

## Youths shaping their destiny through active participatory democratization



In my country there is non-governmental organization formed by youths in 2004 called Youth Forum that's seeks to enhance and promote informed and active youth participation in decision making, policy formulation and development in the democratization of the nation.

### Objectives

Youths are now an integral cog of the Zimbabwean democratic sphere where they have become important stakeholders with some of the youths now occupying top positions in critical arms of government such as the legislature where youths- friendly laws have already been passed. The full participation of youths in the political sphere has also even discouraged the abuse of young people in acts of political expedience by political parties as most youths are now familiar with the gospel of their fundamental rights as enshrined in the constitution and that as future leaders they also have a right both moral and constitutional to decide the kind of government to lead them and how that government should lead them. In Zimbabwe the post 2000 period has seen significant participation by youths in political, social and economic activities of their country in a development largely credited for the formulation of various youths empowerment programmes by central government in a bid to cope with the needs and demands of the growing constituency of youths. Despite the political crisis bedeviling Zimbabwe, the ruling regime was even forced to set up a fully -fledged youth ministry to cater for their needs in a country where social vices like the HIV/AIDS pandemic, economic ills like run away employment threatened the real existence of youths in an environment where their expectations and aspirations will not be achievable.

### Additional information

There is need for a radical and paradigm shift in the way Africa handles and deals with its recurrent developmental challenges most of which can be traced to an apparent failure to develop and empower young people across the continent. Once the virtues of ownership and active participation in development are inculcated in young people, Africa can be guaranteed of future political, economic and social leaders who espouse the values of development in the quest to create a better and more prosperous continent and such vices as crime, conflicts and dictatorship will be relegated into oblivion.

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### Young people

If youths actively participate in the democratization of their respective societies across the continent, it would be a clear signal that the future of the continent would be free of some of the nagging challenges that have been impeding continuous development of societies, partly through imposition of policies and priorities on young people. Today, Africa is heavily scarred with a reputation of having child soldiers, child sex-slaves, a run-away number of orphans and a youth population decimated by diseases because they are not given the space to actively participate in shaping their future and destiny since the democratic window in most African regimes is closed to young people who happen to be the future leaders of the continent.

One of the major reasons attributable to Africa's underdevelopment has been a correspondingly appalling record of democracy and limited participation of the youths in the democratization process. Participatory democratization exposes and opens many windows for human capital development across the continent and thereby aid Africa's march towards socio-economic prosperity inspired by the active and full participation of young people across the socio-economic and political spectrum.

