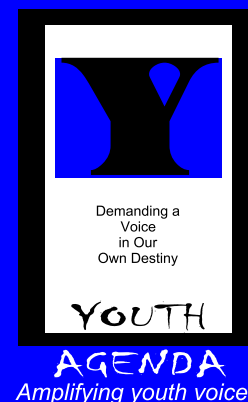


The New Age Voices



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Agenda gets governance and democracy nominationas artist Maseko receives award for Gukurahundi Exhibition

YOUTH Agenda Trust has been nominated for the 2010 governance and democracy award for its outstanding work in promoting good governance and democracy in Zimbabwe by Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CZC).

The nomination was in recognition of the outstanding role that YAT has played in mobilizing young people to participate in the constitutional reform process.

Accepting the nomination certificate, YAT coordinator Arnold Chamunogwa acknowledged the efforts of CZC in profiling the work of young human rights defenders.

"CZC remains one of the few organisations which acknowledges and celebrates the work of young people in various fields. The coalition has been consistent in advocating for intergenerational leadership within the Zimbabwean society, hence this is recognition of the sacrifices of many young people who work towards the democratization of Zimbabwe," Chamunogwa said.

YAT has since the start of the constitution making process been holding countrywide road shows and youth meetings aimed at encouraging young people to participate in the COPAC led process.

The theme for YAT's constitution outreach is, "Our constitution, our future, let's join hands".

Meanwhile, Owen Maseko, the Bulawayo based artist whose touching work on the Gukurahundi massacres provoked State security agents who asked him to close his exhibition before dragging him to court has won a human rights award for his efforts.

The artist, who is being harassed for his exhibition about the Gukurahundi atrocities committed under the Mugabe regime, received a Human Rights award for his bravery last week from the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition.

Crisis decided to give Maseko the Democracy and Governance Individual Award in recognition of his bravery in giving a face and voice to the Gukurahundi massacres through visual arts.

Owen Maseko's exhibition was displayed at the Bulawayo Art Gallery in March but was soon closed down and he was arrested. Maseko was placed on remand on charges of insulting the President.

In August the government passed a law banning his work and in September he was dragged to court to face charges of 'publishing falsehoods prejudicial to the State'. He could be thrown into prison for 20 years.

"I have had such a hard time since March. It was a really great thing for me, it was a good thing for Crisis to recognise me," said Maseko after winning the award.

However, Maseko said his exhibition came at a great personal cost to him. "I am terribly under a lot of pressure. I am kind of living in an isolated environment. Even my fellow artists don't want to associate with me anymore and many other people around. Maybe because they are scared of the sensitivity of my matter or they wouldn't want to associate with me in case they get harassed by the police. Human rights work is quite a lonely thing to do," he said.

He added that his family has also been under pressure, with his wife having to make frequent prison and court visits.

"There is always a tribal reasoning when it comes to Gukurahundi. They commonly say it is a Matabeleland problem. Maybe at some point the government will come out there and say violation of human rights is violation of human rights whether they are black, white or that tribe or that religion," Maseko said.

The Gukurahundi era marks a dark time in Zimbabwe's history. Between 1982 and 1987 the Zimbabwean government headed by Robert Mugabe unleashed the Korean trained Fifth Brigade on innocent civilians in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces, killing more than 20,000 people.



YAT Co-Ordinator Arnold Chamunogwa receiving the 2010 Governance And Democracy nomination from NANGO Chairperson Dadirai Chikwengo as Brian Kagoro looks on

Red card for POSA

IN a rare use of common sense by Zanu PF Members of Parliament, the legislators have finally seen the light and have agreed with the two Movement for Democratic Change formations to have the draconian Public Order and Security Act amended to remove oppressive statutes of the Act.

POSA is a repressive law borne out of the colonial Law and Order (Maintenance) Act (Loma), which was crafted by the Ian Smith regime to suppress freedom of expression, movement and opposition politics by Africans.

In order to cow opposition elements to its rule, Zanu PF has ensured that the draconian law is used on hapless civilians whom it views as outposts of democracy.

Effectively so, Zanu PF has succeeded to trample on its rivals which has seen many opposition players especially from the main Movement for Democratic Change headed by Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC-T) being arrested countless times on trumped up charges of holding rallies without police approval.

