



5TH EDITION

Conference Highlights

ADVANCING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION



Dear students, youth, partners and colleagues

Students And Youth Working on reproductive Health Action Team (SAYWHAT) in partnership with the University of Botswana hosted the 5th edition of the South African Regional Students and Youth Conference (SARSYC) in Gaborone, Botswana from the 17th to the 19th of July 2024. SARSYC V ran under the theme "**Building Bridges, Navigating Emerging Issues: Advancing Equitable Access to Public Health and Education**" reflecting on ICPD30; the intersection between SDG4 and 5; AI, digital technology, and public health; emerging climate change, humanitarian crises, and disease outbreaks; and HIV, TB, and other communicable diseases.

I can confirm that the participants built the bridges between public health and emerging issues.

Further to that, SARSYC V provided a platform to facilitate knowledge exchange among students, young people, policymakers, Civil Society Organizations, and development partners promoting the sharing of insights and best practices to drive collective wisdom and innovative solutions for equitable access to public health and education. 255 delegates, among them 190 students and youth from Angola, Botswana, Tanzania, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe attended the conference and 65 were drawn from SADC PF members, college and university authorities, UN agents and other development players.

I present to you some of the key highlights of the conference hoping that you will find the content informative and engaging.

Jimmy Wilford
SARSYC Convener



DAY 1



University of Botswana Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor, Prof Richard Tabulawa, welcomed delegates to the conference and encouraged them to embrace the opportunity to engage with the student community, listening to their key asks and recommended solutions to the challenges of their time.

Prof Richard Tabulawa

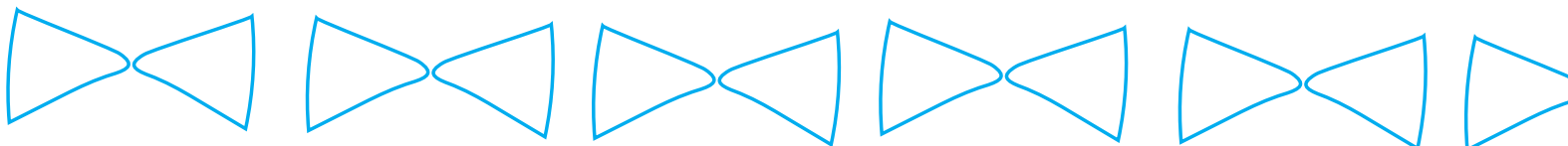
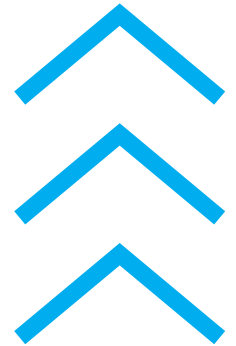
Click the link for Prof Richard Tabulawa's speech

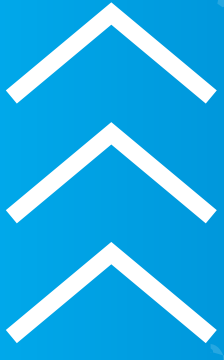


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akexFuaKctU>



SADC Parliamentary Forum Delegates following proceedings during the first day of the conference.





Unpacking the objectives of the conference, SAYWHAT National Coordinating Committee Chairperson and a student at the University of Zimbabwe, Ms Miah Tsinakwadi, implored delegates to review progress made but remain vigilant.

“I speak from the heart, that I am one young advocate who has witnessed positive outcomes in my life from the collective efforts of civil society organizations, my university and the government. The strides made in improving access to healthcare services for young people, mental health support and awareness campaigns have not gone unnoticed. Our journey continues, and together we can build a future where every young person thrives.”

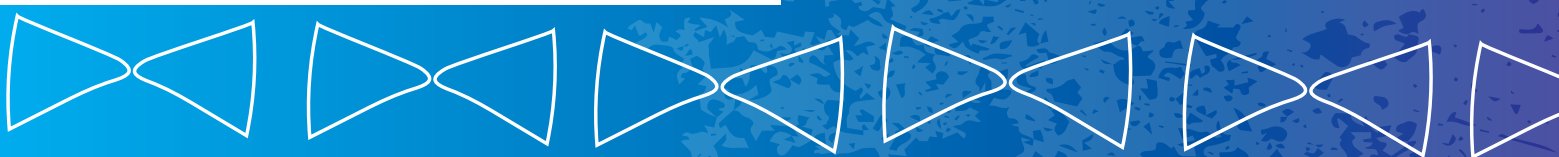
Ms Miah Tsinakwadi

Click the link for Ms Tsinakwadi's speech

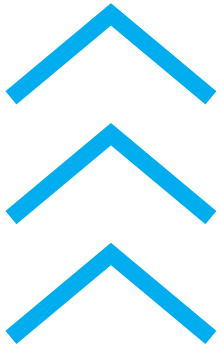
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Students following proceedings on the first day of the conference



