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continued Education advocacy with focus on social accountability.
Zimbabwe	A new Primary & Secondary Curriculum has been adopted with the hope to promote entrepreneurship and innovation. The curriculum influenced adoption of the Education 5.0 and modular learning in tertiary institutions. Further, concerted efforts to ensure quality education through policy promulgation such as continuous access to education for pregnant girls are also observed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Advocate for an increment in national budget towards education. ✓ Advocate for improved teacher-student ratio. ✓ Social accountability advocacy for sincerity and political will in Implementation of policy frameworks.

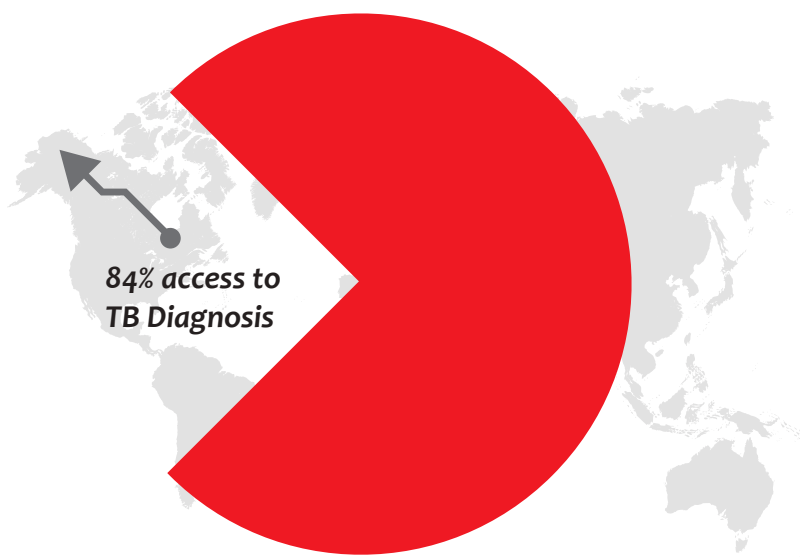
College Authorities during the FOCASS session also deliberated the effectiveness of modular learning at tertiary level highlighting the lack of clarity between the new Primary and Secondary curriculum and what is offered at tertiary level. Further, student participation in extra-curricular activities has also been affected by modular learning taking a toll on young people’s mental health. Suggestions for addressing these challenges include a review of the new curriculum and Education 5.0 to ensure continuity and connections between modular learning and flipped instruction. Modules should be reviewed to include exercises and activities in lessons and invest in capacitating teaching personnel on the modern strategy of the modules. It is critical for modular learning courses to be designed, developed, and implemented properly.

3.3 TB prevention, diagnosis, and treatment

The SAYWHAT Young people Organized for Universal access to TB and HIV services (YOUTHS) project achievements were celebrated during the conference giving the project background to partners in attendance – Dr Ngwenya representative from the World Health Organization, and Dr Chimene and Mr Nyambo from the Ministry of Health and Childcare. The achievements led by the vision for “improved access to Integrated HIV & TB Services for students living with HIV in Zimbabwe's Tertiary Institutions” include:

- Training of 50 (30 Female and 20 Male) TB champions who conducted a policy audit and went on to present their recommendations to policymakers during the 4th edition of the SARSYC conference held in Malawi in 2022.
- TB Champions advocacy efforts on TB stigma and literacy rights have reached over 280,000 people through radio sessions, social media, podcasts, press statements and in person dialogues.
- Directory of national service providers developed for the SAYWHAT call centre and approximately 1000 Referrals for TB services initiated.
- Training of 20 (16 Female and 4 Male) college

nurses to strengthen youth-centred service delivery skills including confidentiality, non-discrimination and upholding the provision of the patient’s charter.

