



**Celebrating a Decade of Feminist Movement Building, Activism and Authentic Solidarity**

**Institute for Young Women Development**

**Annual Report 2019**

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**1. Introduction**

**Who is IYWD?**

The Institute for Young Women Development (IYWD) is a vibrant feminist organization whose approach and work is informed by the voices and experiences of young women in marginalized communities. We are committed to mobilizing and strengthening the voice and power of young women and girls through developing their capacity on human rights and equality so that they organize themselves, demand accountability and challenge systems, structures and all forms of discrimination. Further, the IYWD has created a niche in using young women grounded experiences with discrimination and oppression to influence, demand and push for policy and institutional changes.

**Vision:** A world in which the life of every young woman is *enhanced, widened, enriched and expanded enabling her to have her right of way.*

**Mission:** We are a soulful grass-root based young women's leadership Institute. We fiercely and compassionately promote, demand and protect the rights and wellbeing of young women; mostly those living in rural areas, who are excluded, marginalized and exploited. Our work is anchored by the following pillars: organizing, raising political consciousness, movement building, documenting, thinking alongside young women and sharing with them the tools to create pathways to imagine a better future.

**Our Core Values:** Outrage and Love, Thinking Otherwise, Authenticity, Solidarity, Agency, Creativity, Sisterhood.

## 2. Overview of the Year: Director's Report

2019 was a special year in the life of the Institute for Young Women Development (IYWD). The year marked a decade of our existence and an opportunity to celebrate our milestones. We smile with our hearts at the journey we have walked since 2009 and look at what we have achieved up to 2019. Guided by our strategic foci over the years, we have walked side by side with young women in their diversity and witnessed the transformation in their individual lives to their collective identity and power. Our work traversed from; young women's rights education; to raising political consciousness on our power and position in society not what patriarchal stereotypes accord us; to feminist movement building; while building strategic alliances in our communities, in the country and beyond our borders and giving solidarity to each other. As a result, we saw young women pushing boundaries and taking leadership positions at various levels in their communities, including but not limited to traditional leadership, playing para-legal roles and advocating for a rights based approach in traditional courts, stepping up and claiming positions in administrative and elective positions in local government and parliament. Our alliances and solidarity movements expanded, all in our fight for young women to have their **Right of Way**. We celebrate this decade with a befitting theme we have named *A Decade of Feminist Movement Building, Activism and Authentic Solidarity*.

Now getting down to 2019, which is the year of our focus in this report, 2019 was the most difficult year for young women in marginalised communities and the generality of Zimbabweans. All fronts, socially, economically and politically were characterised by regression (some may argue and say stagnation) at both the first and second generation of rights. The state's failure to fulfill the constitutionally guaranteed socio-economic, civil and political rights required us to think and act otherwise in our work in order to advance our agenda of what we believe in, a society where every girl and young woman has Her Right of Way. As we celebrated a year of existence, 2019 became the test year of our courage and resilience. We survived it, with positive gains in our efforts to place young women at the centre of decision making, democratic governance, gender equality and feminist economics. We grounded ourselves in our new strategic framework to guide us from 2019 to 2021. As we step into 2020, we are short of words to express our gratitude to the members who continue to lead us, our sisters, friends and allies who continue to cheer us up as we '*build our helicopter while flying it*' -Hope Chigudu (at IYWD Strategic Planning Meeting in 2014). We are not afraid of crashing but are ready for the long haul, to deliver full seats and a loud voice at the table, while we expand our reach in the region. Our readiness for the present and future is shown by our reflections of the year shared in this report. We share our work over the year, the results we achieved and the alliances we are building.

### 3. Operating Environment

The year 2019 is significant in IYWD circles as it marked the 10th year Anniversary since Her conception in 2009. The running theme for this incredible milestone is *A Decade of Feminist Movement Building, Activism and Authentic Solidarity*. It is however worth noting that the year itself was characterized by various socio-political and economic events and issues that directly affected IYWD 's operating environment. On the political front, 2019 witnessed further decline and shrinking of the democratic space. The year began with civil unrest as a result of rising prices and fuel and other commodities which culminated in the January 14 Shutdown. The state responded through military interference which led to arbitrary assaults, sexual violence including rape of young women and women and murder of civilians. Young women were victimized during this period with a number of IYWD affiliated members being rounded up and incarcerated including an 18year old young mother who was unjustly sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment only to be released eight months later through IYWD and its allies' intervention. The crackdown span over the course of the year with abductions of civil society leaders, political activists, labour rights activists and artists, signifying increased closure of the democratic space. It is worth noting that while the broader political environment was largely negative for the civil society, IYWD managed to continue with its operations including responding to emergencies that targeted young women. This went on despite heavy surveillance by security forces in the operational areas.

