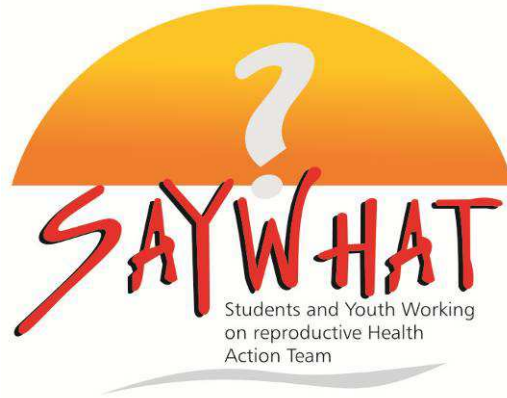




Gender Department

Mid-year Report



JUNE 2013

Introduction and Background

In the first half of the year 2013, SAYWHAT continued to program on and mainstream gender in all its initiatives through its Gender Department. In the first half of the year the department has managed 6 projects funded by AWDF, Ford Foundation, HIVOS, OXFAM, UNFPA and RTI. The projects are currently covering 15 tertiary institutions nationwide; maintaining focus towards female students due to their increased vulnerability. The gender department coordinated its activities targeting young women through the Web for Life Network- a network of female students that is responsible for coordinating female students' SRHR initiatives. The key Sexual and Reproductive Health issues on the agenda through the different projects have been on Positive living; Gender Based Violence; Networking and Advocacy for SRH; Dual Protection; Multiple and Concurrent Partnerships; Information and Communication Technology for HIV prevention; Peer Education; Capacity building; female student leadership and contraception among others. The RTI project has helped SAYWHAT develop a research proposal to help determine effective practises in responding to SHR and gender issues of students in tertiary institutions.

So far in the year the gender department has reached out to approximately 1 800 female students in tertiary institutions through the direct implementation of its projects. Female Students have benefited through information sharing, social media interactions and reach out through the campaigns. The department's main thrust has been to promote and protect the rights of vulnerable female students particularly addressing issues related to pregnancy, sexual harassment and positive living. Initiatives have been able to support the needs of female students and provide the relevant information and skills that strengthen for HIV prevention and positive living.

The department has learnt that students still lack adequate support, services, psycho-social support, mentorship and leadership in demanding and accessing their health care needs. At the beginning of the year the department managed to capacitate female student in positions of leadership in their colleges with skills of coordinating and mobilising other young women from different groups such as the Students' Representative Council, Christian Union, Rotaract Club and Peer Education to promote SRHR.

Limited knowledge on rights and policies continue to be barriers for active participation among the female students. Positively, the integration of gender, SRH and HIV and AIDS in interventions targeting female students has given an opportunity to strengthen responses to SRHR challenges in the colleges. This has also helped in realising the need for a continuous program designed to impart skills, empower, mentor and support young women to learn, explore and get involved with gender and women's rights issues to improve the lives of women and girls within their communities.

The Web for Life interventions have provided the students with support and guidance 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.

In this half year of 2013, the SAYWHAT Gender Department celebrates the appointment of a female National Coordinating Committee Chairperson Hazel from Bulawayo Poly since 2007. This marks efforts of the Web for Life initiatives that continue to seek the empowerment and leadership of female students in all structures.

Summary of Progress

The gender department has contributed to the increased competency in female students to actively participate in college level initiatives and governance issues as well as national initiatives. There has been a notable increase in the assertiveness skills of female students trained in responding to sexual harassment and increased utilization of available contraceptives at college level. Female students in leadership have established platforms to engage with college authorities to critique the state of affairs, policies and sharing ideas on resolving challenges through decision making and active participation.

Currently the department has implemented approximately 40% of its planned activities for 2013. The greater part of the initiatives is scheduled to be implemented in the last half of the year. The already capacitated female students have managed to work as teams to plan and coordinate programmes targeting their peers at college level. The department has supported college work-plans to which the students have successfully implemented their activities.

