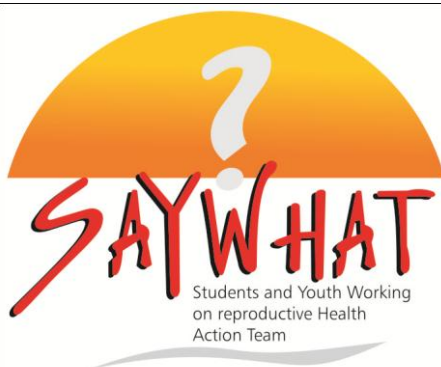




THE WEB FOR LIFE

‘Young Women on the Move!’

SAYWHAT 2012

Acknowledgements

The Students and Youth Working on reproductive Health Action Team (SAYWHAT) extends its gratitude to Oxfam Canada for its support in the production of this Report. This process has gone a long way in helping realise and document the success and impact of the Web for Life Network. SAYWHAT would like to extend its special thanks to other stakeholders, key partners and coalitions that continue to support the Network such as the Ford Foundation, SAIH, US Embassy (The Public Service Section), The French Embassy, SAFAIDS and the Youth for Empowerment Transformation Trust.

Lastly, well done to all female students who have actively participated in the Web for Life initiatives and who have committed themselves to the growth and success of the network. Indeed they have shown the true spirit of 'Young Women on the move'. The support by the college authorities at the different levels is forever appreciated.

ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
FSC	Female Student's Convention/Consortium
SAFAIDS	Southern African HIV & AIDS Information Dissemination Services
SAYWHAT	Students And Youth Working on reproductive Health Action Team
SRC	Students' Representative Council
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WFL	Web for Life
YETT	Youth Empowerment for Transformation Trust
ZNFPD	Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council
ZWRCN	Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre Network
ZYWNP	Zimbabwe Young Women's Network on Peace Building

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In 2007, SAYWHAT introduced a 'Gender Desk' which has extensively contributed to the success and impact of SAYWHAT's gender programming through the coordination of the Web for Life Network. Over the years we have seen female students' increase in active participation, lobbying and advocacy for their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

As an initiative of the Students' And Youth Working on reproductive Health Action Team (SAYWHAT), the Web for Life Network has promoted and strengthened the active participation and involvement of female students in SRHR Advocacy at national, regional and international levels. Female Students have realized the need to spearhead effective responses and continuously deliberate and share experiences and practices of responding to their SRH challenges and needs. Over the years such advocacy has seen an increased access to SRHR services, such as contraception provision, sanitary wear accessibility and Voluntary Counselling and Testing by female students.

The network has provided space for female students to dialogue, network and build linkages through coalitions that advocate for improved SRH service delivery and commodity provision for women at national level. The participation of female students in such platforms has increased understanding and knowledge on the links between young women's sexual and reproductive health and rights and HIV and AIDS, and ensures that these issues are part of the core business of youths' and women's organizations and movements.

The Web for Life has engaged female students in policy advocacy through their active participation and involvement in public meetings with parliamentarians and other forums, with legal experts on SRH related matters. Female students have had policy conversations aimed at changing and addressing the challenges and concerns. Today, female students have challenged policy makers and parliamentarians to review policies and laws particularly around the provision of Sanitary Pads at affordable costs.

The Network has promoted Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of female students through policy interventions at college and national level. Female students' leadership in articulating and seeking strategic ways to address critical global SRHR issues through analysis, commemorations and female student specific actions to support SRHR interventions has marked a dynamic generation of young women on the move to reclaim their SRHR and to advance and influence meaningful decisions on SRHR.

Behavioural change initiatives targeting female students engaging in Multiple Concurrent Partnerships, HIV Positive students, female students' activists, students living with disability and married students have noted improved assertiveness and increased efficacy on protecting one's self.

The Web for Life Network remains an active and dynamic platform for female students in tertiary institutions who are leaders and advocates for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. It has realised the need to build on the female students' perceived strengths and opportunities. Currently it is expanding to cover the greater socio-economic needs of young women through supporting sustainable livelihoods and advocating for enabling policy and institutional environment.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Web for Life Network

The Web for Life is an active and dynamic network and platform for female students in tertiary institutions who are leaders and advocates for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. The Web for Life Network is an initiative of the Students' And Youth Working on reproductive Health Action Team (SAYWHAT) that aims to promote and strengthen the active participation and involvement of female students in SRHR Advocacy. The network was rebranded and introduced in 2010 after female students realised the need to strengthen their capacities and networks in responding to their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights' needs.



