

Edith's Stairway in Leadership

The Situation

Shamva District is a mining area that is highly costumed in cultural norms and religious values which devalue young women's rights. This situation has led most young women to be vulnerable to chronic disease which is leading to sudden death and victims of violence. Stigmatization and discrimination amongst women especially those living in Ward 20 is still an issue in the district as they lack economic opportunities, employment, income, health care, and morbidity. The district has 29 wards, but, 27 men sit as councilors and only 2 women sit as councilors. Village head positions are dominated by males while a few women occupy these positions. At community levels, young women are excluded from decision-making and economic opportunities. Thus, the project has empowered young women, to take positions or create their own spaces and positions so that they can also contribute to community development.

The Response

A 2-day boot camp equipped 10 young women in Ward 20 with leadership skills, aiming to spark wider female participation in community development. These future leaders learned tools to engage and empower other young women in social, political, and economic spheres.

Further fostering this movement, 4 "Rural Young Women Village Circles" were established as safe spaces for discussion and encouragement. Young women used this platform to tackle local issues and advocate for their meaningful involvement in various arenas.

An "Activism Exchange Visit on Mural Development" brought young women from across Harare together. Sharing experiences and igniting mutual support, they used art to address challenges like limited female participation and decision-making power. These powerful and deeply personal murals served as voices for change, urging action for a more equitable future.

The Results

- The Rural Young Women Engage project is igniting a shift in mindsets. Young women like Edith Murenga are embracing their roles in community development, stepping forward to lead and advocate.
- Inspired by the project, Edith saw an opportunity to represent her ward at the National Participate Summit 2023. With the support of project officers, she not only participated but also went on to attend the International Participate Conference 2023.
- Empowered by these experiences, Edith is now spearheading a change project in her ward. Leveraging a mobile digital hub, she's tackling digital literacy, ensuring more young women have the tools to thrive.

The Evidence

During preparations for the International Participate Conference 2023 held at the National Participate 2023 conference, Edith

Murenga received special recognition, as shown in the photo on the right;

