



THE WEEKEND READER

"Your Weekly Read on Debt, Development & Socio-Economic Justice"

ZIMCODO SETS UP YOUTH FOR INTEGRITY HUBS

The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODO) has set up Youth for Integrity (Y4I) Hubs in districts across Zimbabwe providing a platform for youths to convene, share ideas, amplify their voices and fully participate in the anti-corruption discourse through conscious organizing. This effort is under the Strengthening Institutions and Youth Agency in Zimbabwe's Accountability (#SIYA) project. This project seeks to empower youth across the country in becoming 'Integrity Icons' who actively choose transparency and accountability whilst also influencing those in their sphere to choose integrity always!



Youth hub members trained in Midlands Province pose for a picture

According to the Zimbabwean Constitution, youths are defined as people between the ages of 15-35. This definition also aligns with the Africa Youth Charter for which Zimbabwe is a signatory. Under Section 20, the constitution outlines the agenda for youth rights in Zimbabwe, including access to education and training, opportunities for employment and economic empowerment, recreational activities, political representation and being free from harmful cultural practices and all forms of abuse or exploitation. Available official statistics show that the youth constitute approximately 60% of the population. Despite being the majority, youths are facing numerous challenges, such as high unemployment, lack of access to health care, expensive cost of education, child marriages, prostitution and gender-based violence (GBV). Due to ensuing high poverty levels among the youth, they have become too vulnerable to manipulation and abuse of habit-forming products like alcohol and drugs.

More so, youths are experiencing forced migration and many have found solace in street vending and cross-border trading to make ends meet outside the mainstream economy. Notwithstanding existing regulatory and legal frameworks, public corruption through *tenderpreneurship* and opaque 'megadeals' continue to deepen. Oversight and accountability institutions are incapacitated and weakened resulting in ineffective deterrence mechanisms. At the same time, most youths lack the technical skills, capacity, knowledge and financial resources to organize and mobilize to speak with one voice and hold their duty-bearers accountable. Against this backdrop, ZIMCODD is establishing Y4I Hub committees to help organize and mobilize other youths on anti-corruption issues affecting their welfare.

To date, ZIMCODD has inducted 100 youth into the Y4I circle. These individuals are disaggregated into 20 separate hubs of 5 who form a committee: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary General, Information Secretary and Programs Secretary. The Committee's primary role is organizing and mobilizing other youths on anti-corruption issues using centralized district gatherings of youths. The hub members received training from #SIYA on evidence collection, the effects of corruption and the value of integrity. The Hubs have been tasked with creating youth-centric solutions to the current governance issues that impact young people as well as ensuring that young people interact with those in positions of authority, mobilize young people throughout districts and equip young people to advocate for accountability in their communities. Cascading from the initial 100, the established youth hubs have already enlisted 156 additional young people to take part in self-initiated integrity-building activities and future #SIYA initiatives.

Emerging issues

The Y4I methodology acknowledges that youth are not passive but active participants of governance and solution finding. As such, discussions held yielded the below key discussion points:

- There is inadequate protection provided to (potential) witnesses of corruption which may put youth in great danger. In the absence of this legislation there is need to think of protection measures so that the youth can be whistleblowers without fear of being victimized.
- There is a gap in media conversation on the National Anti-Corruption strategy and the youth should lead especially on social media platforms.
- The youth should utilize social media and other digital solutions to campaign for integrity leveraging spaces young people like such as TikTok, podcasts to push the anti-corruption agenda. Further, the use of popular artists or influencers who drive the message through song and art will go far.
- While #SIYA is a youth project; it is also important to involve the elderly because their voices are also key in assisting the youth amplify issues to do with corruption.
- Youth should demand participation spaces for development and governance as no one will call them to the table.

#Youth4Integrity pledge

Are you a member of the youth (18-35 years) with a passion for fighting social and economic injustice? Do you want to join the action for Integrity? Do You want to become an Integrity Icon? If your answer to any of these questions is yes, take the pledge today: <https://rb.gy/9ogzgx>



Are you passionate about Social & Economic Justice?
Do you believe in the movement for equality?

JOIN NOW!

Become a registered member of ZIMCODD today:
<https://rb.gy/ewz45>
Join our Mailing List by sending us your email address to stay caught up on our activities, weekly & monthly reading resources on the Social & Economic justice movement.



SCAN NOW TO BECOME A MEMBER!



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