The evil law has also been used on the civic society where activists have been arrested and detained by the Zimbabwe Republic Police for carrying out civic activities which Zanu PF regards as an extension of MDC programmes.

During the Second Reading Stage of the Public Order and Security Act Amendment Bill, which was brought to the House of Assembly as a private member's Bill by MDC-T Chief Whip Innocent Gonese, there was a surprising show of solidarity among the MPs who have clashed over the law in the past.

A top Zanu PF official who spoke to *The New Age Voices* on condition of anonymity said that the party was running scared because reality is dawning on them that they will not win the next election which is still being whispered in the political corridors that it may be held next month.

"All is not well in the party, there are a lot of divisions so the President (Robert Mugabe) is not taking any chances in the event that the party loses the election. They

do not want such repressive laws that they have blessed in the past being used on themselves. It's a catch 22 situation," said the official who is also a Mashonaland Central legislator.

Zvishavane MP Obert Matshalaga (Zanu PF) and Mberengwa East MP Makhosini Hlongwane (Zanu PF) said the proposed amendments to POSA were a welcome move that would guarantee that freedom of assembly and speeches as well as other freedoms are not trampled upon.

"As we support this Bill, we must also support those whose responsibility it is to ensure that we exercise this freedom of association," said Matshalaga.

Hlongwane said Zanu PF was simply fulfilling its promises of the liberation struggle and said the move by its legislators to sweeten the draconian law was a fulfillment of the promises.

"We support the amendments to POSA. Zanu PF liberated this country and therefore brought these freedoms,"

Hlongwane said.

Gonese welcomed the decision by Zanu PF MPs which he said took him by surprise as he had not expected them to support his motion.

"I say that there is a new spirit in this august House and I believe this is going to be the start of good things to come," said Gonese.

Bulawayo South MP, Eddie Cross (MDC-T), said the amendments to the Bill should be supported as that would remove elements that hindered democracy.

POSA has been one of Zanu PF's effective tools of oppression and if the proposed amendments sail through, Zimbabwe's political terrain will never be the same and comes at a time when Zimbabwe is still battling to convince Western donors that normalcy has returned to the country which had plunged into incessant periods of turmoil.

COPAC reaches out to diaspora

THE beleaguered Constitutional and Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) is making frantic efforts to salvage the crumbling constitution making exercise and will soon receive submissions from Zimbabweans living in the Diaspora after the Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Interface (ZDDI) held a constitutional outreach meeting last week at the London Metropolitan University.

The idea of the outreach was to give Zimbabwean organisations and individuals in the UK an opportunity to submit their views to the constitutional reform process being led by COPAC.

The spokesman for ZDDI, Chofamba Sithole said the outreach meeting was mainly designed to solicit public submissions along the lines of the key talking points used by COPAC in its outreach exercise.

"ZDDI will collate the output from the outreach meeting into a document that we will submit directly to COPAC," Sithole said. ZDDI chairman Dr Alex Magaisa challenged Zimbabweans in the UK to be the change they wanted to see by coming forward to express their views at the meeting.

"We need to get the authorities in

Zimbabwe to recognise the value of their foreign-based human capital, and this constitutional reform exercise presents the Zimbabwe Diaspora with an opportunity to be proactive in advocating for their rights. We in the Diaspora must recognise that any new Constitution will affect us and our children in many ways but if we do not take action to be heard we can have no one to blame but ourselves," Dr Magaisa said.

ZDDI is at the forefront of promoting closer engagement between the Diaspora and the Zimbabwean State, business and civil society organisations and sees Diaspora participation in the constitutional reform exercise as an important step in working towards this goal.

In September last year, ZDDI hosted a successful investment, migration and development conference which contributed significantly to the makings of a new Diaspora engagement policy by the Inclusive Government.

On 1 October in Johannesburg South Africa saw the first ever Zimbabwean Diaspora Constitutional Consultation with COPAC in a meeting organised by the Council of Zimbabwe Christian Leaders UK and the South Africa based Zimbabwe Exiles Forum.