Through its programmes, the gender department has learnt that young women still face cultural and social challenges which affect their safe space to dialogue and influence decision making on social issues. Female Students' challenges are mainly a result of financial problems, cultural beliefs, misconceptions and lack of power. Limited knowledge on issues of rights and policies continue to be a barrier for active participation among the female students.

The Gender Department has noted opportunities in the following:

- Increased support from college authorities. SRH initiatives are now highly encouraged by the colleges' administration;
- Positive responses from College Principals who in some cases have immediately responded to some of the key challenges of students;
- Coordinated responses at college level, where most college clubs and structures now work together to implement major activities;

- More female students in leadership positions such as the SRC structures which have direct influence in mobilising and coordinating student activities at college level;
- Increased appreciation of SAYWHAT programming and initiatives at college, provincial and national level.

Synopsis of Activities

1. The Breaking the Silence toolkit development Workshop

The breaking the Silence Toolkit Development was attended by 20 college representatives comprised of female students in leadership and college focal persons who made direct inputs in the development and content of the toolkit. The workshop was held from 8th to the 9th of February 2013 at Kragnap in Harare. The toolkit is an effective tool that has been designed to facilitate discussions on critical issues that female students have limited information on. The toolkit development process identifies and will focus on issues of sexual harassment, PMTCT, Female Condom Discussions, MCPs, Intergenerational sex and other key issues on policies that governs SRHR in tertiary institutions.



The workshop identified the following issues as what must be done to address some of the key SRH challenges faced by students in the colleges:

- There is need for social mobilization.
- Curriculum Based interventions on policy
- Promote a health seeking behavior among the students
- Private rooms with an open door policy
- Policies must speak the language of students
- Redress the negative attitudes of the students
- Display or be given the policy through websites and notice boards
- Conduct awareness campaigns using drama and posters
- Expand SRHR to explain the rights and responsibilities of students

It was also noted that issues of referring sexual harassment or GBV are very sensitive and tend to be swept under the carpet. The issue of protocol tends to be too long and further exposes to victimization. The issue of time should also be taken into consideration when crafting policies of sexual harassment.

The Breaking the Silence toolkit is still work under progress and aims to cover most of the issues affecting female students in tertiary institutions.

2. Female student's leadership training - Capacity Building of female leaders in student associations

4 female students from each college were trained on key SRHR, advocacy and leadership components. The female student leadership training was held at Kragnep and was attended by 16 participants from Masvingo Polytechnic, Gweru Polytechnic, Hillside teachers college and HIT between the 21st to the 23rd of February 2013. The 16 female students also discussed the key challenges they face in implementing Sexual and Reproductive



Health and Rights. The project has capacitated female students who are already members of associations so that they become advocates for female students' empowerment. These female students already hold positions of power and found the relevance in building their capacity in advocating for female students sexual and reproductive health and rights of students. The workshop paved way for young women from different clubs within tertiary institutions to share information and experiences and also to find ways on how to disseminate information to other female students in the colleges.

Young women seemed not to know their various roles and responsibilities within the various clubs. It seemed as if most expected a lot, for instance if you are in the Christian Union you are expected to be holy all the time, which might not be the case always. Discussions during the workshop noted that Christian Union clubs tend to avoid discussions on sex and sexuality by limiting them to issues of abstinence and fornication. This however paves way for young women's vulnerability (due to pretence) which might lead to STIs including HIV and even unwanted pregnancies. This pretence goes to the extent of being normalized..

3. Sexual Harassment Public Lecture

A public Lecture on sexual harassment was conducted at Kushinga Phikelela which increased the knowledge levels of students on the different forms of sexual harassment and the referral paths for survivors. Following the public lecture, college authorities from Kushinga Phikelela realized the need to strengthen their sexual harassment policy and encouraged students to report such cases.

4. Campus Hostel Dialogues

2 Hostel Dialogues were hosted by Belvedere Technical Teachers and Harare Institute of Technology to discuss the key Sexual and Reproductive Health Issues. The hostel talks reached out to 80 female students.

