

REGIONAL NETWORK OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TRUST (RNCYPT)

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020- 2023

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ACRONYMS

ACERWC	African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AYC	African Youth Charter
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GYW	Girls and Young Women
GYWE	Girls and Young Women Empowerment
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KABP	Knowledge Attitude Behaviour and Practice
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OMT	Organizational Mapping Tool
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
REC	Regional Economic Communities
RNCYPT	Regional Network of Children and Young People Trust
SADC	Southern Africa Development Cooperation
SBC	Social Behaviour Change
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Forward

We have set our minds on growth to become the most influential players in empowering children and young people in the Southern African region. Growth will be guided by experience gathered over the years as well as the ability to harness resources. To this end, this strategy is our guide on how to ensure effective institutional growth process and secure a dividend for children and young people in Zimbabwe and the Southern Africa region.

Through this strategy, we define who we are without losing our core identity and mandate. We realise the need to be responsive to the promotion and protection of the rights of children and young people as well as ensuring that they are the game changers in this whole process.

As we evolve, for now, we remain in Zimbabwe and grow steadily into the Southern Africa region while strengthening our presence and quality of interventions in the Southern, Eastern and Central African regions;

- We self-introspect and take seriously the challenge to grow our own organisational capacity in response to the task at hand. To this end, we are making our office a hub for children and young people, where those in the rural areas and most marginalised are at the centre of our work. In this strategic plan we are therefore revamping our program delivery structure while at the same time reviewing our human resources capacity. We shall also prioritise resource mobilization, as part of our own growth, and sustainability efforts. This organisational development process shall be spearheaded by the RNCYPT Board, management, staff, child and youth led groups steering Committees, and strategic partners. We do believe that this is a good foundation upon which we can grow the organisation. We therefore commit to creating strong accountability mechanisms, and to ensure that targets set during this strategy period, are met efficiently and timeously.*

We are forever grateful to all our partners and stakeholders and look forward to more of the same support as we seek to collectively contribute and empower children and young people in Zimbabwe, the Southern Africa, Eastern and Central regions for the better.

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Board Chair

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 An Overview

Regional Network of Children and Young People Trust (RNCYPT), is a child and youth focused organization that has been working in Zimbabwe since 2012. RNCYPT works to transform how societies treat children and young people; through ensuring that children and young people are active citizens who demand access to all their rights, hold duty bearers to account and mobilize communities for the respect, promotion and fulfilment of their rights. RNCYPT believes in a holistic approach to the rights of children and young people, including empowering them as actors for justice and advocates of their own human rights.

2.0 The Strategy

2.1 Vision

A society where children and young people enjoy their rights and realize their full potential

2.2 Mission Statement

RNCYPT exist to empower children and young people to have a voice, space and meaningfully participate contributing to development processes at local, national, regional and international level

The organisation seeks to achieve this through:

- Capacity development and skill training
- Research, Policy and Advocacy
- Information dissemination and awareness raising
- Networking and partnerships

2.3 Core Values

In order to achieve the above vision and mission, the RNCYPT board members and staff will be guided by the following set of values:

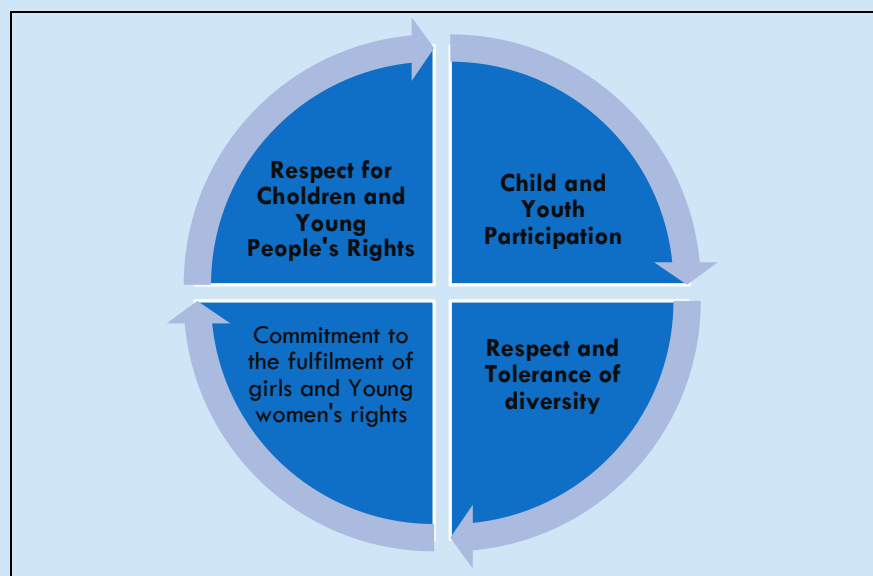


Figure 3: Figure showing core set values for RNCYPT

2.4 Guiding Principles

The RNCYPT Strategic Plan is informed by the following guiding principles:

- Results-based.
- Evidence-based.
- Rights – based.
- Gender mainstreaming.
- Meaningful Involvement of children and young people
- Participatory

2.5 Governance and Administration

RNCYPT is a registered Trust organisation in terms of the Zimbabwean law. The board of trustees provides oversight with regards to programs, policy as well as the financial management and administration of the organisation. They provide leadership in the formulation of organisational strategy; exercising these functions through the Director who heads a secretariat that is responsible for program implementation and the day-to-day running of the organisation.