COPAC was represented by Co-Chairs Douglas Mwonzora (MDC-T), Paul Magwana (ZANU (PF) and the Personal Assistant to Edward Mkhosi (MDC-M), Mr Maxwell Zimuto whilst the Diaspora was represented by Constitutional Coalition (zimcc), The Zimbabwe Development Chamber, as well as the Global Zimbabwe Forum among others.

The purpose of the meeting was for the co-chairs to explain to the Diaspora how their views could be effectively collected and incorporated into the COPAC process.

Engagement with the Diaspora was a watershed moment for Zimbabwe's constitutional reform process as previously the Diaspora felt that they had been excluded in the all important exercise of drafting a supreme law for the country.

The Diaspora coalition used the meeting to highlight some preliminary constitutional issues from the Diaspora that include the demand for the vote, both at the Referendum stage and in future national elections and the desire for dual or multiple citizenship.

Also highlighted were the importance of land reform, the importance of upholding Zimbabwe's traditional institutions and recognition of the nation's

war veterans and creation of a reasonable social support system for them.

The Zimbabwean Diaspora groups requested COPAC to include them in future processes and structures such as the thematic committees, the Second National Stakeholders Conference, the drafting stage and the Constitutional referendum.

COPAC assured the Diaspora that the Zimbabwean Diaspora community's views will be taken and made part and parcel of the final product. "Originally we were going to consult the Diaspora but were restricted by the funding problem. There is no political opposition to Diaspora participation," said Mwonzora. COPAC also tasked the Zimbabwean Diaspora community to consult widely and consolidate views in a singular Diaspora document.

"Consult even the groups in the Diaspora that you don't agree with or have different interests from you," Mwonzora said. The views are expected to be submitted to COPAC by the 25th of October 2010 for consideration. Further consultations are going to take place amongst Diaspora groups in the next few weeks, resulting in the submission of a formal document to COPAC.

Zimbabwe revokes leave for school-going parents

ZIMBABWE'S education ministry has backtracked on a new policy, introduced in August, to grant pregnant schoolgirls and the prospective fathers maternity and paternity leave from school, and has opted for disciplinary measures instead.

"Learners in all schools may be suspended, excluded or expelled from school for various acts of misconduct of a serious nature," Stephen Mahere, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture, said in a circular.

"Pregnancy of a learner, and being responsible for it, are such an example of misdemeanor of a serious nature. The law provides for the exclusion of a learner who falls pregnant, and expulsion of a learner responsible for it," the circular warned.

After consultations between the

school and parents or guardians, a girl could be readmitted to school three months after a baby's birth at the grade or form she had been in before she had the baby, Mahere said.

However, the boy responsible for the pregnancy would be considered for admission at another school, and only after a period of 12 months.

"It should be noted that re-admission of the boy learner is not automatic, as approval would have to be sought and granted from the ministry of education before re-admission in any other formal school," the circular said.

"There cannot be maternity or paternity leave for learners in schools. In this regard, it can only be exclusion or expulsion from school." Kubatana.net

YETT hosts young women's festival

THE Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust (YETT) and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) in collaboration with young women's networks and formations in Southern Africa, will be hosting a Southern African Young Women's Festival (SAYWF) in Harare.

The festival will be held from 24 to 28 October 2010 and will see young women from all over the region converging for the festival.

The gathering will draw young women from Angola, Botswana, DRC, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Participants to the event will be selected through an application process to be part of the 5 day festival.

To qualify, candidates should be between 18 and 30 years, working in organisations or networks and formations committed to social justice especially women's rights. "University students who provide proof of interest in women's rights issues will also be considered and selection will be on a first come first served basis," said YETT on its official website.

Meanwhile YETT is running a radio programme on ZBC called Zvevechidiki which is broadcast every Wednesday at 3pm.

The first and second episodes of the programme focused on the constitution while the third one focused on the national youth policy.

Harare Outreach ... confusion reigns

THE embattled Constitutional and Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) management committee has once again postponed Harare Outreach meetings to this weekend after the initial outreach was disrupted by ZANU PF in Harare over two weeks ago.

Last week COPAC announced the meetings would be held last Friday and Saturday but The New Age Voices is reliably informed that there were no proper logistical arrangements that had been put in place to cater for the outreach leading to its postponement.