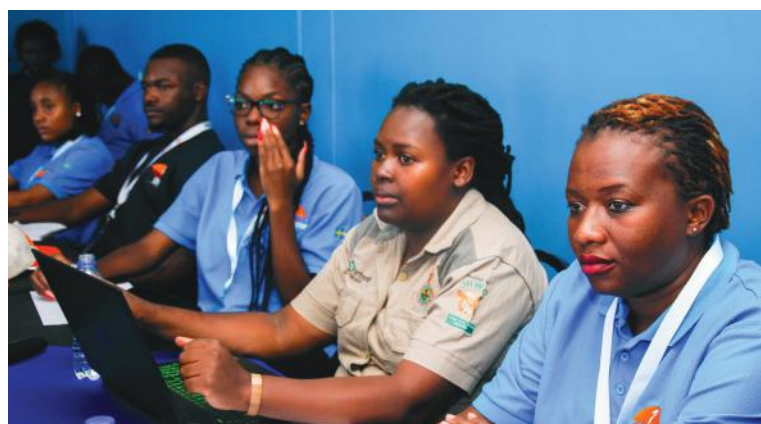


- 84% satisfactory rate by young people who accessed TB prevention, diagnosis, and treatment services in tertiary institutions during the project period.

Dr Chimene applauded SAYWHAT advocacy efforts stating the need for a linkage between the TB champions and the Ministry of Health and Childcare. Chimene highlighted the Ministries resolutions to conduct TB case management trainings in 2024.

3.3.1 Solution-Oriented Discussion: Improving TB prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.

Featuring 1 TB Champion, 1 TB survivor and 1 Ministry of Health and Childcare Mr. Nyambo the YOUTHS and TB Dialogue assessed the challenges faced by young people on TB prevention, diagnosis, and treatment services.



Topic	Discussion	Recommendations
Side effects on TB treatment	Treatment enhancing hunger, loss of consciousness after medication, and rashes resulting in defaulting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Alternative medication for developing economies – people living in poverty. ✓ TB champions trained in treatment support
Stigma and low risk perception	Victimization of TB patients due to lack of TB literacy among the populace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Raise awareness of the <i>One Impact Zimbabwe</i> Platform – a digital platform for survivors and patients to deliberate and garner support. ✓ Age-appropriate TB facts in the education curriculum. ✓ Take advantage of young people’s multiplier effect and place them at the heart of TB advocacy. ✓ Raise awareness on the need for HIV patients to administer TB treatment every 3 years for 6 months.
TB Screening services	<p>Self-diagnosis relying on the internet.</p> <p>Lack of awareness of the availability of Mobile TB screening clinics in all the provinces in Zimbabwe.</p> <p>The cost of screening deterring people from being screened.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Raise Awareness on the availability of the mobile clinics. ✓ Availability of free screening
Overcrowding in tertiary institutions	Difficult case management as there are no isolation places for TB patients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Capacitate college authorities and nurses on case management, emotional intelligence, confidentiality, and pre-and-post counselling services. ✓ Collaborating with TB survivors who have the emotional

College authorities also identified TB as an emerging issue during the FOCASS session giving emphasis to overcrowding concerns among students' living conditions and the need for practical interventions to secure isolation rooms for the treatment of infected students. In addition, emphasis was given for collaborative efforts among stakeholders to curb shortage of qualified nurses, limited nutrition and inadequate medication showing the work that still need to be done in TB prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.

3.4 Climate Resilience: young people and SRHR

Addressing delegates at the conference, Sydney Chisi, Climate Activist emphasized the need for building a global health movement through strengthening the movement and nurturing growth beyond SRHR. Chisi emphasized that climate change is one of the most important global issues of our lifetime as it touches all issues including SRHR. Extreme weather events cause humanitarian crisis, with the effects of climate related shocks on household economic resources indirectly limiting access to SRH services. Further health facilities, infrastructure and medical supply chains can be disrupted resulting in an increase on mortality and morbidity, exacerbation of vulnerabilities, and increase of inequalities. Climate change also worsens maternal health, increases rates of child marriages and gender-based violence with women and girls being affected more than men and boys.

Chisi challenged students and young people to empower themselves with knowledge about climate change and how it relates to their health and to be active in the response that climate change requires. Building resilient health systems in the aftermath of climate change disasters to reduce the impacts of climate change on young people and improving girls and young women's resilience is key to ensure people can better deal with

the impact of climate change. 'Focus on deliverables and question whether your voice is being heard by responsible authorities' he said.

