



*life*  
**CAMPUS**  
**MAGAZINE**

**FSN**  
FEMALE STUDENT  
NETWORK

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AUGUST 2023

# CAMPUS

*life*



# MAGAZINE

August 2023

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STUDENTS  
REMAINS DRIVERS  
OF REVOLUTIONS

# 1 The economic plight of female students in Tertiary Institutions

By Tinashe B. Chirau (BUSE STUDENT)



Scenes from Masvingo Polytechnic orientation. PIC BY FSNT

Economic challenges have had a devastating effect on female students in institutions of higher learning. Due to the economic hardships in the country, the education system in the country has become nothing less than the botte system type of education. Not only is this happening in tertiary institutions

but also even in primary and secondary schools. According to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, more than sixty-five thousand (65 000) pupils dropped out from both primary and secondary schools last year as a result of absconding and financial challenges.

As if this is not enough, universities and colleges in Zimbabwe have been demanding huge amounts of tuition fees which has seen a lot of students resorting to other immoral means of acquiring funds to continue with their studies whilst others defer. A lot of female students have been subjected to intergenerational relationships which are well known as “blesser-blessee relationships”. Due to the desire to finish their studies, female students in tertiary institutions have been exposed to transactional sex as a means to fund for their education.

This has been most rampant in mining towns and cities where there are filthy rich gold buyers who are preying on the female students who have become destitute. These female students normally find themselves prone to contracting STIs, HIV/AIDS and even unwanted pregnancies since they won't be at liberty to

negotiate for safe sex since their fate and economic survival depends on their sexual barter. Many female students have also been under the yoke of abusive relationships with blesser since they stay in abusive relationships because they depend on it for their survival. Some of the female students find themselves in abusive and toxic relationships due to identity crisis hence they end up failing to keep up with their desired standards. This has led to outburst of terminal diseases such as HIV/AIDS as well as other Sexually Transmitted Infections in tertiary institutions. In most cases, issues of unwanted and unplanned pregnancies normally lead to unsafe abortion practices which endanger the lives of female students and jeopardize their studies.



Gracia Bvute (CHEF)

By Abgirl Phiri



Abgirl Phiri  
(UZ Masters Student)

**N**ow this is an interesting topic which many women shy from. This is because from previous experience, women who find themselves in politics end up being victimized physically, emotionally and verbally. Thus, in order to save themselves from such trouble most women don't attempt to think of a career in politics after all the consequences are life threatening. In addition, this kind of scenario is not only found in Zimbabwe but her sister countries as well. Consequently, the participation of women in politics is dwindling drastically. However youth led organisations should recommend, promote and educate on the full participation of women in issues that affect their lives especially targeting the young ladies. Without the voice of the females, then how can their issues properly be addressed? Sometimes in life the only person who can fully understand your issue is the one who has been there and is in the same boat. By that same virtue, we are held in unison by our gender.

Women need to be empowered and encouraged to venture into politics. Education need to be availed to them on the benefit of having a sizable number of representatives in the parliament. Fortunately in Zimbabwe, we have embraced the quota system that nominates women into having parliamentary seats. Although it is a good initiative researchers indicate on the other hand, it's making the women not to be taken seriously. Somehow these women are thought to have gotten these posts on a silver platter. However, regardless of that young women need to be inculcated to take leadership positions. Gone are the days when females were thought to be less than men. For that reason, their participation must be seen by all and sundry. Gender studies are being even taught to ensure equal opportunities, resources distribution plus power between male and females. All this is in the name of gender equality and gender equity. Over and above, this is also what the Female Student Network Trust is trying to inculcate the culture in the young female students to rightfully step up and rise to the occasion. Hopefully, this will bear fruit in more participation not only in student boards at tertiary institutions.

Another pertinent issue to take note of is that women they don't support each other. This is a cause for concern because they need to support one another. There is strength in numbers. Needless to mention no woman is an island. Henceforth, the more the merrier in driving forward the agenda to be heard on issues that affect them all inclusively. For women to become role models to the future generation they must take their stance. Also, when as a female leader you decide to embark on this road to leadership, one shouldn't be dissuaded by other people. Self-confidence is a rare trait but once one wears it then you are ascertained to succeed on your mission.