3.0 Our Target Group

3.1 Primary Target Group

- Girls and young women from marginalised and poor communities including such communities as rural areas, farms, mines and those residing in the peripheries of towns and cities.
- Children and young people of ages 10 to 25
- Boys and young men from marginalised and poor communities including such communities as rural areas, farms, mines and those residing in the peripheries of towns and cities
- Survivors of all forms of sexual and gender-based violence
- Children and young people with disability
- Children and young people living with HIV and AIDS

3.2 Secondary Target Groups

RNCYPT will develop programs that target

- Families, General community members, Religious leaders, Political Leaders, Traditional leaders,
- Institutions such as schools, , Hospitals, Churches, Government departments,
- Other collaborating service providers, Parliament, Intergovernmental agencies, and NGOs

In addressing these target groups, RNCYPT seeks to create support structures and an enabling environment for children and young people to enjoy their rights.

4.0 Background and Contextual Analysis:

Since the formation of RNCYPT in 2012, the organisation has realised a number of successes as well as challenges. In this strategy we build upon the successes and adapt learnings from key challenges while we strive to ensure the promotion of the rights of children and young people.

In Sub Saharan Africa, multidimensional deprivation incidence is 67%¹, based on the CC-MODA – Cross Country Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis conducted in 2014 in 30 countries. It focused on analyzing Child Poverty and Deprivation in sub-Saharan Africa where two thirds of all children in this region experience two to five deprivations, which in absolute numbers is 247 million children. Of all the regions, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of exclusion². Over a fifth of children between the ages of 6-11 are out of school, followed by a third of youth between the ages of 12-14³. According to UIS data, almost 60% of youth between the ages of 15-17 are not in school. According to the World Bank, currently, nearly 70 percent (almost three-quarters) of the total population in Africa, including southern Africa, is less than 30 years old.⁴ While there are many opportunities for

¹ https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/ccmoda_africa.pdf

² UNESCO atlas of children in exclusion 2018

³ <http://uis.unesco.org/en/news/263-million-children-and-youth-are-out-school>

⁴ <http://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/youth-bulge-a-demographic-dividend-or-a-demographic-bomb-in-developing-countries>

development in this youth bulge, youth remain the face of many challenges that the region and its individual countries face. This is particularly true when the position of young women is considered; young women disproportionately bear the brunt of the inequalities that affect women in general and still face many challenges to gain control over their own affairs, let alone in the public spheres. These challenges are a reflection of the situation in Zimbabwe and many other countries in the SADC region. Without effective strategies to empower children and young people in the face of such challenges, the demographic dividend is turning out to be a nightmare - a demographic disaster, in fact. Regardless of countries ratifying conventions like the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)⁵ and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)⁶, the challenge still remains with child participation in Africa still minimal and of concern mainly due to cultural barriers.

4.1 Adolescent girls and Young Women (A contextual Analysis)

There are 1.8 billion young people in the world and approximately half of them – 900 million – are adolescent girls and young women with a majority of them in the developing countries⁷. Despite the untapped potential in adolescent girls and young women, they are the most marginalized and are often invisible and are not prioritized in many development programmes. They are discriminated against as females, and consequently face diminished opportunities and choices. Being poorly educated, adolescent girls and young women are subject to serious health risks, and threatened by violence while their views and concerns are often unheard. Girls' primary school completion rates are below 50 per cent in most East and Southern African countries⁸. Secondary school completion rate for adolescent girls is below 5 per cent⁹. One in seven girls in developing countries is married before age 15, and 38 per cent are married before age 18¹⁰. Child marriages, and teenage pregnancy are still high in East and Southern Africa. More women than men are living with HIV, and young women aged 15–24 years are as much as eight times more likely than men to be HIV positive¹¹. In Sub Saharan Africa adolescent girls and young women live under the constant threat of violence and abuse while up to 50 per cent of sexual assaults are committed against girls under 16¹². They are mostly victims of harmful practices that deprive them of the right to education, the right to life and physical integrity and the right to the highest attainable standard of health. These challenges are a reflection of the situation in Zimbabwe and many other countries in the SADC region. Without effective strategies to empower young women in the face of such challenges, the demographic dividend is turning out to be a nightmare - a demographic disaster, in fact.