BREAK AWAY SESSIONS



ICPD30

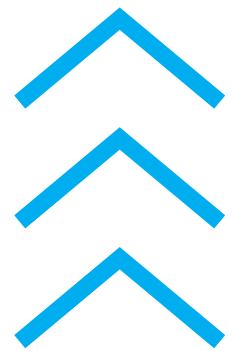
The Reflection Action Meeting on ICPD30 focused on tracking progress in SADC countries and the state of meaningful youth involvement in ICPD moving forward.



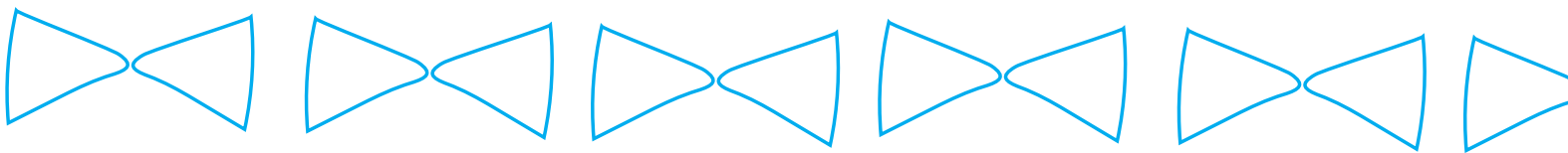
UNFPA representatives



Panelists from Zambia, Eswatini and Zimbabwe discussing TB innovations, progress and working interventions to end TB and HIV by 2030.



HIV, TB, and other communicable diseases





Richard Olong, EOL Regional Programme Manager, encouraged students to champion the inclusion of quality education post the decade of action as the stakeholders have begun deliberating the world post Sustainable Development Goals.

Quality Education, Gender Equality and Public Health (SDGs 3, 4 and 5)



Panelists from Botswana, Zambia, Angola and Zimbabwe measuring advancements in quality education and safe learning environments.

Click the link for GEAR Alliance break away session

<https://www.facebook.com/SAYWHATOrg/videos/1250948322982193>



Eswatini delegate catching up with the girls



Web for Life Symposium





Director Luc Armond Bodea of ICASA and Coordinator of the Society for AIDS in Africa emphasized the importance for ZERO HIV infections among the youth and encouraged young people to know their HIV status and have open conversations with their partners.

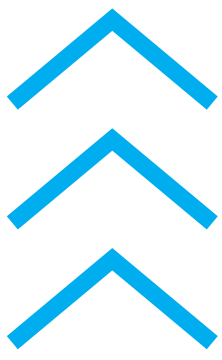


Mugota/Ixhiba Young Men's Forum

Luc Armand H. Bodea catching up with young men

Click the link for the Mugota young men's symposium

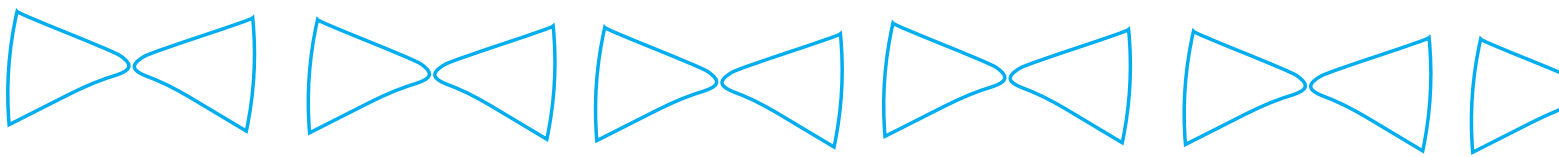
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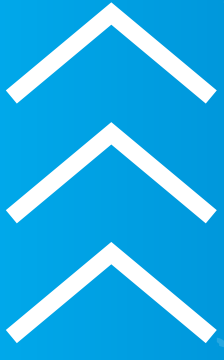


Reflection action meeting on climate action, drug and substance abuse, the intersection between AI and public health.

Click the link for the discussion on emerging issues

<https://www.facebook.com/SAYWHATOrg/videos/1653947048698994>





Second edition of the Regional Research Indaba

Students and youth contributed to the body of knowledge by presenting abstracts on various public health issues including the intersection of juvenile justice and child welfare, TB among young people, mental health, and AI in education.