Leadership positions are not for the faint hearted but for those who have thick skin. In that respect, the clarion call is for more women to take up the challenge and grab at leadership positions which they will use to the best of their abilities. A stellar legacy can be left if you whole heartedly pursue your passion like what the founder and executive director of FSNT Evernice Munando did. Undoubtedly, these are laudable examples which young women should follow suit.

To those who would have managed to break the bias may they have the courage to mentor other young women. Also, may they have the ability to share their life stories. This is because for some women seeing is believing because the doubting Thomas syndrome is a major setback in this our patriarchal society where most individuals were brought up being told they would amount. Additionally to add salt to an injury, it is reiterated this is a man's world.

At Chinhoyi University of Technology there were young women like Joana Mamombe actively following student matters, who also ended up being one of the youngest MP's in Zimbabwe. Indeed, this is what we are seeking from the young girls to have their voices heard. The road to such an achievement is not easy but with resilience all is possible. Interestingly, the power is in our hands to change the course of what happens to us. If you have the calling do act on it. History is made by those who are brave enough to follow their dreams and passion. The question is are you ready and prepared to follow that calling? Again, do you have what it takes? Treasured readers all this is food for thought.



Cathrine Kaitano

Belvedere Technical Teachers College (BTTC) SRC  
President 20.22

# 3 | The evils of patriarchy in today's politics

Poem By: Abgirl Phiri

It's a man's world

These are big shoes to  
fill

But if you hitch up your  
long skirts

You can soldier on

In the same foot steps

History is ready to be  
rewritten

But this is not for the  
faint hearted

Or the weak

Only strong women

Can rise up to the  
occasion

And prove to all

They have got what it  
takes

Think twice

Because the resilience  
of women

Can be the most  
dangerous unmatched  
trait

Ever

**M**enstruation is a natural phenomenon among women. Adolescent girls starting from the age of about 11 are not even spared from this phenomenon. At this age is when physical changes are taking place in both girls and boys. Adolescent comes with these changes in boys- the deepening of voice, the growing of puberty hair and beards. In girls it is characterized with the widening of hips, puberty hair, growing of breasts and the development of internal organs such as fallopian tubes.

At this stage that's when menstruation is expected to start in girls and it is surrounded with taboos and myths across our social divides. Teaching our adolescent girls about menstrual management and Hygiene is very crucial and with these economic hardships hitting our country left, right and center - most of our young sisters do not afford sanitary wear or menstrual products.

Yes, the government is playing its part in trying to reduce menstrual poverty by making sure that menstrual products are available and affordable. It scraps duty on all menstrual products so as to increase their availability and affordability to our girls and young women across the country. Knowing the consequences of menstruation among girls who are still in school, FSNT through its stakeholders that include schools and churches join hands with the government in a bid to end menstrual poverty and prolong the stay of girls in school. Most of our girls and young women make use of the unsafe and unreliable methods as they try to cope with menstruation. Thus, keeping them away from school for quite some time. FSNT in trying to empower the girl child in various spheres of life, spearheading the distribution of menstrual products through its male Gender Champion, Gava Tawanda Andrew. The distribution of menstrual products was done under the mantra, 'our blood our life.'

The inclusion of male Gender Champions in this fight against menstrual poverty signifies that menstrual management and hygiene is not for the girls and women only but it's for us all despite our gender. Menstruation it's not a choice in women therefore it needs a collective approach in as far as managing it. Awareness campaigns are being done male Gender Champions are on the lead so as to demystify the myths and taboos surrounding menstrual issues. Young boys are being taught about menstruation and how they could chip in so as to create safe places for the girls. In yesteryears, young boys used to laugh at the girls when it happens in the classroom. Now through the education on menstrual management and hygiene they are now helping.

Poor menstrual hygiene can pose serious health risks, like representative and urinary tract infections which can result in future infertility and birth complications. With this in mind, FSNT through its male Gender Champions is facilitating the construction of incinerators in high schools and primary schools of which Grasslands High is one of the beneficiaries.

Besides washing of the hands after changing menstrual products as a key hygienic act, neglecting it can lead to the spread of infections such as hepatitis B and thrush. Thus, FSNT as an organization that seeks to empower the girl child engage school authorities through its male Gender Champion to set up modern and female friendly bathrooms in schools so as to create safe spaces of our girls and young women in school.

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## Joining hands to end menstrual poverty among adolescent girls.