5.0 Core-Principles: Theoretical Underpinnings and Justification for Our Work

This strategy recognizes that innovation is key to respond to the plight of children and young people from different marginalized contexts.

5.1 Promoting Effective Behaviour Change

For effective and sustained change in the case of children and young people, RNCYPT believes it is important to understand the whole system and the environment surrounding them. Hence, this strategy seeks to respond to

⁵ The ACRWC originated because the member states of the [AU](#) believed that the CRC missed important socio-cultural and economic realities particular to Africa. It emphasises the need to include African cultural values and experiences when dealing with the rights of the child

⁶ UNCRC is a human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children.

<https://www.unicef.org/media/62371/file/Convention-rights-child-at-crossroads-2019.pdf>

⁷ UN Joint Statement on Adolescent Girls - http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/news/2010/joint_statement_adolescentgirls.pdf

⁸ Population Council (2009). New Lessons: The Power of Educating Adolescent Girls Population Council and UNFPA. The Adolescent Experience In-Depth: Using Data to Identify and Reach the Most Vulnerable Young People -http://www.unfpa.org/youth/dhs_adolescent_guides.html

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ <http://www.icrw.org/child-marriage-facts-and-figures>

¹¹ UNAIDS (2010). Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic

¹² WHO.(2015): WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women: Initial Results on Prevalence, Health Outcomes and Women's Responses

three broad levels of the ecological systems theory, based on the problem analysis and understanding of the preceding context analysis:

Our strategy is designed to allow us to operate simultaneously at these various levels in order for children and young people to enjoy their rights and reach their full potential. The ecological systems theory and its implication on our strategy is captured in the diagram below:

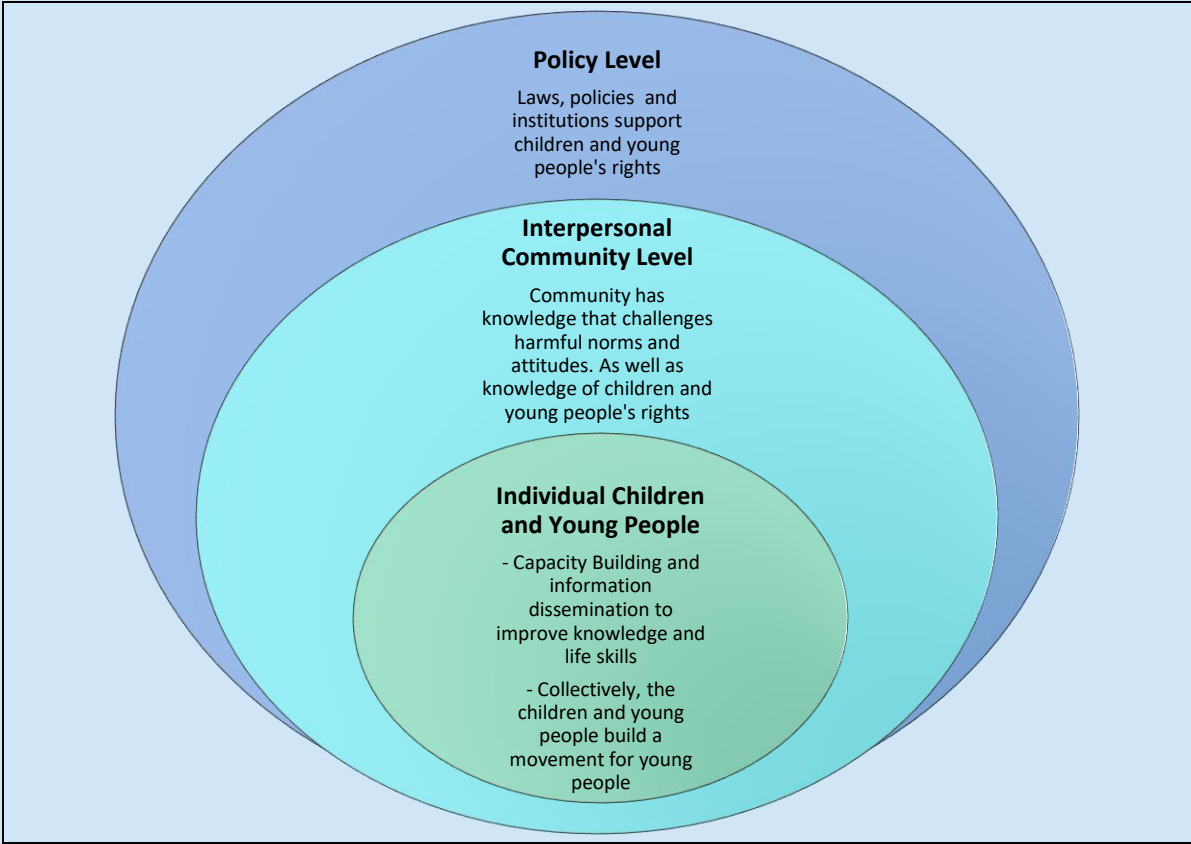


Figure 1: Ecological system of social behaviour for children and young people

5.2 Recognising Intersectionality

The RNCYPT Strategy (2020-2023) is aware of the reality of intersectionality as an entry point to promoting and protecting the rights of children and young people, particularly those with disability. To this end, RNCYPT recognises that what are often viewed as unrelated forms of oppression such as gender inequality, economic status, sexism, political exclusion, illiteracy and sexuality among others are in fact mutually reinforcing factors that disempower children and young people.

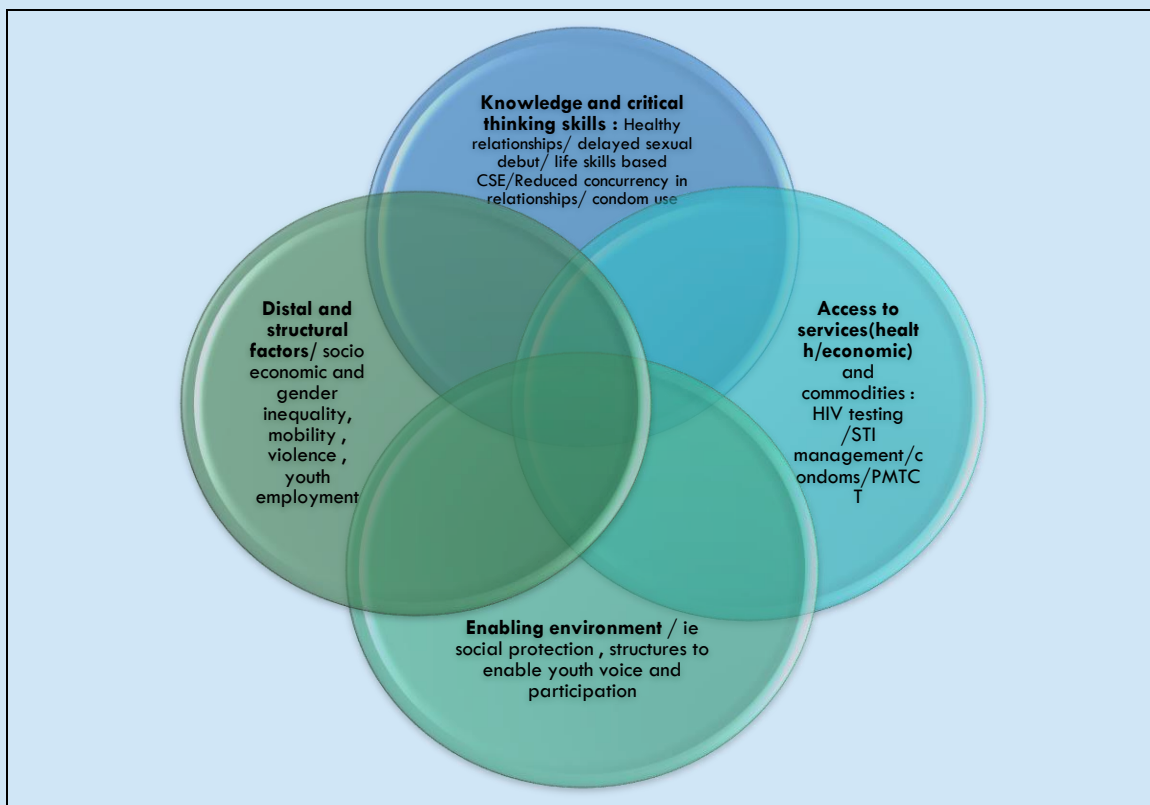


Figure 2: Framework for youth Engagement

6.0 Where We Work

RNCYPT is working from Zimbabwe into the region. This is a transitional strategy in which the organisation is consolidating on its Child led groups Model in Zimbabwe while expanding into the region to share its experiences and consolidate the many voices of other actors in order to attain influence at a higher level.

6.1 At National Level in Zimbabwe

RNCYPT works primarily in Zimbabwe with a current geographic spread covering the following districts: Chiredzi, Chitungwiza, Gokwe North, Gokwe South, Harare, Kadoma, Makonde (Chinhoyi urban and rural), Mazowe, Mutasa, Zvimba and Zvishavane urban.

6.2 At sub-regional Level

RNCYPT has been active in coordinating the Eastern, Southern and Central Africa Sub Regional Network (Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, DRC, Madagascar and Ethiopia) under the African Movement of Working Children and Youth; a movement of children and young people working on capacity strengthening of grassroots groups to demand realization of their rights through advocacy and community engagement.