"The postponement is due to logistical challenges," said Mangwana last week. The COPAC co-chair said political intimidation and violence have dogged the constitution-making process that is way behind schedule.

He said there were some rural areas where COPAC teams were yet to finalise outreach consultations due to an

unfavourable political climate.

"Throughout the outreach exercise we have faced a number of political challenges. "What happened in Harare appeared as if it was a new thing, but no, that is why we still have teams in areas like Manicaland that are still finishing the exercise. It is because of these political tensions," he said.

Mangwana also called on the police to stop supporters of political parties from being bused in from other areas. Zanu PF has been at the forefront of busing people from peri-urban communities to contribute to Harare outreach.

Mangwana said they have asked leaders from all the major parties to publicly and in writing denounce violence, intimidation, racism and other malpractices during the outreach programme.

"We have also tasked the co-Ministers of Home Affairs, Theresa Makone

and Kembo Mohadi to ensure the constitutional meetings must be held peacefully. We hereby call upon the Commissioner-General Augustine Chihuri to ensure that mechanisms are put in place for the effective maintenance of law and order during the meetings," Mangwana said.

Douglas Mwonzora, the MDC-T co-chairperson, said COPAC had taken note of the dangerous political environment and has put in place measures to ensure that violence is abated when the programme resumes in Harare next week.

"There were incidences of violence, that we cannot deny," said Mwonzora. "As COPAC, we have put a host of measures to ensure that the outreach exercise in Harare is conducted peacefully," he said.

The drafting of a new constitution in Zimbabwe is seen as a major step forward to new elections and the end of the political crisis that followed the violent and controversial ballot in 2008.

The process of consulting the Zimbabwean people on a new constitution is now set to come to end, once the Harare and Chitungwiza meetings are held next weekend.

70 teams of 25 people each have in the last four months moved across the country holding consultations in each of the country's 210 voting districts

At the end of this month the teams are expected to report their findings to 17 commissions specializing in a wide range of issues, such as human rights, elections and the justice system. These commissions will then draft the document, which will be submitted to Parliament, before it goes to the people in a referendum.

Due to intimidation by Zanu PF, it is highly unlikely that the new constitution will mirror the views of ordinary Zimbabweans.

State security agents terrorise radio recipients

THE dreaded state security agents from Kwekwe descended on Tiger Reef Mine in Silobela constituency last week and harassed members of the community demanding to know names of people who had gathered for a peace building programme at the mine.

The security agents swamped the mine, two days after Youth Agenda Trust held a peace building road show that was aimed at promoting peace in the community at the same time uniting youths in the area.

It was at this meeting that YAT distributed radios to youths and other members of the community who are marginalized so that they could be able to

keep track with national developments since most of the people in the area do not have access to other forms of media such as newspapers and televisions.

Upon hearing the news, members of the dreaded state security invaded the mine and made follow ups on all those who had received the radios threatening them with unspecified action.

Members of the community who spoke to the New Age Voices said that the dreaded security agents accused them of carrying out Movement for Democratic Change activities in the guise of civic society mobilisation.

Youth Agenda Chairman of the area

Tona Winya, secretary Melody Muvhimi and one who could only be identified as Moyo were some of the youths who were at the receiving end and had their radios confiscated and warned them not to accept such gifts in the future.

YAT programmes officer Lawrence Mashungu said that it was unfortunate that state security agents still view civic society as an extension of the MDC.

“It is surprising that we still have people who continue to believe that civic society and the MDC are one. That is a wrong perception because the MDC is a political party and organisations such as Youth Agenda will continue to operate in the

spirit of civic society,” Mashungu said.

Meanwhile, Youth Agenda Trust also held a sustained dialogue meeting in Chinhoyi which drew many youths in the area, with some being drawn from political parties while others were drawn from community based youths groups that have an interest in the field of conflict transformation and peace building.

YAT also held a belated International Day of the Youth road show in Gokwe two weeks ago and saw hundreds of youths from all political parties in the area attending show that breathed life into the usually sleepy growth point.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education for an HIV free Generation

By Tatenda Songore

Whilst the world is struggling to bring lasting solutions to various issues that are threatening to wipe the whole face of earth, chief amongst them Climate change and HIV/AIDS, Adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) continues to be a pressing issue in Zimbabwe and the Southern Africa Region.