Economically, the environment was harsh for IYWD and citizens at large as the economy continued on a downward spiral that began in the last quarter of 2018. The removal of foreign currency trading which encouraged the use of the local and devalued bond note turned Zimbabwean dollar heightened citizens vulnerability to poverty and inflation. The persistent liquidity crisis and monetary policy inconsistencies worsened the situation.

On the social front, the cyclone witnessed in Manicaland Province resulting in numerous deaths of civilians predisposed the nation to trauma, increased poverty levels and other gendered social effects to girls, young women and women particularly in areas worst affected by the cyclone. The failure of the state to provide basic social services including primary healthcare, power blackouts, lack of access to water and sanitation puts the burden on women while threatening the lives of many. The operational context was difficult, but we did soldier on, without faltering. Prices of goods and services sometimes let us down but our budgetary performances did not fail us.

For IYWD surviving 2019 required imaginative thinking among staff, membership and alliances in navigating the hostile terrain. The challenges were a learning curve for the organization and other members as they demanded a kind of thinking and execution that is often out of the box. In a nutshell, 2019 was a very challenging year politically, economically and socially for IYWD, civil society and citizens at large. As we step into 2020, IYWD is excited to take this leap with renewed optimism and energy for resistance and increased resilience by young women and the broader macro-level socio-economic and body politic.

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## 4. Summary of 10year timeline

Before we dwell so much into 2019, we would like to remind you of some of the highlights of our work in the period between 2009 to 2019. We show this in a timeline below:

**10** IYWD 10 Year Journey

**2009**  
 Institute for Young Women Development (IYWD) was conceived at a member's house in Trojan Mine Bindura, Zimbabwe.

**2010**  
 Young women started shaping their personal economies as they embarked on different income raising projects of making of re-usable sanitary pads and school uniforms, poultry farming and horticulture. This followed an extensive Entrepreneurship Training program.

**2011**  
 IYWD grounded its work by coming up with its inaugural strategy plan that identified three key pillars to guide IYWD's work: Young Women Human Rights Education; Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Livelihoods and Young Women's Civic Participation. Young Women's Rights education programs started. Young women began raising their voices for their right of way, and an inaugural 16 Days Commemoration was held in Bindura.

**2012**  
 Expanding the My Right of Way Give Way campaign: engagement of traditional and religious leaders led to establishment of community based mechanisms for peace and security: Peace Committees comprising of young women, traditional and religious leaders worked to prevent and address violence against women and girls in communities.

**2013**  
 A booklet titled On the Case with IYWD documented two of the historical young women's cases influenced by young women paralegals in Chief Masembura's Court in rural Mashonaland Province.

**10** IYWD 10 Year Journey

**2014**  
 Following extensive consultations with members, Board and friends of IYWD, a resolution to hold elective Annual General Meetings (AGM) was made. The Inaugural AGM was held on the 13th of November 2015 and elected the first ever Dariro Executive (DE).

**2015**  
 We incorporated the use of traditional dance and art in our work. The first public performances were made during the One Billion Rising for Justice commemoration.

**2016**  
 We launched our current flagship program #VoteRunLead, to encourage young women to vote in national elections, run for political office and lead communities and the nation towards a democratic developmental state.

**2017**  
 IYWD's work expanded nationally, reaching out to young women in other Provinces of the country. To harness our impact in those areas we joined the Alliance for Community based Organizations.

**10** IYWD 10 Year Journey

**2018**  
 As part of the 50/50 and 25% quota demand we submitted a petition to the Portfolio Committee on Justice and to the Parliament of Zimbabwe.

**2019**  
 We rolled out a policy advocacy program for 50/50 representation of women and men in elective politics at local government and parliament, and demand 25% of the women quota to be allocated to young women below the age of 35.

