



# SPOTLIGHTING ZAMBIA *October 2023*

## 1. POSSIBILITIES YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

In June, 2022, PYD identified 30 Girls to form the first AGYWs action Groups in Musenga Township in Kasama, Northern Province. The purpose of AGYW Action Groups among others is to Advocate for the Rights of Adolescents girls and young Women in Musenga Township.

Georgina Kapena was among 30 girls who were identified at that time.

Though Her Voice Project- Funds, PYD facilitated the identification and formation of additional AGYW Action Groups with total membership of 30 in Musenga Township.

The process of identification was purely consultative in that key stakeholders who included community leaders and existing AGYWs in Musenga township were involved.

Georgina Kapena was among the 30 girls who were identified at that time. Georgina had low self-esteem and could not comfortably speak in Public. She was a shy adolescent girl who had very little knowledge about the Rights of a girl child. she had no opportunity to learn about girls' rights.

However, through support from Her Voice Fund, PYD engaged the AGYWs in Advocacy training to increase their knowledge about adolescent and reproductive health rights of a girl child. This enhanced their capacity to engage in decision maker on matters of interest for adolescent girls and young women.

After a series of interventions Georgina demonstrated increased levels of confidence and self-esteem. This was exhibited during Radio discussion programs where AGYWs had confidence to discuss matters affecting them such as early marriages, Sexual and gender-based Violence and drug abuse.

During our outreach activities, it was observed that AGYWs had developed the ability to engage community leaders during community meetings. AGYWs were able to challenge negative practices that hinder the rights of a girl child.

During the stakeholder engagement meeting held August, 2022, Georgina represented the Girls to present a speech that appealed to Government to ensure inclusiveness of the girl's voice in of decision-making process at all levels.

## 2. RURAL FOCUS ZAMBIA

### THE STORY OF A DOUBLE ORPHAN AGYW AGED 16 OF BWEMBYA VILLAGE.

Rural Focus Zambia has been working with Ministry Of Health to strengthen coordination of community adolescent girls and young women in Kasama District particularly in Bwembya Village to allow them to carry the vision of “Her Voice”. In view of this Rural Focus Zambia in partnership with Kasama District Health office held an outreach to sensitise adolescent girls and young women on decision making in sexual reproductive health services and gender-based violence and say NO to early marriages including HIV prevention measures awareness. 4 AGYW participated in the dissemination of advocacy material for their participation in the decision making process during this event.

The program was done in this community during the Child Health week program. 149 adolescent girls and young women aged 15-28 years old were sensitized on the use of modern contraceptives, Early marriages and Gender based violence awareness and HIV prevention measures such as PREP.

During this program one community AGYW aged 16 Years old made a turn her life. The girl is double orphan who ended up living with the grandmother who is financially handicapped and she was out of school. Due to this, the girl narrative to the AGYW representative Natasha that she started prostitution in order for her to survive and she was not aware of PREP but only knew about condoms without knowing the correct use. In other instances older men would take advantage of her sexually as she moved around in search of piece work.

RUFOZ team and the AGYW did the counselling of the girl and she joined the AGYW action group. The Girl is now in school through the facilitation made by RUFOZ. The girls is able to educate and advocate for others in school at Kapongolo day secondary school in health related issues e.g HIV prevention measures such as PREP. The girl is able to use her past (story) as a medium of change.

This has been a success story for RUFOZ has it has been an example to other AGYW that indulging in prostitution isn't a good idea but to seek for help from organisation and groups like RUFOZ provides. RUFOZ is proud to say that the message is being deserrminated effectively.

Many thanks goes to Her Voice Fund, Ambassador and the country lead in ensuring that this change occurs.



### 3. RESILIENCE YOUTH FOR CHANGE

YOCA success story for August 2023 - Nominated as District Chair for Adolescent Programming. Our entry in the district was in 2020 through the HER Voice Fund. It was a hurdle for us to to be recognized in the district but through perseverance and consistency we now lead. Our vision as we chaired today's Adolescent Health Technical Working Group Meeting was how to advance the SRHR agenda in an agrarian district with focuss on Self Care and AGYW inclusivity in decision making spaces. #SelfCare #HERVoiceFund#YPlusAimingHigher

### 4. HOPE YOUTH NETWORK

THE STORY OF SARAH A 19 YEARS- OLD LIVING WITH DISABILITY.