With HIV/AIDS, unsafe abortions, complications during pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium contributing to some of the main causes of mortality and morbidity for young people in the Region. Unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STI) and lack of access to contraception continues to have a negative impact on their wellbeing. The development of young peoples' health is often worsened by the fact that ASRH is seldom a political or financial priority for politicians and governments. A combination of lack of equal access to quality health services, insufficient sexual education programs and health services that are not convenient for youth to use continue the cycle of poor sexual and reproductive health for most at-risk populations.

This is just a general view of the region but there have been great improvements in Access to education on prevention, treatment, care and support. Zimbabwe has made great strides in reversing the HIV/AIDS epidemic with the prevalence falling from over 20% in 2005 to just less than 14% in 2009, this is indeed commendable but a lot still needs to be done. In other countries the prevalence is less than one. The question would be, how best can we arrest and reverse the epidemic? Young people hold the key to an HIV free generation and for the elders it is your responsibility to see that this happens. Some might say how can you tame a misguided crop of youngsters, then my reply is simple, “you need to develop a positive mindset just like a farmer planting a seed in the rainy season, only one thing is certain to him (bumper harvest)”

Victors In Motion Youth Association is making positive and effective steps by inspiring young people on the grassroots using a rights-based and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health. “A rights-based approach combines

human rights, development and social activism to promote justice, equality and freedom. Implementing a rights-based approach in youth sexual and reproductive health programmes implies to empower young people to take action and to claim what is their due, rather than passively accepting what adults (government, teachers and other stakeholders) decide for them. A rights-based approach involves increasing access to quality youth friendly services and providing comprehensive gender-sensitive sex-positive sexuality education for all young people. It is about promoting and preserving human dignity.” (IPPF 2006)

Good sexuality education is essential to help young people to prepare for healthy and fulfilling lives. High quality information and comprehensive sexuality education can equip them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to make informed choices now and in the future; to enhance their independence and self-esteem; and to help them to experience their sexuality and relationships in a positive and pleasurable way. In addition, there is a large body of research showing that high quality, comprehensive and rights-based sexuality education programmes can delay initiation of sexual activity and unprotected intercourse, decrease the number of sexual partners, increase contraceptive and condom use, and therefore decrease unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections among young people. This education is a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs and values about identity, relationships and intimacy

It is high time we give our youngsters all the relevant information about sex and reproduction with the good motive that they can make better decisions. I recently gave an assignment to a group of young appies at Delta Training Institute Harare; they were to bring a condom to the classroom. The response the next morning was zero percent. They all had varied reasons why they could not bring one. Some cited that they were too young to carry condoms, others said they were scared to drop one in a commuter and what if my parents see me with one? But my question still stood, “Are young people not having sex?” If they are why is it a taboo for teachers and parents to talk about condoms,

some site religion as the major contributory factor but at the same time we need to talk about contraceptives to our youth. If we do not educate them who will? It is high time that we say a spade by its name because some culture might not hold in the face of HIV and AIDS. Churches also need to look critically into this issue. Some time ago I approached some church leaders requesting to do an HIV sensitization workshop only to be told that it goes against the anointing of the man of God. I am not sure about this one, but I am sure that some youngsters are engaging in risky behaviour and most have little knowledge about protecting themselves and their partners. I would like to encourage faith leaders to scale up knowledge on comprehensive rights based education because they lose nothing by doing so, whilst the opposite can have devastating results.

Let me just conclude my part one with the recommendations from the 2009 Demographic Health survey report that, the country(Multi-sectoral response) needs to scale up prevention programs that will target those who are already infected 'Prevention for Positives'. Zimbabwe should increase advocacy and treatment literacy campaigns to reduce the number of HIV negative people taking ARV. Scaling up of prevention campaigns targeting youth 15-19 and 20-24 with emphasis on abstinence and condom use for the sexually active is also needed. Zimbabwe should also continue to scale up PMTCT to reduce neonatal infection. There is an urgent need to ensure quality of HIV testing in the PMTCT and other program settings. These positive signs in our fight against HIV and AIDS should spur every Zimbabwean to redouble his and her efforts and commit themselves to further reduce the burden of HIV and AIDS

Let me pose a few questions for the youngsters, if you are HIV positive would you prefer having protected sex before disclosing your status or disclosure first? Do you feel you have a right to be told about someone's HIV status? As a result to what extent do you feel a person living with HIV has a right to privacy when it comes to disclosing their status? This is a rather difficult personal question but key to an HIV free Generation.