Seconding Sydney Chisi were college authorities who identified Climate change as emerging and significant factor impacting student well-being and health. The FOCASS session encouraged SAYWHAT to develop interventions to capacitate young people on climate change and its implications on students' health and wellbeing. In addition, the need for policy development on sustainable solutions and coordinated collaboration among stakeholders to address the challenges posed by climate change was emphasised.



4. Rising STARS

The conference also celebrated the interns from the SAYWHAT professional development program and their invaluable contributions in addressing students and young people health challenges during the Nurturing Potential, recognizing Excellence side session. The graduating interns had an opportunity to present their dissertations topics and findings, share their internship experiences and get insights for their careers ahead.

Presentations by interns showcased similar emerging issues as deliberated throughout the conference such as

- Importance of addressing gender inequality, poverty, and social and cultural norms to enhance equal access to education.
- Importance of telehealth services and capacitating medical personnel on emotional intelligence and confidentiality to increase young people's access and utilization of SRH services.
- Importance of policy reviews to strengthen advocacy and drive policy changes.

Through shared experiences, interns conveyed the transformative power of professional development programs and the integral role mentorship and networking played to their growth.

Representing Econet Wireless, Mrs. M. Muzondo, Head of Talent Development applauded SAYWHAT professional development program and gave the graduating interns interview etiquette tips. 'The behaviour, language and empathy deployed during a job interview should ensure a positive impression with a potential employer' she said. Muzondo encouraged the young interns to demonstrate reliability, professionalism, and dedication to becoming a new member of the company applied for.

Representing the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Mrs Kausiyo underscored that professional development of young people is fundamental in the government vision for 2030. Human capital development is an indispensable aspect in the industrialization and modernization agenda of our country to attain a vision of middle income by 2030. Kausiyo commended SAYWHAT organized system for skills development stating that it awards young people with an opportunity to master new skills, contribute their full talents to the economy and be rewarded for it.

The Nurturing Potential, recognizing Excellence: SAYWHAT Graduate Internship program session concluded with the issuance of internship completion certificates. The recipients were encouraged to view themselves as rising stars, destined to make a lasting impact in the field of sexual and reproductive health.



5. AIDS Candlelight Memorial

In commemoration of the World AIDS Day, SAYWHAT joined the global movement in honour of the students and young people living with HIV/AIDS in tertiary institutions with a candlelight memorial.

The memorial began with the screening of CHOICES a short film by students and young people that depicts the risky behaviours young people opt for with dire consequences to their health and wellbeing. The story of CHOICES follows two young students Amanda and Themba and the choices they make on campus.

Amanda chooses to go on a date with a young man she met online, Ishe. Ishe under the influence of illicit drugs sexually abuses Amanda on their first date and chokes her into unconsciousness. With the fear, that he had killed Amanda, Ishe solicits her sister's help Zviko to dispose Amanda's body.

Themba, a poor student chooses to live with Zviko his girlfriend, in what is referred to as a semester marriage due to the anticipated benefits that Zviko can give him - access to a laptop, cell phone, headphones, Wi-Fi, free rentals and free food etcetera. The benefits however come at a cost on his mental wellbeing due to Zviko's verbal and physical abuse.

The themes depicted in the short film resonated with the themes deliberated during the conference:

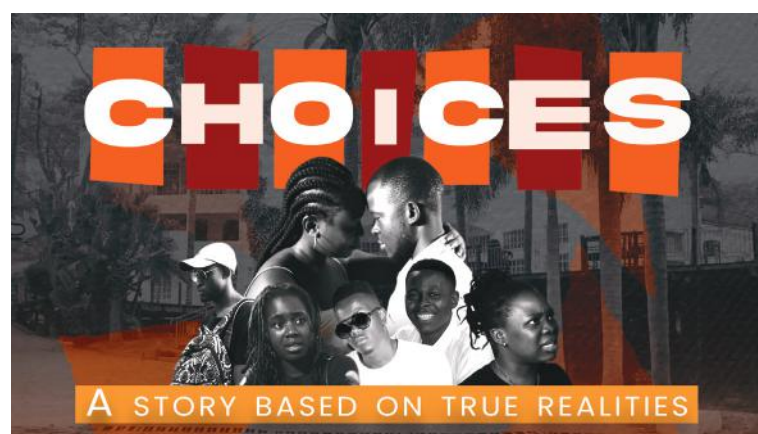
- The negative impacts of drug and substance abuse.
- The need to #makeanoiseaboutmen as they are also victims of Gender-based violence who needs their men's mental health nurtured.
- The nexus between sexual harassment/exploitation and the quality of education.
- STIs, HIV/AIDS are often the result of date rape and semester marriages.

Following the screening of the short film, the National Coordinating Committee (NCC) Chairperson, Panashe Chandiwana led the Candlelight Memorial, reminding delegates that young people living with HIV matter, they deserve to be loved, and to go after their dreams. With the World AIDS day 2023 theme of **"Letting Communities Lead"**, Panashe encouraged all delegates to build stronger communities that care for one another, reduce stigma associated with HIV/AIDS and promote advocacy regarding AIDS prevention and treatment.

"Let us develop ownership of HIV interventions, and realization of the global 95-95-95 targets".

Delegates came together, to light their mobile phone torches and express solidarity with students living and affected by HIV.

Over 28 million people have died from AIDS since the AIDS epidemic began in 1981, and more than 42 million people are still coping with HIV/AIDS. The occasion reinforced SAYWHAT commitment to combating AIDS the disease that continues to affect millions around the world.





6. Celebrating 20 years of championing SRHR for students and youth

The conference saw delegates celebrating the organization 20-year milestone. Speaking at the opening ceremony Executive Director Jimmy Wilford said the organization will stop at nothing in pursuit of ensuring a healthy and empowered youth demographic.

Former secretariat members and development partners joined the conference delegates to celebrate the 2 decades of championing SRHR for students and youth with a dinner and 911 band live performance.

Speaking at the celebrations, Dr McDonald Lewanika reflected on SAYWHAT's journey towards stardom. Lewanika shared insights into how SAYWHAT managed to survive while other student-led organisations collapsed often before five years of operation. The strengths to SAYWHAT success can be categorized into two pillars, strategic programming and talent nurturing said Lewanika.

Strategic Programming: SAYWHAT develops evolutionary approaches to its programming that maintains their founding values while adapting to changing times and the changing behaviours of young people.

Nurturing Talent: SAYWHAT trains and create a network of alumni who become its biggest advocates. Many of SAYWHAT alumni are now working in the development sector.

Dr Lewanika challenged SAYWHAT to continue being STARS,

Strategic in their approaches,
Transformative in their leadership and work,
Agile in their programming and
Responsive, responsible, and resourceful in their approaches.

6.1 20 voices, 20 stories

The screening of the “20 voices, 20 stories, 20 years of championing SRHR for students and Youth” documentary was one of the major highlights of the celebrations. 20 individuals who are a representation of SAYWHAT stakeholders reminisced their journey on SAYWHAT milestones. Audience, watched the inspiring story of SAYWHAT from the voices of the student alumni, former and current secretariat members as well as development partners including:

- Jabusile Shumba, an Economist at the United Nations and co-founder of SAYWHAT.
- Selma Bratberg, The president of SAIH, SAYWHAT funding partner since 2003.
- Dr David Parireyatwa, the president of ICASA and the Society for AIDS, who has walked with SAYWHAT in its regional expansion.
- Professor Matunhu, Director Midlands State University, Tugwi-Mukosi Multidisciplinary Research Institute, and mentor of the
- SAYWHAT Young Researchers Initiative Program.