5. Campaigns and Commemorations

15 female students participated at the Women's Action Group Maternal Health Advocacy Campaign to promote maternal health among women. 5 Web for Life members attended the SAfAIDS International Women's Day Commemoration.

6. Gender Based Violence National Tour

SAYWHAT in partnership with Zimbabwe Young Women's Network for Peace Building facilitated Gender Based Violence sessions between the 8th to the 18th of April at Harare Institute of Technology, Great Zimbabwe University, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Bindura University of Science Education, Midlands State University and Lupane State. The discussions were held to capacitate young men and women on the different forms of Gender Based Violence, to encourage students to report cases of Gender Based Violence, the referral path for survivors of Gender Based Violence and to understand the Gender Based Violence Policy and how it applies to students within Tertiary Institutions. Information on the Domestic Act was disseminated to the students and this made them more aware of the choices as well as dangers surrounding gender based violence. The gender based tour managed to reach out to 139 students from the a-fore mentioned colleges.



Gender based violence discussions at Great Zimbabwe University and Chinhoyi University of Technology

7. Join In Circuit Trainings

SAYWHAT trained 60 female students from Harare, Masvingo, Mutare and Bulawayo in JIC facilitation and mentorship. The training was under the Big sister young Sister initiative which would enable the female students within tertiary institutions to disseminate information to the young sisters within the primary and secondary schools. The JIC toolkit is a toolkit that has seven stations namely, ways of transmission, contraception, condom use, sexually transmitted infections, body language, positive living and protection station. Through this tool Information is disseminated with the incorporation of fun and games and this makes it very enjoyable and easy to understand the information. The training capacitated the female students with facilitation skills, boosted their confidence and made them be mentors to the fellow young sisters.



JIC Facilitation and Mentorship training with peer educators from Hillside teachers college and Bulawayo Polytechnic

8. Networking and Advocacy

The Gender department went on to engage the not so conventional community based radio groups such as Harare radio dialogue on a hot topic around the LGBTI community. These platforms allowed the department to share information on contested SRH focus areas such as homosexuality, SRH rights for young people and the effect of the social media on young people's sexual behavior. These platforms facilitated for a broader reach out including other strategic audiences such as parents, policy actors and makers.

9. Support Visits

The Gender department managed to have support visits at Belvedere Technical Teachers College and Harare Institute of Technology. The visits were an initiative to support college based activities and to further strengthen the already existing relationships between the colleges and SAYWHAT. The support visits proved to be both fruitful, and

the information gained was able to inform relevant programmes within the gender department.

10. Work plan Support

The department was invited by peer educators who are on teaching practice to have a big sister young sister mentorship at Chaplain high school in Gweru. The discussion was to highlight some of the issues that the young women did not have answers to. The young women were asked to write down some of the questions that they had concerning the topics that they had forwarded. The topics that they forwarded are as follows:

- ❖ Discussion on HIV/AIDS
- ❖ dealing with peer pressure
- ❖ behavior change
- ❖ hygiene
- ❖ growing up
- ❖ boys and love
- ❖ abuse
- ❖ interaction with other people

The discussion managed to bridge the gap between big sisters within tertiary institutions and the young sisters who are still in secondary school in a platform that allowed them to share information around challenges that they are facing and possible solution to combat them. The discussion was filled with edutainment activities as the young women showcased their skills in the egg and spoon race as well as the dramas around HIV/AIDS.



Big sister young sister mentorship at Chaplain High School in Gweru

As part of the JIC facilitators work plans, the trained JIC facilitators from Harare Polytechnic in partnership with the facilitators from Belvedere teachers held a JIC run on the 21st of June at Harare Polytechnic. The JIC was in a bid to disseminate SRH information to the other students at the college. The JIC run managed to reach out to about 100 students and various questions around ways of HIV transmission, STIs and Positive Living were asked. The JIC run was also a platform that boosted the facilitators self esteem and confidence.