In the Implementation of HERVOICE fund project,a heartwarming success story when the program reached out to an adolescent girl living disability. Sarah,a 19 year old girl with physical disability,had faced significant challenges accessing healthcare information and support in her community. Her disability made it difficult to attend regular program activities and often felt excluded from discussions on Sexual Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS prevention due to communication barriers.

Recongnising the importance of inclusivity,the team collaborated with the local disability support organisation to develop tailored workshop for Sarah.These workshops were conducted in accessible venues by providing transportation for her.

The impact of the inclusive approach was transformative for Sarah,she not only gained vital knowledge about Sexual Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS prevention but also found a newfound sense of empowerment. Sarah's confidence and self-esteem flourished as she actively engaged in discussions and shared her experience with her peers. With support from her newfound friends from the program,she started advocating for disability rights within her community,breaking down barriers and raising awareness about the unique challenges faced by adolescent girls with disabilities. Sarah's journey serves as a shining example of how the HERVOICE FUND'S commitment in inclusivity and collaboration can empower every young woman,regardless of her circumstances to become strong and vocal advocate for her own rights and the rights of other.



### 3. ADOLESCENT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ADVOCATES

- ARHA has closely been working with MOH, MOE including community members to help enhance adolescent capabilities through adolescent voices.
- Among the AGYWs that were trained to help in the implementation of the HERVOICE project, (the peer mentors are key members as they help in the dissemination of information).
- ARHA/ HERVOICE conducted a stakeholders engagement meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to enlighten the stakeholders of the HERVOICE project, the aim, as well as its strategies.
- During the meeting an adolescent was given a platform to give a presentation on the challenges that adolescents are facing in line with accessing services and the leading factors of teenage pregnancies in the district.
- Through the deliberations had ARHA was invited by MOH to present the HERVOICE strategy and how the implementation has been in the communities and schools. The collaborations had, has since yield a positive impact in terms of the reporting mechanisms, linkage to care for the AGYWs who are on ART. The one stop centre has also shown interest and are yet to conduct a training for our peer mentors on GBV and how cases can be easily reported directly to the office.

### 4. ZAMBIA YOUTH PLATFORM

**The success story of Ruth, a 15-year-old AGYW Adolescent Girl living with a single parent, is a testament to the impactful work of the life skills mentorship under the Winning with Women and Girls project.**

The Zambian Youth Platform (ZYP) operates as a beacon of change, dedicated to fostering youth-led movements and amplifying young voices to shape the socio-political landscape of Zambia. In collaboration with the Department of Education in the southern province of Choma, ZYP conducted an impactful awareness session on positive and negative thinking in relation to peer pressure at Shampanda Secondary School with only AGYWs from grade 8-12. During one such session, a remarkable incident unfolded. A 15-year-old girl, previously heading down a troubling path, was deeply inspired. Intrigued, she approached the mentors afterward and was encouraged to attend ZYP's weekly sessions at the youth hub. Gradually, she became a regular participant.

As part of their program, the team also make home visits to the AGYW being mentored. During one such visit to Natasha's home, they met her mother, who shared a heart-breaking story of her daughter's decline. Natasha had been changing her behaviour, staying out late, and even turning to alcohol. Upon visiting her home, the young girl, formerly known as Ruth, had veered into negative influences, even changing her name to Natasha in grade 7 without her parents' knowledge. She indulged in risky behaviours, arriving home late and experimenting with alcohol. Her mother, a single parent, felt helpless, watching her daughter's decline.

However, instead of judgment, the mentors provided counselling and support. They explained how through the Wining with women and girls supported by the HERVOICE Fund educates Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) in crucial life skills and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). They emphasized leadership, assertiveness, and self-care, tailoring sessions to address the unique challenges faced by AGYW. Hearing this, the mother encouraged her daughter to actively participate in the awareness sessions.

With unwavering support from her mother and peers, the Ruth transformed. Through the focus on Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC), she improved her behaviour she stopped returning home late, and most importantly, she embraced the responsibility for her siblings in her mother's absence.

As a member of the "Winning with Women and Girls" program, Ruth learned how to take care of herself and make informed choices about her circle of friends. It was a challenging journey, but the progress made was nothing short of a remarkable success.

Ruth's story demonstrates the power of youth-led initiatives and community support in helping AGYW overcome challenges, make positive life choices, and become responsible, informed, and empowered individuals. It is a story of resilience, transformation, and the potential for a brighter future for young women in Zambia.