- A 12-year-old girl from Epworth, Sexual exploitation, and abuse survivor with assist from the SAYWHAT call centre.
- Faith Takedza, Junior Parliamentarian, Ministry of Women Affairs, Small and Medium Enterprise Development speaking on the
- SAYWHAT online school, Smart Learners Hub. Isabel VanGuard, a student from a University in Sweden, interning at SAYWHAT.
- Jimmy Wilford, SAYWHAT Executive Director and co-founder

The full documentary is available on SAYWHAT You Tube <https://youtu.be/SZkC8EpxpeQ>

6.2. A team in Action

The Audience also received a teaser of the detailed story of the movement that inspire generations of healthy and empowered young people in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa from Tayson Mudarikiri former secretariat and author of the SAYWHAT @20 book titled **“A team in Action”** to be published and launched in the coming year.

Mudarikiri, read a paragraph from the book and gave insights that the book summarizes the various narratives from individuals, reports, strategic plans to tell the story of SAYWHAT and unpack the inspiration behind the organization’s formation, the journey, and the challenges it has gone through as well as the aspirations that drive the organization forward.

A Team in Action follows the SAYWHAT nascent years, how strategy became its lifeline, the SAYWHAT model, and the SAYWHAT hall of fame in remembrance of all key stakeholders who have contributed to SAYWHAT milestones, some who have passed on. In conclusion, Mudarikiri quotes Martin Luther King Junior to show SAYWHAT sentiments with the book – that SAYWHAT has come a long way, yet more must still be done.

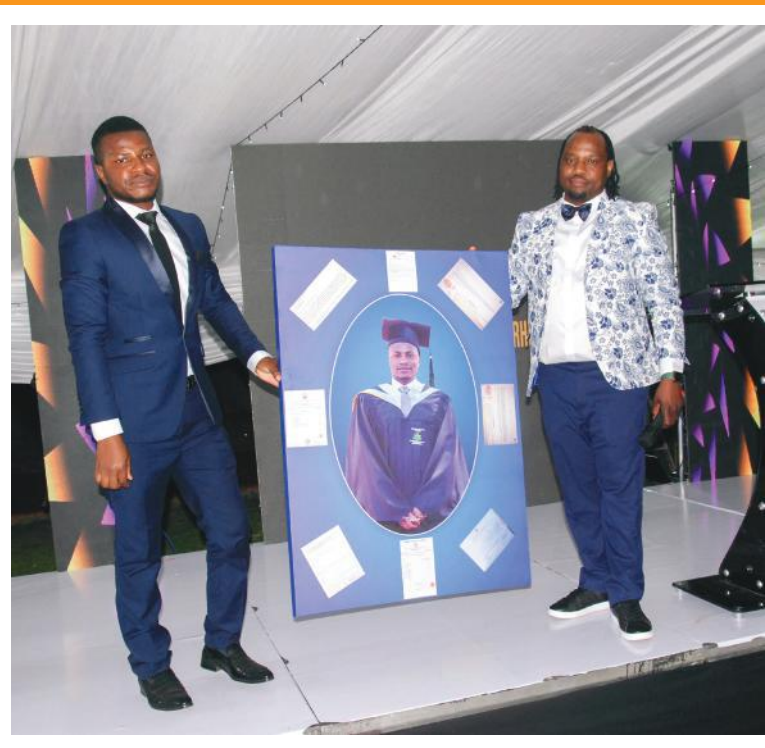
“We are not where we want to be, but we are not where we were yesterday”.

6.3 Stakeholder Appreciation

The 20-year milestone anniversary served as a powerful reminder of how working in collaboration with various stakeholders has enabled SAYWHAT to rise to complex challenges in the past and look forward to continued success in the future. The 20th anniversary celebrations saw appreciation being extended to partners and former secretariat members who contributed towards a generation of empowered and healthy young people either through funding, energy, collaboration, and expertise in the form of thank you notes (letters of appreciation).

The Executive Director, Jimmy Wilford issued thank you notes, to the stakeholders present at the conference.