The gender department managed to have a support meeting on the 4th of June at Belvedere teachers. The meeting was held with the focal person to brief them on SAYWHAT programmes. During the support visit a discussion was held with the college nurse who reiterated that he felt as if he is usually left out when it comes to issues to do with Sexual and Reproductive Health. This issue was however being resolved with the college focal persons that SAYWHAT works with. The college nurse also stated that he has challenges with service delivery for students that are living positively. He reiterated that usually the college does not have money set aside for services such as CD4 count and opportunistic infections and he is finding difficult to refer some of the students to other facilities to get help.

11. Partners Platforms

The Gender Department participated in 2 partner's platform of capacity building knowledge strengthening. An AWDF Fundraising Strategy Development Boot Camp was attended by the Gender Officer who managed to finalise a Fundraising Strategy for SAYWHAT in May. The department also participated at the SAT Maternal Health Care Workshop which helped strengthen capacities and gave new knowledge on key Maternal Health Care issues. The Research Triangle Institute facilitated a 2 Day Workshop on Research Ethics to which the department took part in.

12. Gweru Poly Policy Dialogue Session

1 Policy Dialogue session was held at Gweru Polytechnic College on the 25th of May 2013. The Dialogue was attended by 40 students who deliberated on key SRHR challenges facing students at the college. The students highlighted on how some key policy issues continue to create more conflicts and disadvantage students on campus. Some of the challenges noted were on no availability of a clinic on campus and poor health conditions in the hostels, particularly the female students' hostels.

13. Gweru Poly Symposium

Gweru Poly hosted a Symposium on the 27th and 28th of June 2013. The event shall engaged students at the college and engaged them in awareness raising, policy advocacy, information sharing and dissemination and networking on key Sexual and Reproductive Health issues. The Symposium is aimed at ensuring that students are

empowered with relevant information on how they can protect and promote key sexual and reproductive health and rights as young people. The overall goal of the event was to promote wider community mobilization and participation for gender responsive college communities.. The event empowered Gweru Poly students in addressing sexual and reproductive health issues and promoting availability and uptake of contraceptive alternatives among other gender related challenges.

Gweru Poly invited different partners and stakeholders from Midlands who shall exhibit on issues around Commerce, marketing and health for the students. 40 secondary schools from Gokwe and Mberengwa participate at the symposium. Approximately 650 young people and students were reached out to during the 2 Days. The key activities included information dissemination and sharing and dialogues.

14. 4 Ps Training

20 college representatives from Mutare Teachers College, Mutare Poly, Masvingo Poly and Great Zimbabwe were trained in the 4Ps Campaign as GBV Dialogue Facilitators. The dialogues aim to promote Participation, Programs, Prevention and Protection of women against Gender Based Violence in tertiary institutions.

15. 4Ps Dialogues

15 4Ps Dialogues were held at Belvedere Technical Teachers Colleges and Harare Institute of Technical Teachers College between May and June 2013. The Dialogues have so far reached out to 300 students on Gender Based Violence.

16. Web for Life Safety Net

The Web for Life Safety Net has supported 3 female students in vulnerable situations and who face challenges with tuition fees. 2 female students from Hillside Teachers' College and 1 female student from Bindura University have been supported directly by this fund. The female students are active members of the peer educators' groups at their colleges. There has been increased support for pregnant students and students living with HIV at college level under the web for life safety net.



Lessons learnt

- Limited information and services on contraception
- Appreciation of hostel dialogues among young women
- Students with capacity and willingness

- Organisations working with students – there is an opportunity to partner (for example Doctors)
- Appreciation of hostel dialogues among students and college staff
- Support of college authorities in student driven initiatives
- Students with capacity and willingness
- Effectiveness and positive response when using tools to assist peer educators
- High knowledge levels on SRH issues amongst Bulawayo Peer Educators
- Maternity leave differs from institution to institution based on the amount of work involved, so advocacy should also be aligned to this.
- Communities working together towards a common goal will have a huge impact on the students that they are working with.
- Students in teacher training colleges showed higher knowledge levels around various STIs and their symptoms
- Young women are still not well versed with issues around contraception
- Issues around the LGBTI community are still not accepted within our societies
- SAYWHAT is making greater strides and being recognised in ensuring that SRH concerns of students are heard
- Students within high schools keen to know more on issues to do with sexual and reproductive health





Big Sister Young Sister Mentorship

I Was Here; Learning to make a difference in my community!