By Tawanda Gava (FSNT Alumni)



The handover ceremony of sanitary wear and other products by Tawanda Gava's team. Picture: Tawanda Gava

The male Gender Champion also engage and train young leaders to undertake the empowerment program and raise awareness campaigns to educate their peers on the above-mentioned matter. Among these young leaders is Martha Muleya who's the Junior Member of Parliament for the Marondera West Constituency and Takudzwa Makwanya the Junior Councilor for Ward 4, Marondera West Constituency. With these young leaders, I distributed menstrual products to Chiseve Primary School in a bid to end menstrual poverty in primary school girls. Talking about menstruation is still a taboo among these primary school girls and we did raise an awareness campaign so as to demystify the myths and the taboos around menstruation.

The encouragement of male students in this whole process made it easier to talk freely about the matter and build confidence in our young sisters. During the campaign, male Gender Champion - Tawanda actually told the young girls to be proud

of their menstrual period as it is natural. Since it's not a choice, we are joining hands both girls and boys to fight menstrual poverty by making menstrual products available at schools.

Yes, as a team working under the banner of FSNT, we are aware that distributing menstrual products to Schools is a temporary measure in ending menstrual poverty hence, we are engaging school authorities to undertake projects such as gardening so as to ensure the sustainability of the provision of menstrual products in schools.

Therefore, I thank FSNT organization for training myself in various aspects of life that seek to empower young women and girls. As we all know that no one would lit a light and put it under a bowl instead he would put it on top so that it will provide light for the entire room. I'm also training others -thus spreading the light!