1.1 Vision and Motto

The Web for Life Network envisions empowered, healthy and responsible young women who advocate for their Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights. The motto of the network is ***'Young Women on the move!'***

1.2 Rationale of the Web for Life Network

The Web for Life Network is aimed at improving the active participation of young women in addressing their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. SAYWHAT through its several interventions has realised the need to increase access and uptake of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services including HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support by female students in tertiary institutions. Responding to these challenges requires greater involvement of female students in creating a gender-just community on college campuses.

Within tertiary institutions, there is still limited capacity and networks of female students that responds and addresses sexual and reproductive health challenges. Increasing such capacity can help in the lobbying and advocacy for friendly policies within tertiary institutions that addresses SRH challenges and increase their knowledge/ information levels and understanding of policies that address gender issues within tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe.

Currently female students face challenges that are perpetuated by the policy environment that exists within the colleges. Such challenges include pregnancy, access to treatment and sexual harassment. As a result of structural challenges



female students face challenges related to gender when pursuing positions of leadership. When compounded by the economic, political, and social hardships obtained in the tertiary institutions young women find themselves more vulnerable than their male counterparts.

Our programming over the years has realized that young women, if empowered with tools to address the specific challenges they face, are a strong force for progress and reform in all sectors. However, in order

to succeed, they must have access to a wide range of options, gain confidence in their own abilities, possess specialized leadership and management skills, and develop the capacity to advocate within government, businesses, and the general public. The Web for Life has become the centre piece in influencing and encouraging female students to be involved in numerous activities in their colleges.

“The Web for Life Network aims to strengthen capacity and networks of female students in responding and addressing their sexual and reproductive health challenges...”

1.3 Objectives of the Web for Life Network

- Facilitate for mentorship, capacity building and leadership skills development of female students in order to advance advocacy and influence meaningful decisions on the SRHR of young women.
- Create space for information, knowledge and experience sharing on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of female students in tertiary institutions.
- Provide leadership in articulating and seeking strategic ways to address critical global SRHR issues through campaigns and commemorations and female student specific actions to support SRHR interventions.
- Link and connect female students at college, provincial, national and regional level with organisations, campaigns and initiatives on Young Women Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Advocacy.
- Promote livelihoods skills and programmes that empower female students socially and economically as well as promote the engagement of role models and opportunities for female students' entrepreneurship opportunities that address economic challenges.
- Research and documentation of female students' SRH experiences within tertiary institution to inspire evidence based programming on young women interventions.

2 HISTORY OF THE FEMALE STUDENTS' CONSORTIUM

In 2007, female students noted the gaps related to capacity, structures and systems of addressing their needs and promoting their rights in tertiary institutions. They noted that the gender disparities continue to increase their vulnerability and affect responses related to their needs. The need for a platform to dialogue and space for action was realised and this gave birth to the annual Female Students' Consortiums.

The 1st female students' consortium was held in August 2007. SAYWHAT with the support of Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust (YETT) and Community Working Group on Health (CWGH) engaged female students from 30 tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe. The consortium was a platform to assess and interrogate the needs of the female students. The primary agenda was to effect a transformation from the female student of today who faces many challenges to an ideal female student who provides solutions and enjoys her full sexual and reproductive health rights on and off campus.

SAYWHAT held the 2nd Female Students Convention (FSC) in August 2008. During this Convention, the female students slotted 'gender' on the agenda. They deliberated on the key and specific measures required to ensure that the transition process does not reinforce any subordinate position of women to men in society. The group agreed that transitions must involve gender role changes, understanding the fluidity, thus providing windows of opportunities for change toward a society with improved gender equity and respect. Equally, the male side of the gender equation must be fully understood, which requires questioning the masculine values and norms that society places on male behaviour. Generally, the key outcome was the need to address gender disparities and at the same time empower the female student to become a leader, the change and force for equality and justice.

The 2009 conference had the broad objective of providing space for engagement between students and key policy makers and program implementers so that there will be dialogue on the SRHR challenges female students face and recommendations on the best responses that will address the vulnerability of female students.

The 2010 Web for Life Convention marked the fifth edition of what has been traditionally known for the past four years as the Female student's Conference. The rebranding was inspired by the need for a meeting point of consolidating and reviewing grassroots interventions that would have been done throughout the year under the Web for Life network. The Web for life is a coordinating network that is responsible for managing provincial and college based initiatives for sexual and reproductive health for female students.

