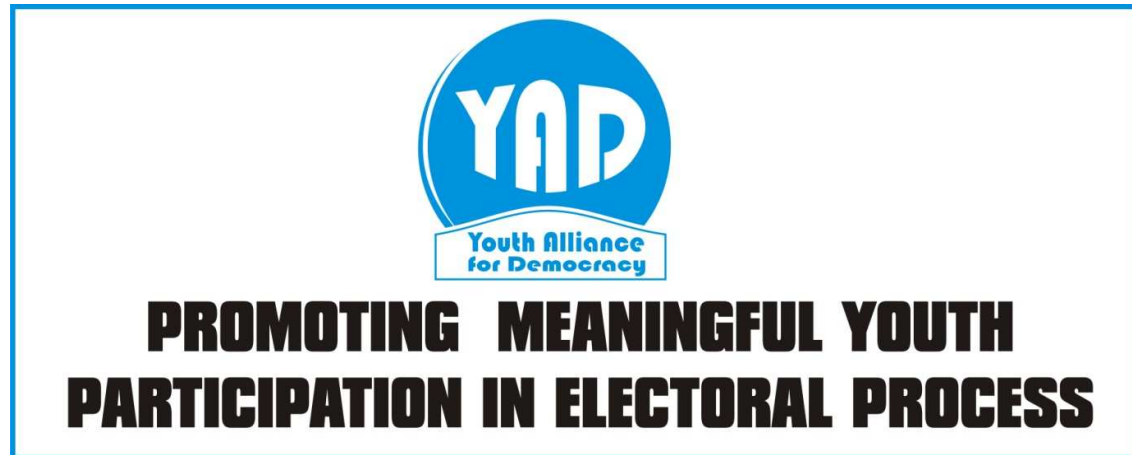




Youths Stand Up Against Poverty

Summary: the **Stand Up and Take Action Against Poverty Program** is part of Youth Alliance for Democracy's Strategic Goal of encouraging Accountable leadership among young political leadership within their constituencies. The program is in line with Government Work Plan for 2010 which seeks to improve service delivery at community level by resuscitating the nation's infrastructure, health care systems, education, antiretroviral therapy, address gender disparities, etc and is in line with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals that seeks to end absolute poverty in the world by 2015 and is cognisant that from the 8 MDGs 7 of them relate directly to youth and the overall objective is:

- To foster social accountability by the country's government and political leadership and build communities' capacity to participate and make demands to and hold their leaders accountable towards the implementation and achievement of Millennium Development Goals.

The program is done using and adapting the concept of social accountability and principles of the MDGs. Social accountability refers to a broad range of actions including the voting process, and mechanisms that citizens, communities and civil society organisations use to hold government officials and bureaucrats accountable. This includes citizen participation in public policy making, participatory budgeting and budget tracking, monitoring of public service delivery, citizen advisory boards and lobbying and advocacy campaigns. The program also factors best political leadership practises among youths in political positions and aims at encouraging governments, both at the national and local level governance, community based strides towards attaining Millennium Development Goals and cultivates a **Zero Tolerance Attitude** towards ineffective political leadership. A survey carried out by the United Nations in 2008 contained in the Human Report ranked Zimbabwe as a nation whose populace is living below the Poverty Datum Line owing to political conflict, corruption and no clear cut economic policy to steer the nation towards poverty reduction among other social ills.

Standing Up and Taking Action Against Poverty Kadoma Youths Stood Up against poverty on 17th September 2010 in recognition of the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Millennium Development Goals at a United Nations meeting of all member states with the intention of eradicating absolute poverty by 2015.



Part of the participants that gathered at Rimuka Hall for the SUTA Program

The event drew participants from Rimuka, Waverly, Rio Tinto and Ingezi who converged at Rimuka Hall from 09:00 to 1700hrs for the Stand Up And Take Action Against Poverty Program spearheaded by YAD's Youths in Politics Support Department and electoral clubs in Kadoma.



Young Political Leadership of Kadoma

The event was attended by approximately 510 youths including the young local governance leadership of Kadoma who included 6 councillors, the Mayor, school heads, political parties among others with the express purpose of sending a message to both national and local governments to fulfil their promise on the 8 Millennium Development Goals, the event was supported by Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust which also hosted a Public Debate Forum for youths in Harare on the same day.

The event also saw various artistic presentations and pleas to the decision makers to uphold their promise of ending poverty and questioning the strides that they are making in improving the lives of youths in their constituencies, Mwatita Ngoma an orphaned 16 year old girl spoke of the **HIV/Aids pandemic which has destroyed families owing to the high levels of prostitution caused by illegal gold mining in pursuit of economic livelihoods at the same time a number of hospitals and clinic are either inadequately stocked or have closed shop. She put the challenge on the government to address this challenge.**

This also saw local policy makers answering questions and making a pledge that they would work towards improving health care infrastructure within the next six months while a post mortem meeting will be arranged to assess the progress made. Speakers from different political inclinations emphasized the need for pro poor poverty alleviation development strides to be made through continued consultation with the constituency while at the same time working with set timeframes in

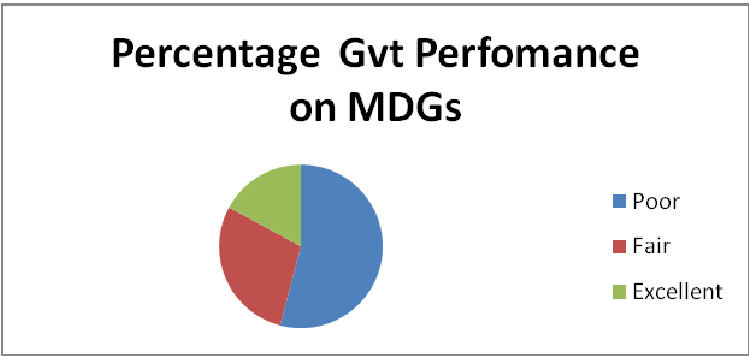
order to beat the 2015 deadline. In a song sung by Vimbai la Musica from Rotterview College urging the city fathers to improve maternal conditions for young mothers in Rimuka:



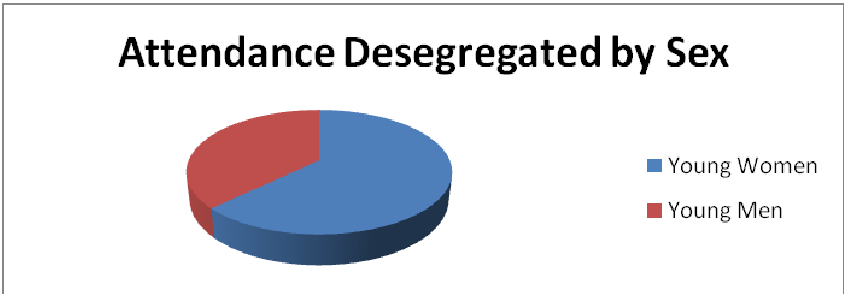
Vimbai la Musica Group from Rimuka sang urging the local government to address maternal health problems at Rimuka Hospital

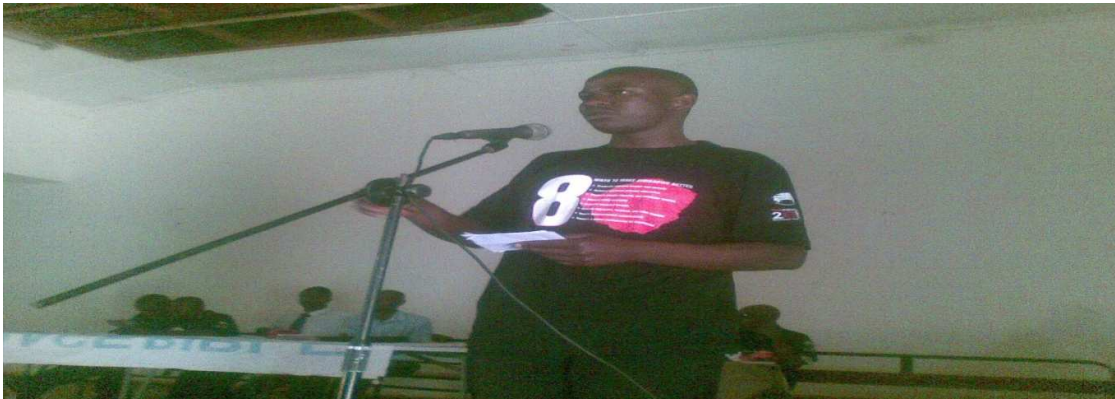
The program also saw YAD gathering the views of youths in Kadoma on the performance of government in implementing the Millennium Development Goals by circulating score cards. The following are the responses that were captured on the score cards:

Out of a total of 1155 responses 625 indicate that the government's performance is poor while 333 indicate the performance as being fair against the 197 who believe that government is working excellently to attain the Millennium Development Goals. The following is therefore a diagrammatic presentation of the respondents' views:



Out of a total of 510 participants who signed the attendance register 320 were young women whose ages ranged from 16 to 23 while 190 were young males whose age range was between 15 and 27, attendance at this platform is indicated in the following diagrammatic presentation:





The Public Education Program Manager, George Makoni sharing a word with participants



Guest of Honor, Acting Mayor of Kadoma, Muchineripi Chinyan'anya making a pledge to work towards alleviating poverty in his constituency, he also received soccer ball to initiate the Kick Out Poverty Tournaments in collaboration with Electoral Clubs

"... we were once the city of gold but the gold is not improving our lives we remain poor and poverty remains our greatest challenge as young people yet we do have young leaders who should understand the plight of fellow youths in Kadoma, its time we walk the talk if ever MDGs are to be achieved by 2015." Acting Mayor Muchineripi Chinyan'anya

The activity also the young political leadership of Kadoma headed by the Acting Mayor of the town making a pledge to fulfil the mandate of the Millennium Development Goals among the youths within Kadoma by eradicating abject poverty using locally available resources by the year 2015.

Participants at this platform also received portable 20 radios courtesy of the Crisis in Zimbabwe in Coalition and IEC Material on best political eadership practises, good governance and democracy as part of efforts aimed at bridging the information gaps and increasing access to information in the hitherto closed societies.

The following are some of the demands that the young people of Kadoma made to their leadership using various medium of communication:

1. Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

Comment: Zimbabwe as a nation is still along way to go in as far as the attainment of Millennium Development Goals are concerned. YAD advocates for the implementation of poverty reduction strategies at a community level given the nature of the national governance crisis and also taking into consideration that the majority of those that are living below the Poverty Datum Line are young people who are neither employed nor do they own the means of production cognisant that their representation in the national stake with only 3% in the lower house of assembly.

While the organisation continues to implement these programs generally well it is faced by resource constraint electoral conflict management program is progressing generally well YAD continues to be constrained by resources to implement this program in 7 other areas which have young parliamentarians as a way of pushing the agenda for discussion of the timely implementation of the MDGs.

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“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that frightens us most. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and famous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that people won't feel insecure around you. We were born to

make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in all of us. And when we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

Used by Nelson Mandela in his 1994 inaugural speech

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