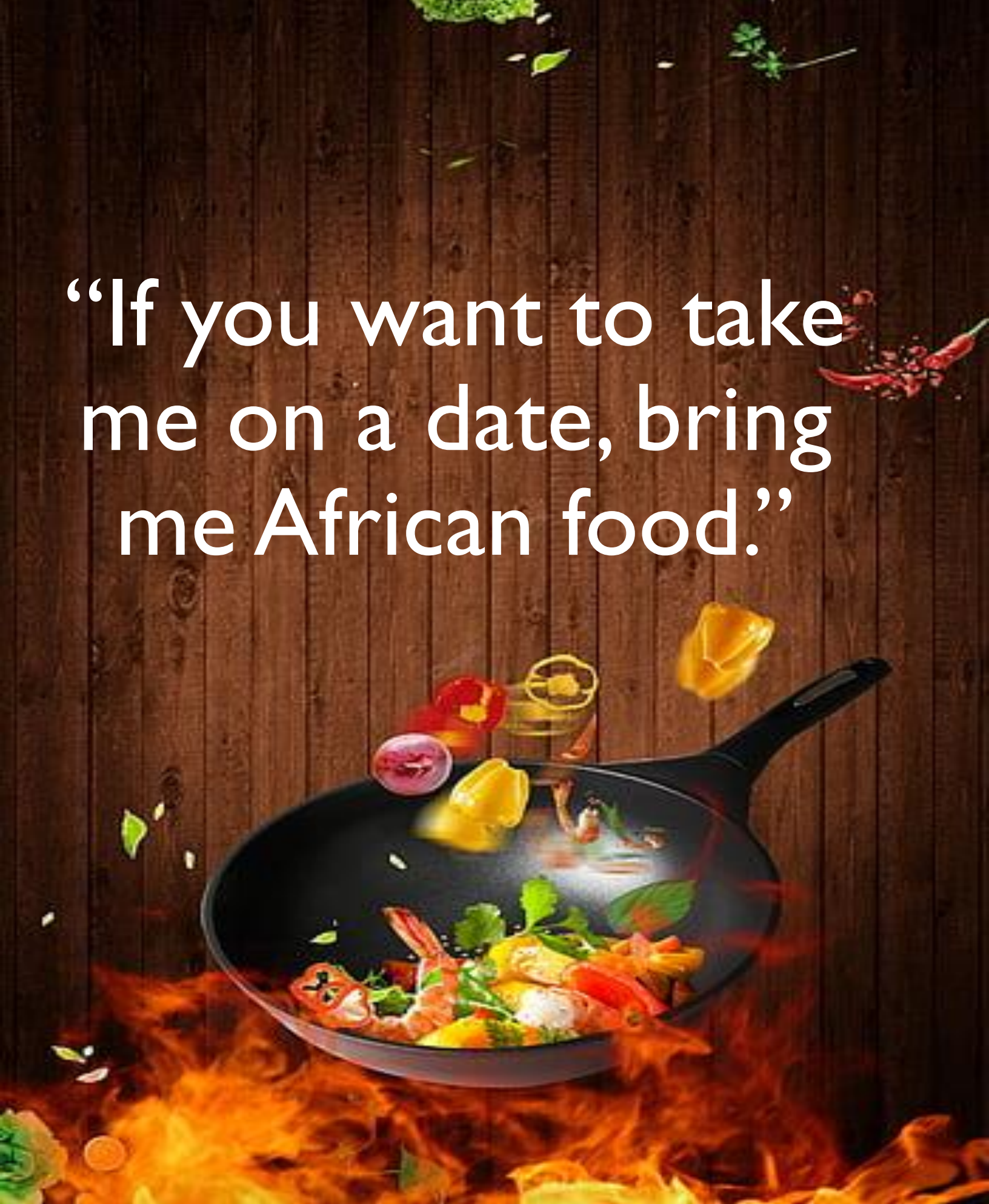


According to a survey conducted by SNV Zimbabwe, “about 62% of girls miss school during their periods” and the largest number of the girls live in marginalized areas where sanitary ware is deemed a luxury.



Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (ZEGU) FSNT Advocacy Team members giving away stationary and menstrual pads to underprivileged pupils at Jit High School. Picture: FSNT

“If you want to take me on a date, bring me African food.”