This edition of the convention was a platform for dialogue and engagement with key stakeholders in the area of SRH and brought together experts in the various thematic areas. Exhibition and break away theme sessions that were hosted provided a platform for students to unfold key issues affecting their access to SRH, HIV and AIDS services which included access to contraceptives, support strategies for positive living, sexual harassment, date rape, abortion, sex and sexuality.

2.0 The transition from a Consortium to a Web for Life Movement

The evolution of The Female Students' Convention promoted leadership and empowerment of female students around sexual and reproductive health. It focused on the effects of socio-economic depreciation, economic incompetence, culture and lack of confidence among female students which continues to increase their vulnerabilities. It noted that the environment in which female students exist has some socio-cultural, political and economic factors that continue to make these challenges more severe on these female students.



Female students identified their challenges and what action they needed to take. However, they agreed that a lot has been done by the government, politicians, civic society and the communities to address the gender disparities especially in the colleges, with an aim to promote gender equality and empowerment of female students. There was then a call to enhance female students' leadership in addressing these challenges.

The transition indicated how young women's leadership can make a real difference in the campaign to end gender inequality, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence and to address biological, economic and social factors that continue to put them more at risk of HIV infection. There was need to build capacity and help female leaders explore the need to acquire leadership skills for personal empowerment. A key lesson was that female students have a great will and potential to become great and competent leaders if equipped with skills and knowledge as well as a fair platform.

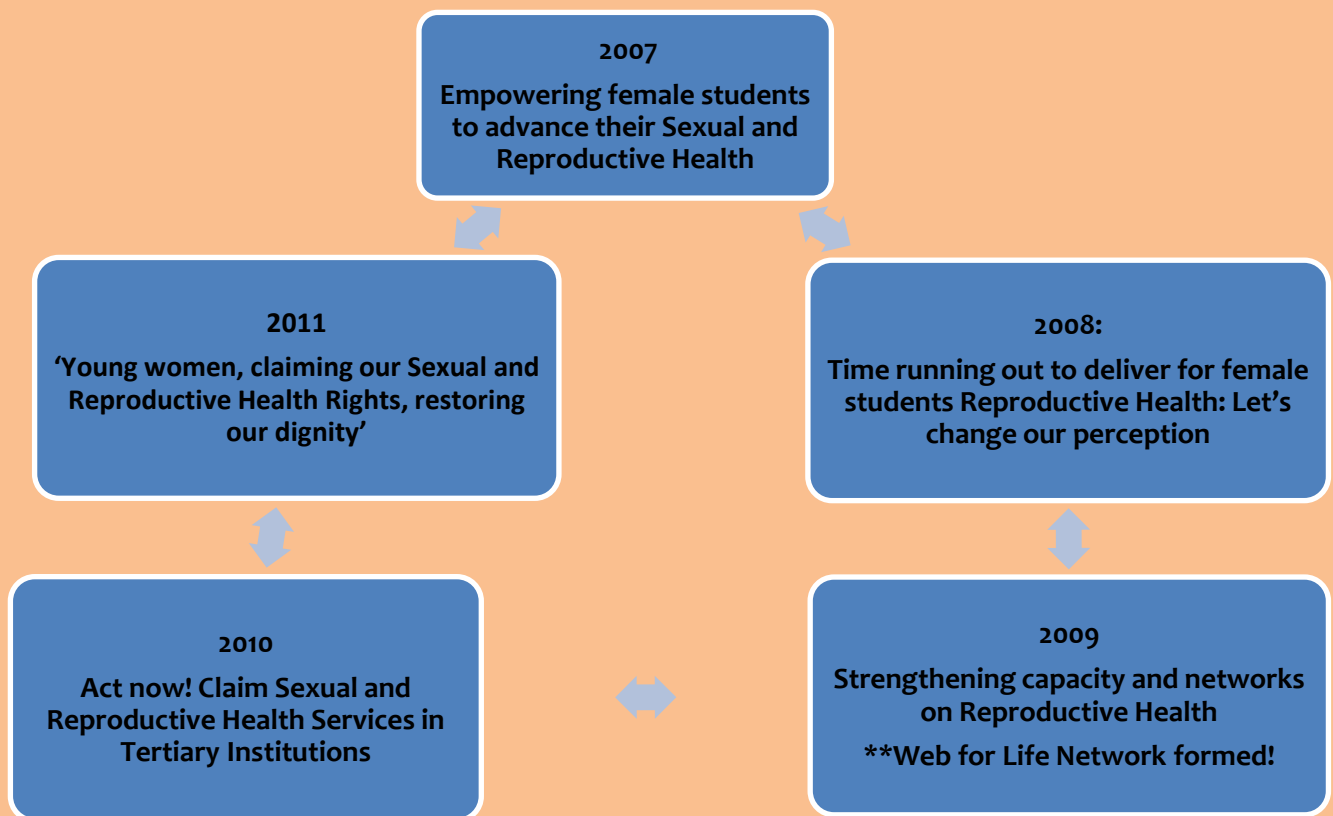
Dialogues during such platforms noted that it was difficult for female students to acquire leadership roles such as Students Representative Council President due to gender, lack of initiative, limited capacity and confidence as well as lack of support for one another. Discussions noted that there are gender biases that term women as incompetent leaders and therefore do not give them opportunities to be leaders. In other instances, female students simply conformed to the cultural prescriptions that they should be submissive or ruled by men. These grievances were said to be detrimental to the progression of females in society as well as their capacity to take leadership roles.