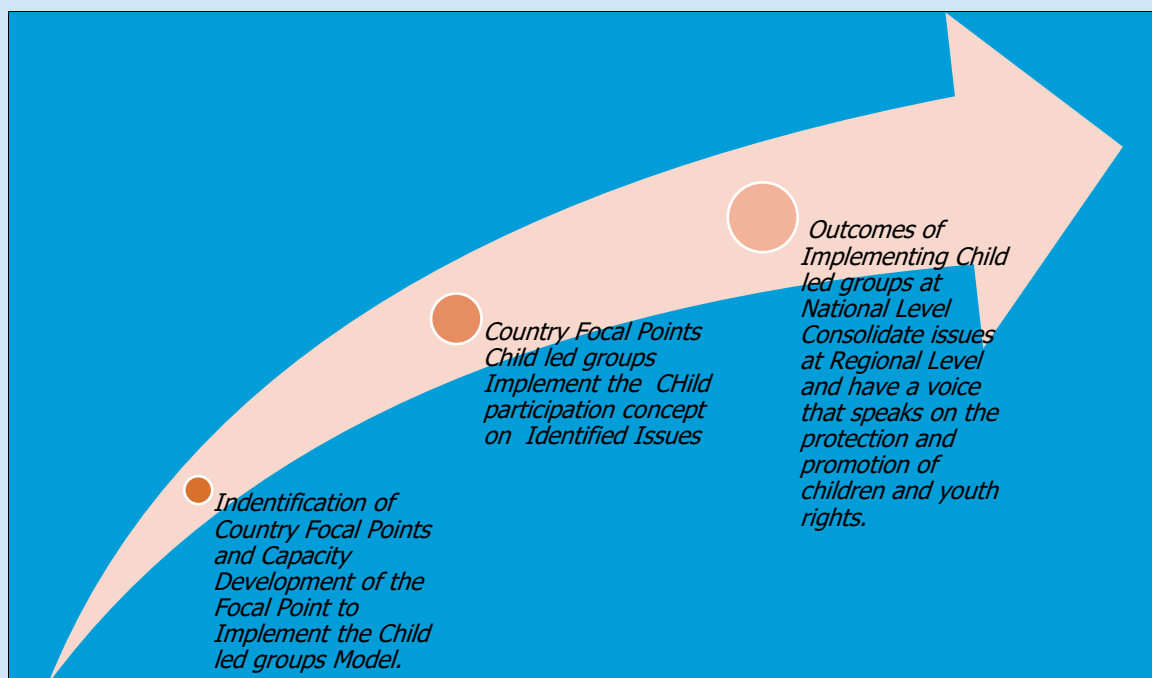


Figure 4: 3 Stage Process for Regional Engagement

Above is the 3-stage process for regional engagement. In detail, the process will involve:

Stage 1: RNCYPT identifies a country focal point in form of an organization or group that is young women or child and youth led. The group has to have a solid movement behind it or at least have capacity to mobilize. Capacity building of the group is conducted through provision of information resources as well as training on key aspects of child participation, leadership and advocacy. Some sessions of the training are done per country while the initial training is for all the country's participants in one country. It is in this session that the focal points agree on common issues to tackle for the regional advocacy.

Stage 2: The Country Focal Points continue in their countries with some capacity building elements while mainly implementing the child led groups Model. This process involves mobilizing children and young people and their communities, sensitizing the same and together begin to take actions that change the behaviours of the communities while at the same time building a movement for collective advocacy. They then undertake advocacy at local, national and regional levels.

Stage 3: Country Focal Points meet at regional level to consolidate their voices and share experiences while influencing policy on identified issues at national and regional level. A review is done, and adjustments made in an iterative process.

7.0 Our Strategies –

In responding to the challenges that children and young people face in Zimbabwe and other Eastern, Central and Sub Saharan African countries, we shall use a combination of the following key 4 strategies:

- i. **Capacity Development and/or Skills Training:** Based on the review of the context, we notice that children and young people's rights, especially SRHR, are negated by lack of a wide range of skills and capacities among the children and young people themselves as well as in the communities and institutions/policy makers that are meant to support them. To this end, we are lining up trainings and

platforms that are meant to strengthen this capacity in order to guarantee protection and promotion of children and young people's rights.