**Chef  
Gracia  
Bvute**

@graciabvute

@pabvute\_gourmet





# STUDENTS REMAINS DRIVERS OF REVOLUTIONS

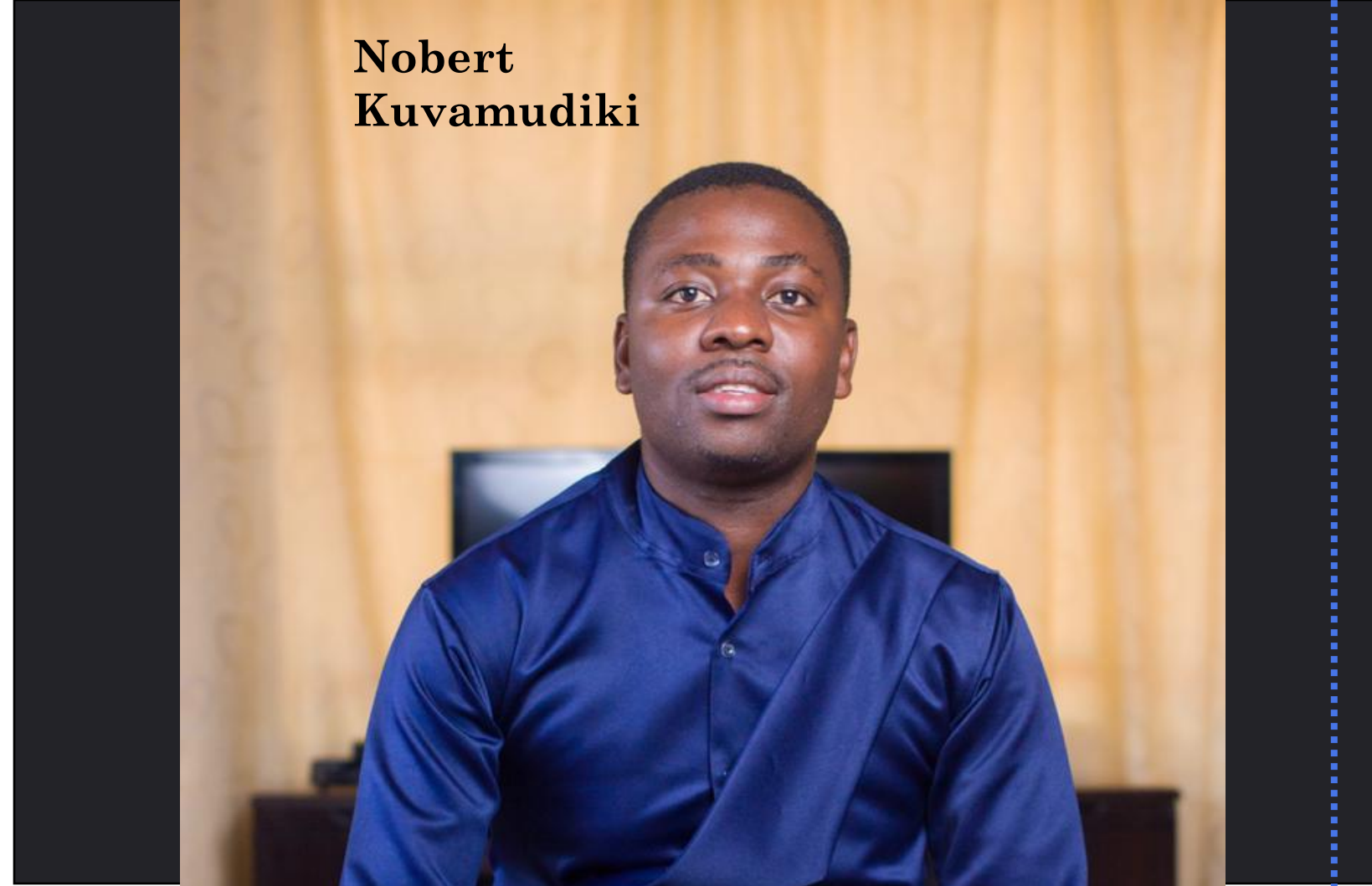
By Nobert Kuvamudiki

History has taught us the importance of young people especially students in the genesis of human rights revolutions across the entire cosmos. The revolutionary war in Zimbabwe would have never been successful if students had not run away from school to neighboring countries like Mozambique to be trained as guerilla fighters and come back to fight the smith regime. When the wind of change swept across the nation around 1966, primary school pupils from as little as 14 years joined took the gun and joined the struggle. This enhanced the prowess of the guerilla fighters catapulting the genesis of the Lancaster house conference in 1979.

The incident that gave birth to the establishment of the Day of the African Child (DAC) is such an exemplary contribution of student to the fore of the struggle. This was made in 1991 as a tribute to the Soweto student rebellion of June 16, 1976. Students at the time marched in protest of the subpar education they were receiving and to demand that they be taught in their native languages. Numerous schoolchildren were massacred during the rally. To honor these kids and the valiant effort they took to protect their rights, the Day of the African Child is observed. The Day of the African Child not only honors African children but also encourages thoughtful thinking and proactive action to address the problems that African children deal with on a daily basis.

In America, the 1960s students' movements played a pivotal role to the dawn of anti-racism movement which later swept across the entire country. The Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee, or SNCC, was founded in 1960 by Black college students who protested the segregation of restaurants. Their activism focused on peaceful and direct-action protests and played a significant role in the civil rights movement. The Congress of Racial Equality, or CORE, was founded in 1940 and gained momentum in the 1960s due to the growing student movement. Members of SNCC joined the fight on behalf of CORE, and young activists took on leadership roles within the organization. Their mission was similar to that of SNCC, where action focused on peaceful protests, including sit-ins and boycotts.

Nobert Kuvamudiki



Students remains key drivers of the 21st Century revolutions. Although the contest might have changed hence the strategies also change but students are still playing a pivotal role in the struggle for human rights, constitutionalism, rule of law, eradication of poverty and many other social ills that Africa and Zimbabwe are facing. The role of the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) and Zimbabwe Congress Students Union (ZICOSU) in shaping the national political discourses can not be ignored even by an Inch. Most of the active political figures whether in the ruling party or the opposition were nurtured by the aforementioned main student unions in Zimbabwe.

It is against this back ground that, students from all corners of the country should retrospect on their

future and take a trajectory of leading from the front. The upcoming harmonized elections scheduled for August 23, 2023 are the hands of young people who constitutes 67.7 percent of the entire population hence their effective participation in these elections will be a formidable determinant on the outcome of the election. The future of Zimbabwe and the world remains young, it is by the young people that certain leaders should be in the echelons of power, it is by young people that laws should be enacted, development is realized, change is established and that prosperity is enjoyed in our mother land.

#TheFutureIsYoung #StudentsPower

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## THIS ISSUE IN BRIEF

This is a 2<sup>nd</sup> compendium of students narratives, experiences and lived realities by students for students. It captures different campus dynamics and hurdles that students go through during their journey in attaining a higher qualification.