Young researchers received certificates after presenting their abstracts

Click the link for details of the presentation on research

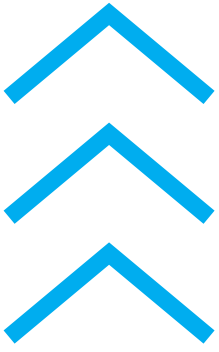
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Key dignitaries signing research books launched during the second edition of the regional Research Indaba



DAY 2



Opening Ceremony

University of Botswana Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, reminded young people that they make the largest proportion of the general population in Sub-Saharan Africa, and should lead in contributing towards positive transformative changes in their communities.

Dr Choolwe Muzyamba implored students to think locally and act globally, researching local challenges as Africans, and coming up with solutions for our own development.



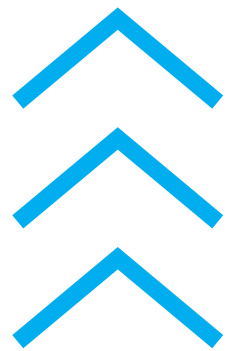
Professor David Norris

Click the link for the official opening ceremony

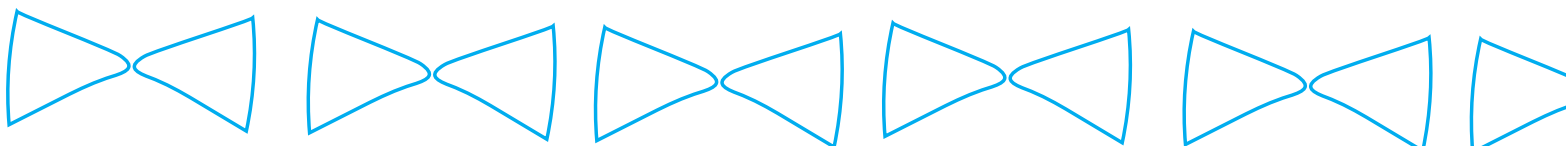
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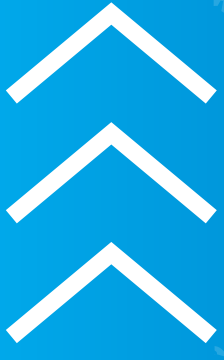


Dr Choolwe Muzyamba, University of Amsterdam unpacking the theme of the conference



Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges: Navigating the Future of Public Health and Education





**SARSYC Overview
and Strategic
Direction**

Mr Jimmy Wilford implored young people to participate in activities that affect them during their time as young people and not claim to be young at heart when they are old.



SAYWHAT Executive Director and SARSYC convener Jimmy Wilford

Click the link for SARSYC overview and keynote address

<https://www.facebook.com/SAYWHATOrg/videos/795567459228256>



*Professor Oathokwa Nkomazana
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Health and Wellness
Botswana.*



**Keynote
address**



DAY 3



Closing ceremony

The UNFPA country representative for Botswana and the Secretary General of the SADC Parliamentarian Forum graced the closing ceremony, addressed delegates and reaffirmed their commitment to meaningful youth participation and transparency to achieve sustainable development



UNFPA Botswana country representative Ms. Tlangelani Shilubane



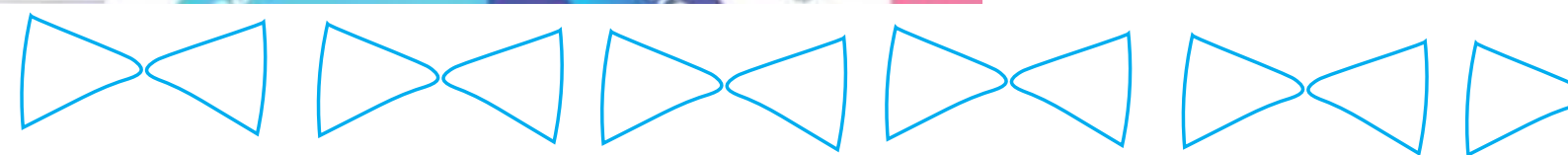
Click the link for the keynote address

<https://www.facebook.com/SAYWHATOrg/videos/858900692961459>



Keynote address

Secretary General of the SADC PF H.E. Boemo Sekgoma





Young people read out their call for action to the SADC member states, development partners, Civil Society Organisations as well as their role as young people to achieve equitable access to public health and education .