After realizing such gaps the female students drew up an Action Plan to incept a platform that would coordinate initiatives aimed at promoting and strengthening the capacity and networks of females. Thus, at the end of the 2009 Female Students' Convention we witnessed the formulation of the Web for Life Network.

'The female students' struggle is a two-fold struggle'. What is needed is positive, concrete change that will give us more power and confidence to transform relations between women and men at all levels' –

Honour Meda – Chinhoyi University (2007)

2.1 Thematic transition from Female Students Conference: (2007-2009) to Web for life Convention (2010 - 2011)



Over the years the Web for Life Conventions have run under different themes which sort to encourage and promote the realisation of female students' need at each stage. In 2007, the theme focused on the need to empower female students with the relevant skills and capacity to actively engage them in advancing their Sexual and Reproductive Health needs.

3 **PROGRESS AND IMPACT OF THE WEB FOR LIFE NETWORK**

The Web for Life's key outcomes have been realised through Capacity Building, Mentorship, Networking, Advocacy and Leadership strengthening among female students in promoting their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.



3.0 Capacity Building and Mentorship

The Web for Life Network has played the central role of building and developing the capacity and skills of female students. Female students have been trained in life skills, advocacy and leadership. Their skills have also been developed through the capacity building trainings, national, regional and international conference as well as mentorship programmes. Currently 185 female students have been trained in Leadership and Advocacy skills and 153 female students have benefited directly and 450 indirectly from the mentorship program which has hosted mentorship weeks in 5 Colleges. The network has engaged young women leaders

namely Talent Jumo (Katswe Sistahood) and Nyarie Mashayamombe (TAG a LIFE International), Hon. Dorcas Sibanda and Dudu Manhenga in different areas of excellence in building a healthy, trusting relationship with the female students. They have been provided with support and guidance to the young women, and through counselling, conflict resolution, goal setting, tutoring, career development, involvement in social activities and role modelling. Female students have been inspired and continuously motivated to keep on the move of achieving their own personal goals and set targets for the Web for Life.

I am inspired and ready to MOVE!..... I believe I can make a difference in my life and that of other young women! – Elscnt Chatsanga, Women's University in Africa

The Capacity Building and Mentorship has led to the female students initiating their own newsletter, 'The Web News', which is a space for female students to express their views and opinions on their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights challenges.

3.1 Networking

The Web for Life has created networks and coalitions national and regional level where female students at college, provincial, national and regional level link with organisations, campaigns and initiatives on Young Women Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Advocacy. 54 female students have become active in several different networking platforms and coalitions for SRH Advocacy. In 2012, the network has hosted the Masvingo Province Female Students' SRH Campaign which provided an opportunity for the network to engage 7 key stakeholders in the Masvingo province on the SRH issues and challenges of female students. 211 female students took part in the campaign. Such strategic partnerships have gone a long way in shaping and influencing responses targeting young women in tertiary institutions.



3.2 Leadership

The Web for Life Network has provided female students with opportunities for leadership in articulating and seeking strategic ways to address critical global SRHR issues through analysis. In 2011, 20 female students were selected to be part of the Core Group which is a national coordinating body of the network. The female students have so far actively participated and added their voices on SRHR Advocacy at local, national, regional and international levels such as the Sub-Regional Workshop on Gender Based Violence (Zambia), Imagined Futures (Botswana) and the Global Power Summit in Harare. Female students' participation and leadership has drastically increased since 2007. Between 2008 and 2011, 13 female students have occupied strategic posts in the Student Representative Council posts like the Secretary Generals and the Presidents unlike the previous scenario where they were relegated to committee members or secretaries.