“Mentorship is about leadership. I believe I have taken a leadership role in my community by assisting the young sisters.” – Diana, Mutare Teachers’ College

The SAYWHAT Web for Life Network has created a dynamic platform where female students continue to link and learn. Today, the Network has clearly improved the active participation of young women in promoting their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and has strengthened the network around female students’ issues. Its thrust is to develop leadership skills and build the capacity of female students to advance advocacy and influence meaningful decisions on the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of young women.

What difference can female students bring to their communities? Through the Web for Life Mentorship programs female students have found an opportunity to reach out to young girls in their communities. The Big Sister Young Sister program is an initial step to creative leadership by the female students in tertiary institutions. The net has been cast wider to reach out to the young girls in the schools. How are the Big Sisters making a difference?

The Big Sister Young Sister initiative is spearheaded by female students in tertiary institutions who are on Teaching Practice at their local Secondary/Primary Schools. The main goal of this initiative has been to provide mentorship and leadership to girls in the Secondary Schools on key Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights issues affecting the girls. The ‘Big Sister’ support includes providing SRH information, peer education, mentorship, facilitation, and counselling and referral services among others. They use the Join In Circuit Tool to educate and increase dialogues on key issues such as Contraception, HIV and AIDS, STIs, Positive Living and Body Language.

The Web for Life Network facilitates for mentorship, capacity building and leadership skills development of female students in order to advance advocacy and influence meaningful decisions on the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of young women. Currently, the Big Sister Young Sister mentorship programme has trained **60 female students in Bulawayo, Masvingo, Harare and Manicaland provinces**. The female students in tertiary institutions now have an opportunity to reach out to the girls in their communities for mentoring through the JIC Run Tool.

The Join In Circuit Tool has been adopted to disseminate information on Sexual and Reproductive Health to the young sisters in the secondary/primary schools. JIC is an interactive, participatory and educative tool that allows the big sisters to link with the girls and open dialogues on key sexuality issues. It was developed by GIZ and the Zimbabwe AIDS Network. It fosters communication on sensitive issues thus offering an opportunity for guidance from the mentors.

So far the trained female students have already reached out to approximately 1 200 fellow sisters and young girls in the colleges and schools with information and support on Sexual and Reproductive Health related issues. The female students have offered support such as counselling, information and referrals to girls and young women living with HIV as well as other peculiar challenges faced by women.

Challenges

- Absence of clearly defined policies for addressing key SRH challenges of students in tertiary institution;
- High student turn over which affects the continuation of programmes;
- Very busy academic schedules for most students in the colleges;
- Limited capacity building opportunities for coordinators and implementers of the Web for Life initiatives.

Conclusion

The Gender Department intends to continue working in-order to realise its main goals which include capacitating, mobilizing and promoting advocacy initiatives among young women. Facilitate 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. The department shall continue to create space for information, knowledge and experience sharing on Gender and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights students in tertiary institutions. The department aims to increase leadership in articulating and seeking strategic ways to address critical SRHR issues such as Maternal Health Care, Cancer and Contraception through campaigns and commemorations. The SAYWHAT Gender Department will never undermine the positive results brought by linking female students at college, provincial, national and regional level with relevant SRH services, organisations and campaigns. In the last half of the year, the department shall spearhead 2 research initiatives under HIVOS and the Research Triangle Institute. The research and documentation of key SRH issues in tertiary institutions shall inspire evidence based programming on young women interventions.