Gaborone Declaration hand over



Students from Southern Africa reading out the Gaborone Declaration

Click the link for details of the Declaration hand over

<https://www.facebook.com/SAYWHATOrg/videos/858900692961459>



Students handing over the declaration to SADC PF Secretary General





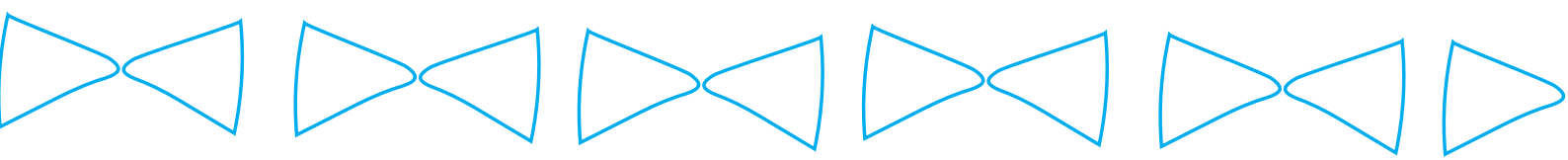
Culture Night

In celebration of diverse and rich cultures in Southern Africa, delegates showcased their songs, dances, stories and art to communicate their deepest values and shared humanity.



*Mr Tebogo Etsile Matebesi
Deputy Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Youth, Gender, Sport
& culture addressing delegates at
the culture night*





Media Coverage

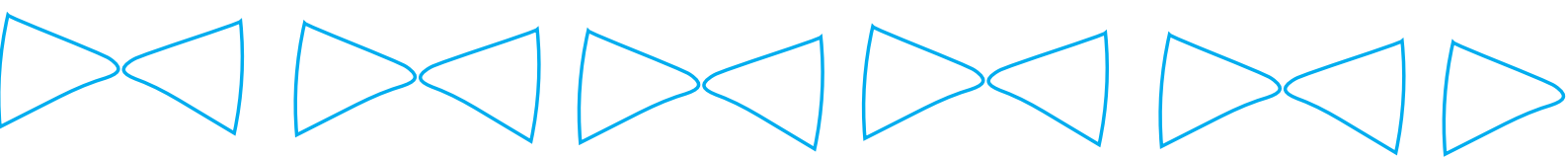
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<https://www.hmetro.co.zw/zim-students-in-bots-for-transformative-conference/>
<https://www.newsday.co.zw/thestandard/amp/international/article/200029751/regional-conference-on-youth-health-opens-in-gaborone>
<https://dailynews.gov.bw/sitesearch?page=1&srch-term=Substance+abuse+serious+concern>

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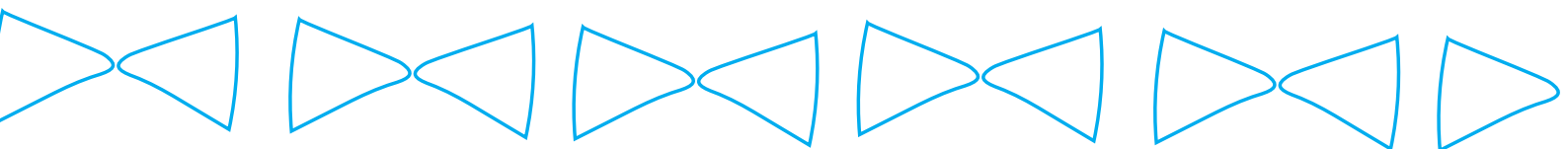


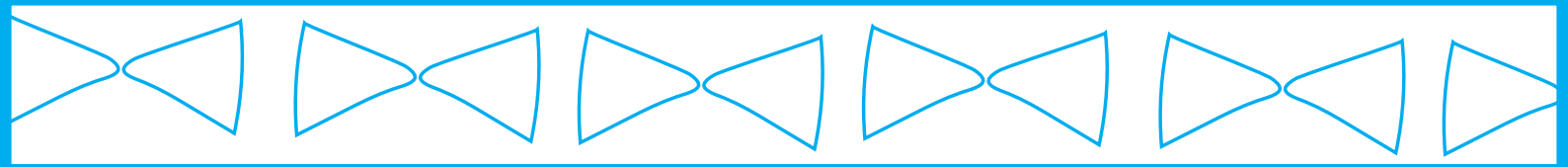
www.sarsyc.org



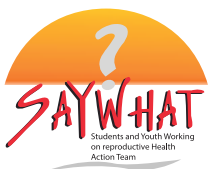
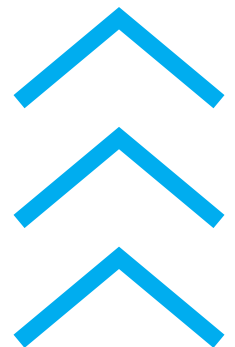
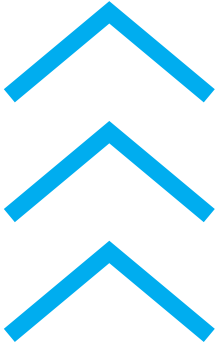


Gallery





Our special gratitude to all our partners who are supporting us in our vision of generations of healthy and empowered young people across Africa



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