3.3 Advocacy

Female students have initiated and participated in key advocacy initiatives such as the Deliver Delayed Dignity (3D) Campaign on Sanitary Wear to which they have met some commendable achievements such as engaging with parliamentarians namely, The Deputy Prime Minister, Thokozani Khupe to submit a



petition to parliament and engaged representatives from the Budget Committee, namely Hon. Dorcas Sibanda in dialogues on making sanitary wear available to such marginalised groups. Advocacy remains the cornerstone of the entire Web for Life Network's work with the aim of promoting the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of female students through policy interventions at college and national level. Female students have initiated dialogues with college authorities on issues such as sexual harassment, pregnancy and contraceptive issues. Kushinga Phikelela Farmer Training Centre has since included a fee to purchase sanitary pads in order to support the female students.

SAYWHAT has managed to set up the Web for Life Network which has so far managed to connect approximately 300 female students using social media and other spaces for interaction. The social media platform has facilitated dialogues on policy advocacy. The dialogues were on the Maputo Plan of Action, the Female Condom and Sexual Harassment.



3.4 Information Generation and Experience Sharing

Information Generation, knowledge and experience sharing on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights is the key aspect that revolves the network and keeps young women on the move. The female students have been capacitated on the need to take information generation, knowledge and experience sharing at the centre of all the network business. The Web for Life engages and mobilises the female students through social media such as Facebook,

Tweeter and WhatsApp. Currently the Web for Life has a database of 530 female students on social media. The female students have since introduced an exciting newsletter, 'The Web News', which has become their own space of expressing their views, opinions and concerns towards SRHR Advocacy. So far 500 copies have been produced and distributed in the colleges. The Gender Barometer has been used over the years to collect data on the responses of female and male students on gender issues. 254 students have been used as respondents to the barometer.

4 WEB FOR LIFE PARTNERSHIPS

The Web for Life has partnered several Women's Organisations, Feminist Groups and Networks working on Women's Rights and issues. The Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development is a central partner in coordinating Women's issues.

The Web for Life is recognised by the relevant Ministries namely, The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Ministry of Agriculture, The Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development and the Ministry of Youth and partners them in all initiatives. The Web for Life maintains membership within key networks that influence and provide support on Women's Rights interventions.

Through these partnerships The Web for Life has so far managed to claim its space in speaking elaborately to the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and challenges of female students. The Web for Life has gained a status on fostering the agenda of female students. The network is now represented in several networks and is well recognised.



5 THE WEB FOR LIFE CORE GROUP

The Web for Life Core Group is composed of 20 female students who are selected through an application and selection process. The female students spearhead all SRH initiatives targeting female students at college level, national level, regional level and international level.

Some of our Core- Group Members making a Difference!!

Princess Sibanda – Princess Sibanda is a student at the University of Zimbabwe. She is an energetic, vibrant and artistic young woman who has a passion for Poetry. As a Web for Life Core Group member she has not failed to use her passion and talent to reach out to many more young women out there.



Fiona Mutirori – Fiona Mutirori from Hillside Teachers' College has for the past 2 years demonstrated her desire to address Sexual Harassment and Gender Based Violence issues affecting young women. As a young woman who has also survived GBV, she continues to share and encourage several other female students to stand for themselves and fight violence in the face of HIV.

Elscent Chatsanga – Elscent Chatsanga has become one of the most and well networked female students in the Core Group. Her talent in Hosting, presenting and acting is outstanding and she has been able to use these skills to her full potential.

Nyarie Nhengonhema – Nyarie Nhengonhema is a female student who has demonstrated passion for theatre and dance. Her success within the Core-Group lies with the initiation of the '**Web for Life Dance Ensemble**'. The dance group has so far demonstrated promising edutainment in dancing Sexual and Reproductive Health Challenges to the grave!

6 2011 Web for Life Retreat



The Web for Life hosted a one day convention that allowed the network members to share experiences and provide feedback on the activities that the network has engaged in throughout the year of 2011. This was a platform to review progress and deliberate on the future direction of the network. The convention also reviewed the on-going mentorship program and provided for spot on advice on how the network can improve on its key functions of coordination of the sexual and reproductive health initiatives for female students in tertiary institutions. The 5th Edition of the Web for Life Convention ran under the theme ***‘Young women, claiming our Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, restoring our dignity’***

SAYWHAT hosted the Web for Life Convention 2011 where Everjoice Win presented a pre-recorded Key Note Address. Everjoice Win who is the Associate Country Director of Oxfam Canada in Zimbabwe spoke about the importance of transformative feminist leadership, guided by personal values and principles in addressing the challenges they face. She challenged young women to think of their roles and rights in their spaces. In summary, leadership as she defined is about being there, where and when all is happening.