Wilford shared an emotional appreciation to Jairos Mutore, a member of the SAYWHAT secretariat serving as Business Development and Partnership Management Officer. Wilford reminisced his first encounter with Jairos in 2018 when the young man had completed and passed his secondary education but lacking funds to pursue his tertiary education. Recruited as an intern at SAYWHAT, Jairos not only devoted himself to SRHR advocacy but people with disability, assisting his colleague who was visually



impaired and night school. As SAYWHAT celebrated its 20th anniversary, Jairos is celebrating an Honors degree in Social Work from WUA.

2024 Resolutions

In conclusion the recommendations from the conference sessions are outlined below to inform SAYWHAT interventions in the coming year. The resolutions for the thematic areas covered during the conference are categorized per the SAYWHAT 2021 -2050 strategic framework pillars:

Youth & Students Organizing and Leadership

The strategic pillar focuses on building the capacity of adolescents and young people in life skills, leadership, and economic empowerment as essential aspects that reduce their vulnerability to health challenges.

Youth focused Knowledge and Information Sharing

The 2nd strategic pillar focuses on building knowledge and providing information that enables student movement structures and student support structures (including college nurses, HIV and AIDS coordinators, student affairs departments, community-based youth organisations) as well as implementing agencies to better respond to health challenges and needs. Information will be shared through dialogue, social media channels, online TV, promotional materials, and print media.

Advocacy and Campaigning

The third strategic pillar focuses on influencing college and community-based, national, and sub-regional policies and structures to ensure they are responsive and addresses health and education challenges faced by students, and young people.

Health and Child Protection Services

The fourth and final strategic pillar focuses on continued delivery of services through partners while strengthening SAYWHAT's capacity to directly offer services to children, adolescents, youth, and students.



Strategic Pillar / Thematic Area	DSA & Mental Health	Quality Education (SDG4)	TB	Climate Change Action & SRHR
Youth & Students Organizing and Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sensitization of students and young people with comprehensive education on drug and substance abuse. - Capacitating rehabilitation facilities, mental health institutions, tertiary institutions, and law enforcement personnel on effective mechanisms to ameliorate drug and substance abuse among students and young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacitating marginalised AGYW with legal education, leadership, and advocacy skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacitate more TB Champions on advocacy skills as well as treatment support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen the SAYWHAT Smart Learners Hub with courses/ modules on climate change and SRHR.
Youth Focused Knowledge and Information Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacitating rehabilitation facilities, mental health institutions, tertiary institutions, and law enforcement personnel on effective mechanisms to ameliorate drug and substance abuse among students and young people. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacitate more nurses and college authorities on case management, emotional intelligence, confidentiality, and pre-and-post counselling. - Social Media campaigns on available national TB services for instance One Impact Zimbabwe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacitate the SAYWHAT secretariat on climate change advocacy learning from others such as the Africa Climate Summit - Social Media Campaigns on climate change action
Advocacy & Campaigning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy review of the Zimbabwe National Drug Master Plan (2020-2025) to assess the progress since 2020, note gaps and make recommendations to the parliament. - #MakeNoiseAboutMen Campaign – review and influence national and regional commitments on the health rights and wellbeing of the boy child. - Extensive marketing of the first SAYWHAT research-based book, cultivating success stories. Bringing the book to the parliament to garner support from the law makers/parliamentarians and advance the SRH cause. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of the Public Service Sexual Harassment Policy with particular interest on sexual harassment in tertiary institutions, noting gaps and making recommendations to the parliament. - Review of the Primary and Secondary Education new curriculum, Education 5.0, and modular learning, noting gaps and making recommendations to the parliament. - Strengthen the “I am a woman, I am powerful” mantra with a campaign. - Take #KeeptheGirlsSafe campaign to the marginalized communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy audits and recommendations follow up at both national and regional level particularly provisions of isolation centres. - Policy review of the new Primary and Secondary Education curriculum and recommendations particularly availability of age-appropriate TB facts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy review of the Carbon credit framework 2023 and make recommendations to the parliament.

Strategic Pillar / Thematic Area	DSA & Mental Health	Quality Education (SDG4)	TB	Climate Change Action & SRHR
Health and Child Protection Services			- Call-centre collaboration with Ministry of health and childcare to strengthen referral system between patients and the provincial mobile clinics.	

Partners





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