

POSITIONING YOUTH AT THE FOREFRONT OF SUSTAINED FAMILY PLANNING COORDINATION IN ZIMBABWE

MERCY MARIMIROFA¹, FARAI MACHINGA¹, ALFRED ZVOUSHE¹, ISABEL MICHAEL², RATIDZO NJAGU³, OBEDIENCE MAZENGE⁴

¹ZIMBABWE NATIONAL FAMILY PLANNING COUNCIL, ²SAYWHAT, ³KUNASHE FOUNDATION, ⁴MY AGE AFRICA

BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION

Why Youth Leadership Matters?

- Young people aged 10–24 make up 32% of Zimbabwe’s population and are key drivers of legitimacy, innovation and social mobilization in family planning (FP).
- The Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (ZNFPC) plays a leading role in promoting inclusive policies that address the needs of adolescents and youth.
- Despite ongoing challenges such as stigma and restrictive consent laws, ZNFPC is strengthening youth engagement by:
- Integrating youth voices and partnering with grassroots youth-led organizations to position them at the forefront of FP coordination;
- Implementing youth-focused approaches such as the Peer Educator Movement (PEM), institutionalized youth representation, youth-led service delivery channels, and coordination platforms;
- Promoting multi-stakeholder collaboration, including engagement with colleges, training institutions, and community-based health systems.

METHODS:

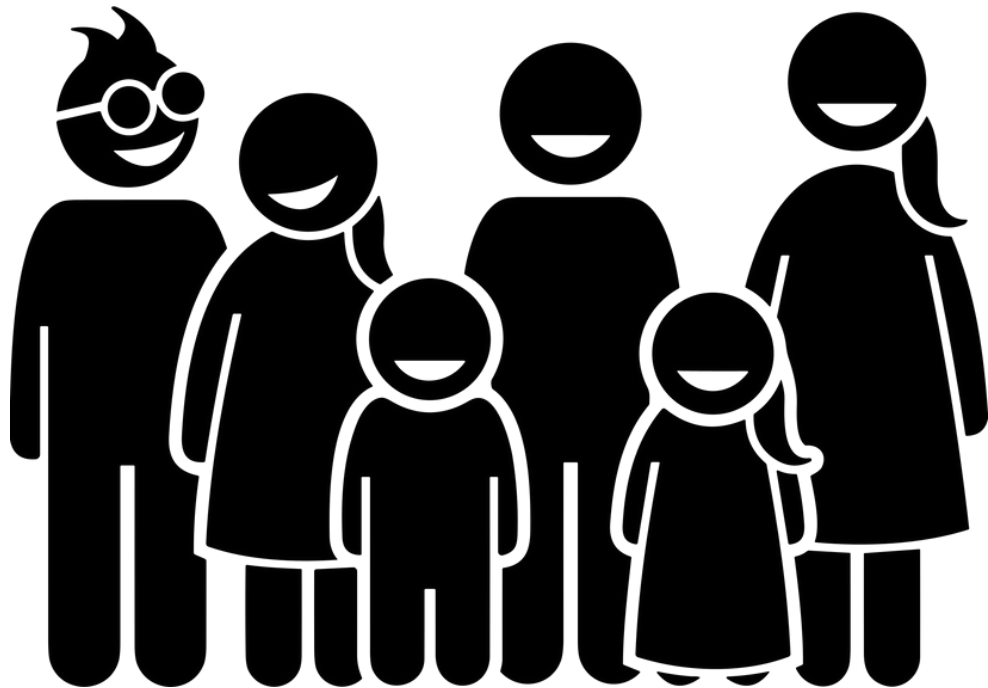
MODEL 1: PEER EDUCATOR MOVEMENT (PEM):

- Young people are trained as Peer Educators and lead in all youth initiatives across all provinces
- They conducts community needs assessments, dialogues, referrals and information dissemination on SRHR issues.
- Young people review and plans for their activities through coordinated forum meetings and share best practices



MODEL 2: INSTITUTIONALIZED YOUTH REPRESENTATION

- Youth advisory seats in coordination platforms. There is a youth focal point within the FP2030 technical working group
- Youth co-chair meetings on adolescent programming in different foras
- Quarterly Technical Working Group meetings on FP and ASRH
- The ASRH fora both at national and provincial level are being led by young people and the youth led organisations



MODEL 3: YOUTH-LED SERVICE DELIVERY CHANNELS

- Youth center models are in place across the country and works with peer educators to reach out to young people and young people access youth friendly services
- Youth-run digital platforms and mobile outreaches targeting young people (263 TV by My Age Zimbabwe)
- Toll-free call centre, complementing the telehealth service provided by SAYWHAT.
- Campus engagements through student led groups (SAYWHAT) and peri-urban engagement



RESULTS:

- Developed a Smart Advocacy plan including youth led-initiatives to advocate for domestic financing towards family planning in Zimbabwe
- Youth participated in the development of the Contraceptive Cost recovery framework in 2024 making sure that equitable access for marginalized populations including young is observed
- Stronger community-based demand generation for family planning through youth led outreaches.
- Increased youth engagement in national policy dialogues leaving no one behind in the 2023 and 2024
- Youth-driven research improves targeting young people, 80% of the abstracts submitted and accepted to be presented at the ICFP25 are from young people

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CALL TO ACTION

- “Positioning youth is not charity, it’s an investment in sustainability.”
- Commit to youth seats, budgets, and training.
- Partner with all organisations for youth-led initiatives
- Create permanent youth coordination posts

CONCLUSION

ZNFPC strengthens family planning systems while ensuring sustainability and inclusivity through leveraging on youth led initiatives. The organization’s leadership fosters policy innovation, capacity building, and service delivery models that align with SDG goals, FP2030 goals, offering scalable solutions to regional challenges.