The Web for Life Convention 2011 was

- A platform to share experiences on Web for Life interventions and work by its members
- A strategy to improve the work, relevance and influence of the Web for Life on young women's issues through dialoguing on the key advocacy issues.
- A statement on advocacy priorities for the Web for Life and the message was passed on to the parliamentarians.

The convention had presentations on Harmful Sexual and Reproductive Health practices in tertiary institutions and on rights fundamental to young women which inspired discussions on how young women should realize their rights in protecting their bodies.

This platform for the female students to dialogue on these key issues gave them an opportunity to deliberate on the key advocacy issues which included advocacy on maternal health, female condoms and sexual harassment.

The Web for Life Convention continues to be an annual event where female students learn to prioritise their agenda and create space for increased dialogue, mentorship, lobbying and advocacy for their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. The Convention was also attended by female student representatives from the University of Zambia and UKZN.



7 Web for Life Future Steps!

The Web for Life is a promising network that is focused on increasing advocacy on the Sexual and Reproductive Health needs of female students in tertiary institutions. The future steps involve expanding the network and increasing leadership among female students to take up their issues and ensure that they contribute to the achievement of the overall goals and vision of SAYWHAT.

1. Strengthen the Web for Life Network by developing tools for M & E, data collection and documentation of female students' experiences and work on SRH Advocacy.
2. Strengthen the Web for Life structures through setting up Web for Life Branded Centres in the provinces for information dissemination, space for dialogues and interactions.
3. Female Condom Advocacy Campaign – There is a need to strengthen advocacy on the female condom among young women.
4. Support Web for Life college-based work plans and other initiatives implemented by the female students.
5. Create a strong platform for mentorship where the young women shall be encouraged to take a step further in defining their course of action and increase their confidence to work in groups and to share ideas, building group empowerment.
6. The Web for Life shall create a female student's pressure group to actively engage in policy dialogues and give the ability to share and fully represent for their concerns to key decision makers.
7. Intensify social media mobilisation, engagement and advocacy for the SRHR of female students.

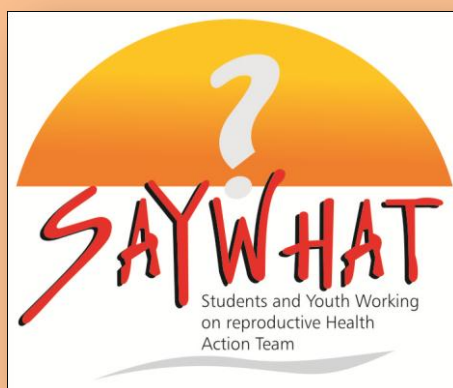
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: LEADERSHIP AND MENTORSHIP

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TARGET	OUTCOME
Mentorship and Leadership Training	The training defined mentorship and gave skills on be a mentor/mentee	20 Female students	Increased understanding of Mentorship
Mentorship Dialogue	The Dialogue interrogated the key roles of mentors	60 Female Students	Appreciation of the process of Mentorship
Mentorship Classes	The Mentorship classes were led by a Mentor who spoke more on the role of mentorship in developing leadership	120 Female Students	Identification of Mentors and building of confidence among female students
CUT, BUSE, Hillside and Kushinga Mentorship Weeks	Female students led initiatives on Mentorship for Week in their Colleges	650 Female Students reached out to	Female Students demonstrated good leadership qualities by organising their mentorship weeks
The Web News	Newsletter for female students by female students	500 Copies so far published and distributed	Female Students' space to share their experiences, views and opinions

APPENDIX 2: NETWORKING PLATFORMS

NETWORK	DESCRIPTION	LEAD ORG	ACHIEVEMENTS
Pepeta Cluster	Cluster on Young Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights	Katswe Sisterhood	Female Students' Voices added on and fully represented
PAC Coalition	The Coalition supports the Advocacy issue on provision of Post Abortal Care in meeting the objectives of CARMMA	SAfAIDS	Involvement and inputting to the Abortion discourse
Aminatare Coalition	Regional Coalition on the Sexual and Reproductive Health of Women in Africa	Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre Network	Web for Life recognised at regional level as strong group for female students
Women's Coalition	A coalition of Women's organisations	Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe	SAYWHAT representing young women in the Health Cluster



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