- ii. **Research, Policy and Advocacy:** From local to national and regional/international levels, the plight of children and young people is the lack of implementation of legal and policy frameworks that support their rights. At best, policies and/or laws are inadequate or when comprehensive, remain unimplemented while at worst the universally accepted rights of girls and young women have no supportive frameworks or are deliberately curtailed through law. Supported by evidence we will work on pushing for legal and policy reform at all levels as we seek to enforce the rights of children and young people.
- iii. **Information Dissemination and Awareness Raising:** Sensitising children and young people, their communities and policy makers on rights of children and young people as well as ensuring that they have information on the services they require and where to access such. We creatively seek to use different channels to communicate with our segmented target groups with tailor-made messages that meet the information needs of children and young people, their communities as well as policy makers.
- iv. **Networking and Partnerships:** In doing all our work, we recognise and pay tribute to the work of others who seek to promote and protect the rights of children and young people as well as to create a better society. We seek to partner others and take part in networks that enhance our capacity to deliver but also to play our role in sharpening others through our knowledge, skills and experiences. We believe that partnerships and networks benefit our target groups as they can draw services and help from many players, especially those who can provide what our own organisation cannot provide.

The above strategies, in no particular order, represent our overall strategy. We realise that, like a chain, our strategies draw their strength from interconnectedness – hence no one strategy is more important than the other. All the strategies are key to the strength of our programme and they build the key blocks of our organisational strategy.

8.0 Departments

As a result, informed by our problem analysis and the strategic thrust above, we will work through 4 units led by Programmes Manager and Finance and Administration Manager who reports to the Executive Director:

Departments	Responsibilities	Programming Strategies
Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights	Sensitisation and training of communities on young women's rights and SRHR. Prepares communities for action to promote and protect the rights of girls and young women.	Capacity Development, Information Dissemination and Awareness Raising Advocacy, Research, Policy analysis
Girls and Young Women's Empowerment (GYWE)	The programme seeks to empower girls and young women to have a voice and demand their rights, ending and or reducing child, early or forced marriages, harmful traditional and religious practices against girls and young women and promote equality.	Capacity Development, Information Dissemination and Awareness Raising Advocacy, Research, Policy analysis, Partnerships and Networking
Child and Youth Participation Governance	Oversees all child participation, policy campaigning work from local communities to the regional level. Also responsible or building networks and partnerships at all levels. The regional Network is coordinated under this department.	Capacity Development, Information Dissemination and Awareness Raising Advocacy, Research, Policy analysis, Partnerships and Networking

Finance and Administration	Responsible for putting in place and enforcing policies, procedures and systems of the organisation in relation to financial management and ensures the professional administration of the organisation including Human Resources issues.	Systems development, review and enforcement. Capacity building on the operations of the organization.
Knowledge Management, Research and Documentation	This will encompass the deliberate and systematic handling of knowledge and the precise use of knowledge in RNCYPT. The department will be responsible for creating, sharing, using and managing the knowledge and information of the organization. This will include research, information management, media innovation, the sharing of lessons learned, integration and continuous improvement of the programmes of the organisation.	Documentation, communication and information management. Research, Monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Table 1: Table showing proposed departments for RNCYPT

Just as the programming strategies, the Departments are not mutually exclusive. They work together in pursuit of the organisational goal and strategic outcomes. To this end, the Programmes Manager forms part of the management committee that meets regularly to discuss programmes as well as monitor and evaluate progress of all programme activities.



Figure 5: An adolescent boy leading a session on "not for us without us".

9.0 STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS AND OBJECTIVES

9.1 STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA # 1: Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights



All **children** and **young people** have the right to make their own free and informed choices and to have control over their **sexual** and **reproductive health** and lives, free from coercion, violence, discrimination and abuse. Girls and **young** women are denied the ability to exercise these **rights**.

9.1.1 Strategic Objective # 1.1: To ensure all **children** and **young people** have the right to make their own free and informed choices and to have control over their **sexual** and **reproductive health** and lives, free from coercion, violence, discrimination and abuse. This goal is achieved through the right to access education regarding sexual and reproductive health, enabling legal and policy framework, budget allocation, capacity building and sexual practices behavioural change.

9.1.2 Priority Strategies:

- i. **Ensure children and young people have comprehensive knowledge on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)**
 - a. Access to information and knowledge
 - b. Awareness raising
- ii. **Ensuring Social Behaviour Change (SBC) programming within communities**
 - a. Individual knowledge, motivation and other behaviour change communication and models.
 - b. Social cultural and gender norms, skills, physical and economic access
 - c. Social mobilization for a wider participation, coalition building and ownership
- iii. **Research and surveys to inform programme development interventions.**
 - a. Ensuring that adequate data and information is gathered at each level of programming, where research and surveys like Knowledge, Attitude, Behaviour and Practice(KABP), Participation, Accountability and Transparency Tool(PATT) Surveys are consistently

conducted to inform Programming. Research will be a continuous process where different research topics which falls within our thematic areas will be key.

iv. Ensuring access to SRHR services and resources

- a. Enable children and young people to take responsibility for and protect their sexual and reproductive health
- b. All young people - married and unmarried - have access to sensitive, respectful, confidential and integrated reproductive health counselling and services. These services should emphasize the prevention of unintended pregnancy, unsafe abortion and STIs. Programmes will also help equip children and young people with life skills that enable them to make informed decisions about sexuality and to negotiate abstinence or safe sex.

v. Advocate for responsive SRHR law and policy reform, as well as influencing budgetary allocations at local and national levels. This strategy aims to address gaps in data to build evidence that drives action where it is most needed.

