

## Young Women Rise and Excel (YWRE) 2021 fepa report

### How YWRE effects change

- When women are supported to access and influence decision-making they can shape their own visions and strategies for change and become resilient to gender based inequalities.
- WRE and follow-up activities by YETT create safe spaces for young women from grassroots to national level. In these spaces young women gain individual and collective power to challenge inequalities because they benefit from an enabling environment that promotes and sustains women's participation and leadership.

### How YWRE contributes to YETT's work on gender justice and women's rights

- training and advocating for Women's participation and for transformative leadership is the foundation of YETT's work in this field
- WRE is a key training tool implemented by YETT that capacitates young women directly

### What success of YWRE means

- young women, especially those who face a double forms of marginalization, achieve and hold effective and transformative leadership positions at all levels of engagement.

### Concrete goals of YWRE

- WRE exposes young women to diverse experiences and perspectives. They gain insight on skills and strategies needed to succeed in leadership
- WRE supports the participation of women in influencing pro-women policies and assists implementation at community and national level
- young women increase their self-awareness and self-confidence
- young women access resources, information and services for economic empowerment and entrepreneurship?
- WRE builds a network of strong and supportive young women across participants from all cohorts.

YWRE was created as a targeted offer for 30 young women complementing the "Winter School", which is often somewhat dominated by young men. WRE is held once a year and lasts a whole week in a camp format, i.e. a secluded retreat that is conducive to joint learning processes and also individual reflection. The camp increases the participants' "self-efficacy": they gain insight into their abilities as leaders of change in communities or the economy and they further develop their strategies for this.

In 2021, YWRE was held for the third time (second with fepa support). This year the training was held in Gweru in Midlands, halfway between the two national centres of Bulawayo and Harare. Direct feedback from participants of the YWRE 2021 to fepa showed great excitement and appreciation of the inputs and impact of the training for the young women participants.

### Sessions held during WRE camp, 3-8.10.2021 at Antelope Park in Gweru

- daily activities for teambuilding, and every morning a health & well-being session
- daily activities for self-reflection in groups and individually
- daily activities for exchange and strengthening networking skills

- 'managing self': personal leadership, emotional intelligence
- 'transformational leadership': how to apply in real world (2 sessions)
- 'entrepreneurship': mindset, skills and economic empowerment opportunities
- financial management
- body politics: my body, my choice
- civic engagement and community service: how will I be heard?
- group work presentations

### participant cohort 2021

- YETT runs an extensive system to choose deserving participants.
- Recruitment from all, and especially from peripheral regions, was a priority. Therefore call for nominations was sent out nationwide via 60 mostly youth-led, community based organisations. More than 70 young women were nominated. Just over 60 submitted an application including a motivation letter, an essay, a recommendation letter and their cv. YETT graded these applications, with the motivation letter and essay having double weight, and accepted those scoring amongst the best 30 as participants.
- Participants age was between 19 and 35, educational levels from O-level (3 participants), which compares to a secondary school graduate in Switzerland, to tertiary education (still at Uni, some with complete Degrees).
- They were coming from 8 out of 10 provinces (with the metropolitan region of Harare being a heavyweight) and were affiliated with 19 different youth organisations.



### **facilitators 2021**

Facilitators were briefed to focus their methodologies on practical ('learning by doing').

Expert facilitators and young women from the group shared roles in leading sessions. Participants were subdivided in 3 groups that took responsibilities for health and self-care sessions and pre-dinner 'food for thought' sessions.

For choice of expert facilitators YETT gave preference to female facilitators and representatives from women's organisations with a track record in the specific areas for sessions and are based or work in the part of Zimbabwe where YWRE was held. Expert facilitators in 2021 were:

- Dr. Mandiedza Parichi, Chairperson for the Peace Studies Department at the Midlands State University Midlands State University, gender and media expert
- Priscilla Komboni, psychologist, expert for wellness and mental health
- Linda Ndiweni, researcher/lecturer at National University of Science and Technology, and founder of community/regional newspaper 'The Tenacity Post'
- Tsitsidzaishe Shumba, Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises
- Samulekiso Khumalo, Executive Director of Women Institute for Leadership and Development (WILD)

### **Follow up activities**

- After the course, the female graduates got access to a rotating loan fund from which they can develop self-sustaining activities, mostly in the field of social entrepreneurship.
- participants were included in all kinds of other YETT activities that strengthen youth and young women participation and leadership.
- WRE has created a Facebook platform with more than 900 followers (April 2022): <https://www.facebook.com/youngwomenrisingzimbabwe>
- participants themselves become key initiators of grass-roots processes in the context of fepa's community of practitioners for women's rights and gender justice (see separate report).

### **Assessment activities by fepa in 2021**

feпа board member Silvia Schönenberger and managing director Marcel Dreier did a follow-up in Harare with participants from the previous year. Not all of them did as well as the two we interviewed. But these two impressed us very much with their demeanour, their skills in analysing the challenges for girls and young women in their communities and the commitment they put in to implement the solutions they developed. It was also pleasing to see that the graduates continue to have lively and motivating exchanges with each other. They also continue to profit from access to trainings and to economic opportunities, including the rotating fund. Some are able to use their voices in more advanced bodies such as the EU Youth Sounding Board and the Youth Advisory Board of the USAID Local Works Zimbabwe Programme.

We also received direct, informal feedback from 2021 participants in interactions with them during a visit in Zimbabwe in March 2022. This feedback was very positive: the participants assessed the impact it made on them as high and sustained.

**finance report:** see YETT report