YAT official officiating at Peace Building road show that was held in Silobela. Some of the youths here had the radios they had received confiscated by State Agents



SCMZ, AYG and YAT officials pose a photo with the winning team of the Our Constitution-Ngatitaure-Asikhulumeni-Speak Out Soccer Tournament in Wedza

CIVIC SOCIETY CONVERGE FOR IDEAS FESTIVAL

CIVIC society organisations on Thursday descended on Bulawayo for the annual Ideas Festival which was held from October 7 to 10 and was running under the theme, "Towards a democratic transition...The Reform Agenda". The festival was being hosted by Bulawayo Agenda and drew 62 organisations from across the country's civic society where various organisations exhibited their various materials and services to the general public in Bulawayo.

Speaker of Parliament Lovemore Moyo, chairman of the board of trustees Kucaca Phulu, Bulawayo Agenda Executive Director Anastacia Moyo were among those who toured the stands.

Youth Agenda Trust (YAT) was among some the civic society organisations who took part in the exhibition which participants said surpassed expectations.

YAT went to Bulawayo to showcase at the event buoyed by its nomination for the best Governance and Democracy award that it received from Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition.

In October 2008, Bulawayo Agenda successfully launched the Ideas Festival Which attracted scores of civic society organizations and has been building on that strength since.

Following the success of the past two events and the overwhelming support received from partner organisations and stakeholders, Bulawayo Agenda hosted the 3rd ideas festival which was also a huge success.

"One of the organisation's beliefs is that all citizens share the responsibility of the past and can all contribute towards building the future.

"The Ideas Festival is the organisation's humble way of contributing to the reconciliation of Zimbabweans and the rebuilding of a new and better Zimbabwe," Bulawayo Agenda said.

The Ideas Festival includes activities among them, Democracy Fair, an exhibition for CSOs and NGOs and various sector specific symposia among them local governance, women, and youth and leadership symposia.



Youth Agenda Trust officials captured here at their Ideas Festival stand

Do Not Fight: Wedza youths urged

YOUTHS in Wedza district have been urged to denounce all forms of violence in the remaining stages of the constitution making process and foster the spirit of togetherness and ensure that the final document truly reflects their views.

Speaking to youths who gathered at Gatora Primary school in Wedza last week, Achieve Your Goal Trust (AYGT), Youth Agenda Trust (YAT) and Student Christian Movement of Zimbabwe (SCMZ) officials called upon the youths to embrace sustainable ways of living instead of being swayed by the whims of self serving

politicians and ensure that they actively take part.

The organisations also took the opportunity to solicit views from young people who attended the event on how the COPAC process fared and prospects of the youths in the next stages of constitution making.

The youths had gathered for a soccer tournament that was organised by the organisations to try and unite the polarized community and to preach the gospel of peace.

The Wedza area has in the past been

used by the Zanu PF regime as a resource base for youth militia whom it would train and drug with harmful alcoholic beverages to perpetrate violence especially in Wedza and Chikomba districts of Mashonaland East.

Fortune Nyamande of YAT told The *New Age Voices* that the 3 organisations are deeply concerned by the continued isolation of the Wedza community in national processes especially the National Healing and constitution making programmes and said that the aim of their outreach programmes are aimed at getting the youth

position on COPAC to date.

The soccer fiesta was attended by thousands of youths some of whom travelled from as far as Goto, Mt Saint Mary's, Sanganayi and Dendenyore villages who braved the hot weather that characterized the afternoon.

The organisations also held a community discussion on the constitution making process at Zaire Growth point, about 15 km from Wedza.

The discussion had an overwhelming response from youths in the area who actively participated in the process.

Ideas Festival In Pictures



Speaker of Parliament Lovemore Moyo touring the stands



Part of the people who visited the various stands of civic groups that exhibited at the festival



Bulawayo Agenda officials at their stand



A man asks questions to YIDEZ officials at the Ideas Festival