- a. Evidence based advocacy initiatives will emphasize the need for services to be designed specifically to meet the needs of children and young people, which may vary according to age, sex, marital status, level of sexual activity, religion, ethnicity, culture, school status, geographic location, socio-economic status, and vulnerability to sexual coercion or abuse.
- b. Social accountability tools will be key in this strategy to help identify and address obstacles to children and young people' use of services and appropriate steps for making services more "youth-friendly". It will emphasize the need for children and young people to be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of SRHR programmes.
- c. The program seeks to empower children and young people to have a voice in the promotion and realization of SRHR with a special focus on GYW; and boys and young men operating as agents of change.

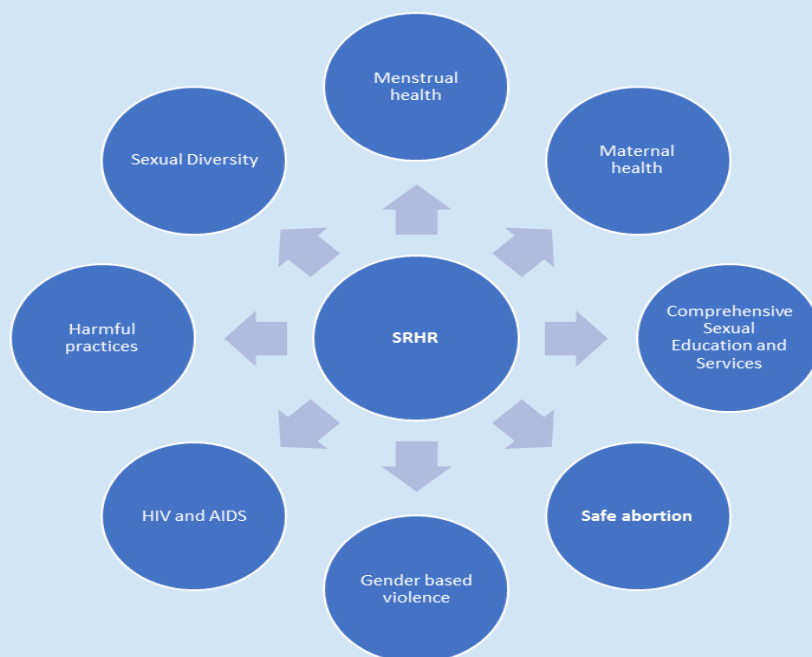


Figure 6: Summary of the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Strategic Priority Area

9.2 STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA # 2: Girls and Young Women's Empowerment (GYWE)

The programme seeks to empower girls and young women to have a voice and demand their rights, ending and or reducing child, early or forced marriages, harmful practices against girls and young women and promote equality.

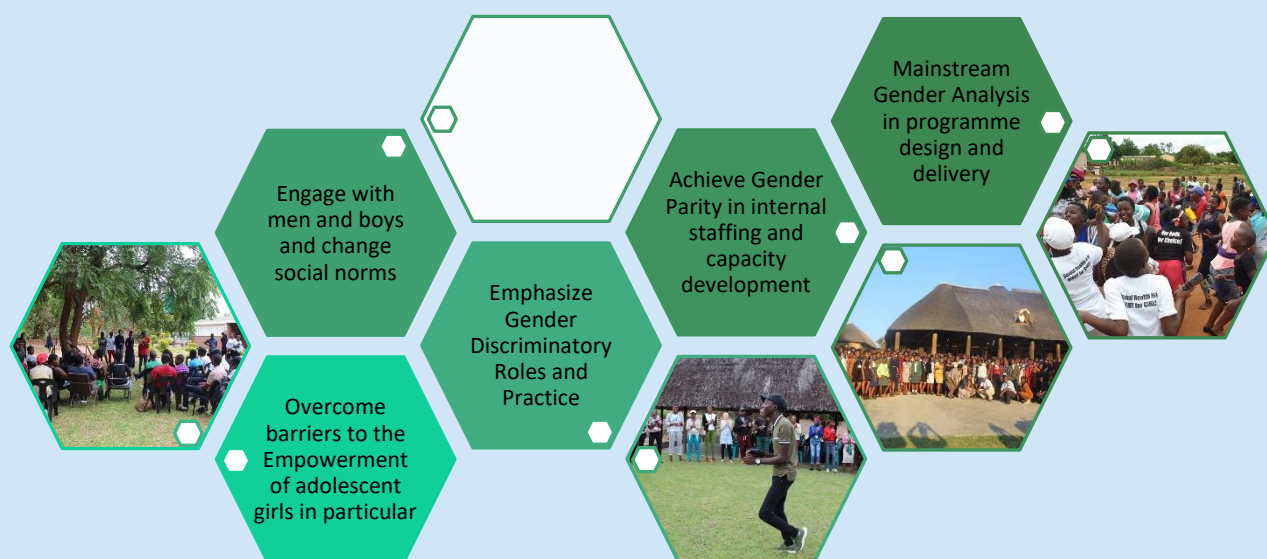
9.2.1 Strategic Objective # 2.1:

To promote a more stable, fairer and more prosperous world for girls and young women, and combat gender-based violence and global poverty.

9.2.2 Priority Strategies:

- i. **Capacity strengthening of child led groups, girls and young women, boys and young men of women's rights**
 - a. Mass media campaigns and other efforts that address the importance of investing in girls' education and health must be strengthened. These efforts need to target issues such as early marriage and childbearing, as well as heavy domestic responsibilities, which limit opportunities for girls.
- ii. **Protection of girls and young women from Harmful Practices:**
 - a. Virginity Testing
 - b. Child Pledging
 - c. Female Genital Mutilations (FGM)
 - d. Early / Child Marriages
- iii. **Reducing Violence Against Girls and Young Women**
 - a. Men and boys are sensitised to build support and protection for girls and young women
- iv. **Promote Socio-Economic empowerment of girls and young women**
 - a. Encourage family and community support for early child marriages and unplanned pregnancy.

- b. Expand girls' access to higher quality education and vocational skills training. Mass media campaigns and other efforts that address the importance of investing in girls' education and health must be strengthened. These efforts need to target issues such as early and forced marriages, unplanned pregnancy as well as heavy domestic responsibilities, which limit opportunities for girls and young women.
- c. Expanding income-generating opportunities for girls and young women will improve their ability to provide for their own needs as well as that of their families and will empower them to contribute more equally in household, community, and possibly national level decision making.



9.3.0 STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA # 3: Child and Youth Participation in Governance

9.3.1 Strategic Objective # 3.1

To increase by 30% the number of children and young people who meaningfully contribute to social capital through active participation in governance processes in their communities.

9.3.2 Priority Strategies:

- i. **We will work to empower children and young people to actively engage and voice their views and opinions.**
 - a. Training on Children's rights across all child led platforms to enable them with the necessary skills and resources to implement positive change within their own communities.
 - b. Reporting to Treaty bodies like the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC),
 - c. Strengthening participation within children and youth structures like African Movement for Working Children and Youth (AMWCY) sharing experiences and building the skills of grassroots and associations in country and among member states.
- ii. **RNCYPT recognize that meaningful participation** of children and young people can lead to better informed and more effective policy and planning, budgeting and programme

management. children and young people cite that participation in a broad sense (including accountability mechanisms) can lead to the development of social capital (the acquisition of enhanced skills, confidence and self-esteem and greater awareness of their rights

- iii. **We recognize that it is an instrumental value to develop young active citizens** who play a role in improving development gains nationally and globally and who become active and participative adults.
- iv. **RNCYPT recognize that there is intrinsic value in upholding children and young people's right to participate** in decisions that affect them. There is instrumental value in children and young people's engagement in governance processes due to the value they provide in improving policy and programme outcomes.

9.4.0 STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA # 4: Capacity Strengthening, Regional Networking and Strategic Partnerships

9.4.1 Strategic Objective # 4.1

To mobilize and engage children and young people to come together and collaborate on issues that affect them without physical country borders as a barrier. Our programmes are geared at engaging with children and young people in different capacities and levels whilst strengthening partnerships and capacity of African and minority community-based organizations. We will continue work through our child and youth led groups at community level that support the organization and the implementation of project work and provide guidance and support monitoring of projects.

9.4.2 Priority Strategies

1. Participate in different networking activities in the Eastern, Southern and Central Africa
2. Establish strategic partnerships for information and resource sharing.
3. Improve regional, intra-regional and international connectivity.
4. Accelerate the development of a more inclusive Information Society for children and young people across Africa.
5. Exploit synergies with other projects aimed at facilitating global research and education collaborations.
6. Increase responsibility and ownership of local actors within the networking communities on their path towards sustainability.
7. Partnership creates a critical mass of expertise, knowledge, resources and relationships.
8. Research and Information management- impact assessments, KABP surveys, situation analysis and rapid assessments
9. Bringing together different opportunities to embed public involvement throughout the children and young people programming regionally, from the design to delivery.
10. Board and governance capacity strengthening,
11. Resource Mobilization Strategy development and strengthening its function

NB: See Annex 1: Strategic Plan Logical Framework attached