## 5. The Teams behind the Scenes: IYWD 2009-2019



**The IYWD Team of 2019**—Standing: *Glanis, Sandra, Danny, Victor, Kudakwashe M and,* Sitting *Kudakwashe C, Constance, Tatenda, Gillian, Onai and Tinodaishe.*

## 6. A summary of Her Work for the year 2019

We embarked on our Strategy Review and Planning process in 2018 and finalized it in 2019. Using a highly participatory approach with our different structures of leadership, ranging from our Ward *Dariro* Committees, the National *Dariro* Executive, our Board of Trustees, Staff, IYWD friends and allies, we came up with our strategic framework for the period 2019 to 2021. Our work was thus guided accordingly as follows:

- **Strengthening Feminist Leadership and Activism of Young Women**

Transformative Leadership Trainings characterised much of our capacity development work to enhance young women's feminist leadership in decision making at different levels of community and local government. We launched and conducted two Feminist Schools and trained young women in feminism and feminist leadership. An estimate of more than 700 young women from Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East and Midlands Provinces benefited through training of trainers and community level trainings.

Our feminist movement building approach acknowledges that our work as young women today stand on the shoulders of women who came before us. Hence, under this goal we also conducted Our Feminist Indabas reflecting on contributions of feminism in democratic processes in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The Indabas facilitated an intergenerational conversations among women activists who have fought different women's rights in different generations including young women's efforts for political participation in the present digital world. We followed our intergenerational conversations even as we celebrated our tenth anniversary while commemorating 16 Days against Gender Violence.

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We also took our feminist conversations to Denmark where we had an opportunity to exchange with feminists in our partner organisation and discussed synergies and points of departure in our feminist work.

- **What this achieved for us**

Our feminist leadership programme has delivered young women who are politically conscious about the different forms of oppression and inequality that they face. Additionally, they are able to analyse these as well as the different forms of power that shape these inequalities and take action against these. Resultantly through their Ward Dariro and Dariro Executive leadership structures in their communities the young women have been able to self-mobilise and take action against injustices they face.

They have also been able to use the feminist analysis to influence judgements in traditional leadership courts where they para-legal roles. We won on some of the cases and we lost some however our presence in the courts make a difference for the young women and women whose rights, to participate, to have access to land and economic resources, to claim their democratic rights, to access their sexual and reproductive health and rights among others are usually trampled upon simply because they are women.

The feminist programme has also largely contributed to the building of strong support and solidarity systems among young women and women intergenerationally and in their diversity. These support and solidarity systems anchor all our other programmes especially as we experienced socio-economic and political tribulations that 2019 came with.



*Two panels of intergenerational conversations that deliberated on young women participation in key decision-making processes and efforts to end violence against women and girls.*

- **Strengthening Young Women's Participation in Politics**

Anchored on feminist principles, we conducted trainings on various issues of democratic governance, social accountability, gender equality and devolution. More than 2 184 young women and 144 ward councilors participated in the trainings. These were followed up with actions holding leaders accountable and advocate for 50/50 representation of women in

elective politics at local government and parliament, with 25% of the women's quota being young women below the age of 35.

We conducted a baseline survey on the level of participation of young women in appointed public administration to establish the representation of young women. The findings which demonstrated that young women are insignificantly represented, at 10% were followed up by identifying the few young women and telling their stories in order to inspire others and to amplify their voice in decision making in the spaces they occupy. Some of the young women have already been published on IYWD's website while more narratives will be shared on social media.

We also facilitated strategic engagement spaces among young women and various community leaders including local authorities where young women sought accountability on social services delivery and questioned gender responsiveness of the services being provided. With the government of Zimbabwe also implementing devolution which is provided for in the constitution, we facilitated trainings on the subject and followed up on how the process is being rolled out and the involvement of young women and women at its different stages.

Information blitz were also conducted through bulky sms, on our social media sites and print and online newspapers.

- **What this achieved for us**

We petitioned Parliament to enact gender equality laws in order to fulfil constitutional provisions 17, 56 and 80 on gender equality and non-discrimination. The petition was submitted to the Deputy Speaker of Parliament in partnership with other women's rights organisations in December 2019. The petition compels the Parliament to come up with a deliberate piece of legislation and not to start mutilating the constitution as approved by the Cabinet. The advocacy will continue into 2020 with strategic alliance building among women's rights organisations and others.

This programme delivered for us young women actively engaged in democratic processes in their local communities. Many of them have contested and won elections in school development committees, village development committees, clinic committees as a way of exercising their democratic rights and to also influence decision making at that level. A database of 44 young women in these leadership positions has been created and ready for continued timely profiling of the women.

The young women have also been at the forefront of holding their local authorities and elected councilors accountable on social services delivery. On devolution the young women have been tracking the devolution programme holding the local authorities on the use and prioritization of funds disbursed under devolution. They have also been keenly seeking accountability from the implementing officers on what devolution means in terms of utilization of natural resources and economic resources in the Mashonaland region, their distribution and the role of young women in accessing the resources and informing their utilization and distribution patterns.

The programme also resulted in IYWD forging alliances with different duty bearers including traditional leaders/chiefs, public officials in local government, Gender Focal persons in councils among others.



Young women deliberating on Gender and devolution in Guruve



(Left) Young Women at the Bindura District Devolution Meeting (Right) BRDC CEO Dr S Munoriarwa commends and urge young women to actively participate in policy formulation.

- **Feminist Economics**

In 2019, our Entrepreneurship and Livelihoods programme became Feminist Economics. The idea is to promote a culture of business among young women but also bring in different aspects of how gender plays out in pursuing livelihoods and profits. The programme sought to challenge the conventional way of doing business that marginalises young women and women by undervaluing jobs/services and even farm produce produced by women. The new feminist lens we are now applying to business also seek to proffer alternative ways of doing business without destroying the ecosystem.

To entrench feminist economics within these interventions, we conducted a training of staff and young women members on Feminist Economics. Staff training in this instance helps staff to have a better understanding of feminist economics and better support the membership



who are into various interventions. Under the programme, we continued supporting young women who are farming organic fish and those doing piggery.

We attempted supporting young women who wanted to grow Chia however failed to succeed due to changing prices of irrigation equipment under the current economic context. We are however excited that failure of this project opened up opportunities for the young women to focus on growing indigenous small seeds, promote healthy lifestyles that are ecologically friendly. Learning from our strategic ally, ZIMSOF, young women have been inspired and started growing rapoko, sorghum, round nuts and grounds nuts in the November to March 2020 farming season. Two learning exchange visits were done in the year and a total of 23 young women have been to ZIMSOF's farms and homesteads in Masvingo to learn about their agro-based interventions and how they contribute to climate resilience while guaranteeing food security for the farmers.

### **What this achieved for us**

The feminist training provided both staff and members with knowledge to understand analyse doing business in relation to gender identities, and the positionality of women within the capitalist framework. With the knowledge, IYWD staff is able to track the businesses being done by the young women and support them towards balancing business and the ecology.

For the members who went for the Learning Exchange Visits including the Seed Fair, they have found inspiration with three quarters of them having started small seeds farming, buying, packaging and retailing of repackaged nutritious indigenous foods that promote positive lifestyles and wellbeing. Some of the young women already planned to hold their own seeds fair in Mashonaland Central as seen in Masvingo.

IYWD has also managed to receive seeds for piloting at its Young Women's Resource and Wellbeing Centre which is still under construction and is expected to have the first crops in 2020.

Through the Learning Exchange Visits, young women also managed to meet with the UN Special Rapporteur on Food who went on to share in their social media about the agriculture-based concerns of the young women in Mashonaland Central.

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*Piggery and Small Seeds Learning and Sharing Visits in Bindura Rural District and Masvingo respectively.*

## **New Alliances Built**

During the year we invested in strengthening some of our existing alliances and building new alliances. In addition to our strategic allies and friends, the highlights for 2019 alliances were as follows:

### **Alliance for Community Based Organisations (ACBOs)**

We got a renewed mandate to convene the ACBOs from its strategic planning meeting held during the year. In this partnership we facilitated the conduct of the strategic planning process of the ACBOs and the operational plan for its coordinating structures. Additionally, we also came together with the Alliance to make submissions and meet with the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Freedoms of Association and Expression. Some of the issues we shared in our submissions were included in the preliminary report of the SR.

### **ZIMSOFF**

ZIMSOFF is a partner we met early in the year at a partner organized Learning Exchange Visit. Listening to the work of ZimSOFF, we found common ground for the passage and sharing of small seeds and other indigenous crops intergenerationally among women in ZIMSOFF and young women in IYWD. We also found commonalities in efforts to foster climate resilience and food security. As such we followed up after our partner's meeting and have been able to conduct two learning exchange visits learning about the seeds and their model of agro-ecology. As the relationship developed, we have also started processes of entering into a Memorandum of Understanding for our effective collaboration.

### **7. Financial Overview: Finance Officer's Report**

**See attachment**