

Research on Youth Agency

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Why Youth Agency?

- Understand how young people perceive agency: enablers/impediments to exercising agency
- 60% region's population: youth bulge/reap demographic dividend

Why Youth Agency?

- C21st challenges need young people's voices/action
 - Climate change
 - HIV/AIDS: access to SRHR services
 - Economic inclusion/prosperity
 - Good governance/accountability
 - Employment/access to marketable skills

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How is youth agency understood and experienced by young people, and other stakeholders, including key gatekeepers in the SADC region?

What are the obstacles to youth exercising their agency?

What are the implications of this for youth programming?



Level of the child

Parents and families

Community members and leaders

Schools

NGOs and development partners

The media

Institutions supporting rights and development

Government departments and ministries

SADC

AU

UN

Evidence to embed youth agency in school
ecosystem

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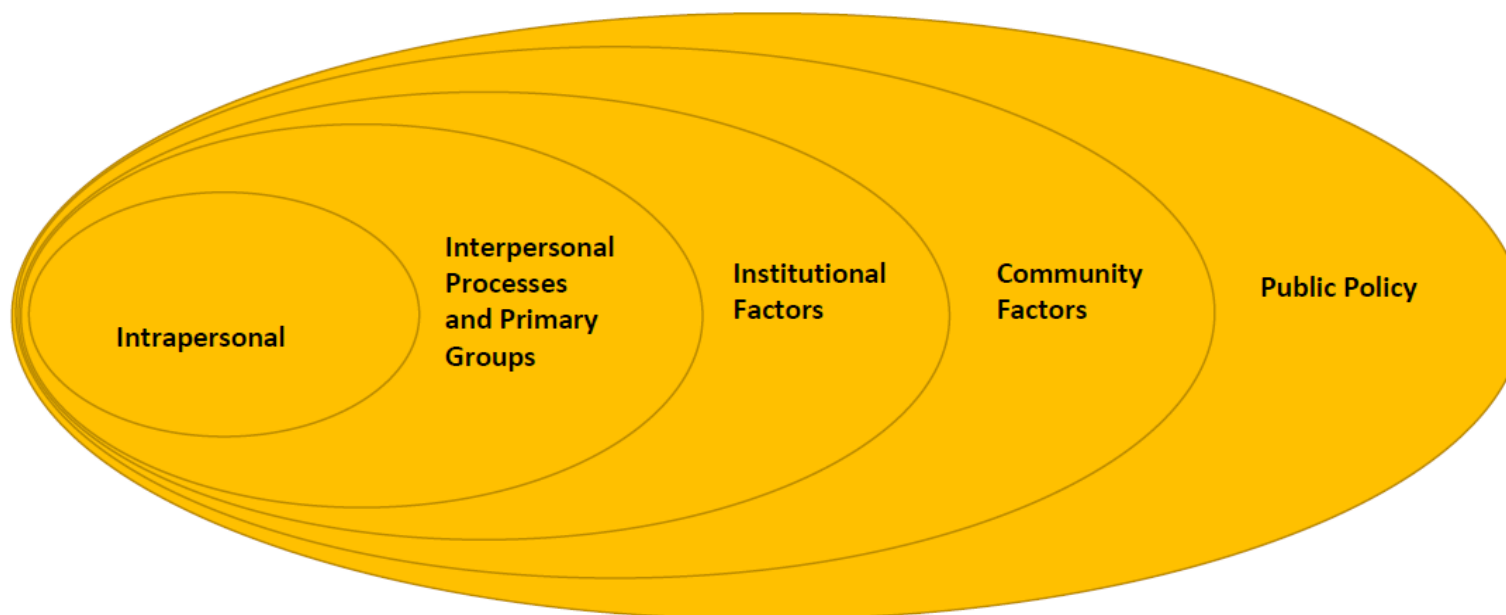
Youth programming to enable children/youth to
take leadership/action in exercising agency across
Southern Africa

Definition

- Desire/ability of young people to make decisions and drive change: own lives, their communities, larger spheres influence
- Human-rights perspective: allows young people become architects of own futures

Definition

- Provide space young people: develop strategies, support or hinder social change in broader socio-economic, political, cultural contexts



Methodology

- Youth-driven Participatory Action Research (PAR): desktop review; research instruments; trained youth/data collectors
- Young people have social right participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives (Checkoway, 2011).
- Research benefits for youth agency, community-based organizations that serve youth, and broader communities (Berg, Coman, & Schensul, 2009; Ford, Rasmus, & Allen, 2012)

Methodology

- Youth led stakeholder convenings, youth teams: Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe
- PanAfrican youth-led organisations, parents, teachers, and policy makers: national/regional levels: participate facilitated discussions Framework

Findings

- Youth agency contested terrain: viewed from diverse contexts/ perspectives
- Two key challenges: framing of youth by media; sociocultural and gender norms
- Promotion youth agency: reinforcing intersection between individual/collective agency

Findings

- Constrained/moulded by socio-historical, structural contexts and factors:
 - gender, sexuality, social class, ethnicity, education systems, labour markets, social norms
- Social/cultural norms: key enablers/barriers to youth agency

Next steps

Evidence to embed youth agency in school ecosystem

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Youth programming to enable children/youth to take leadership/action
in exercising agency across Southern Africa

Youth Driven

Technical support, ethics, data collection/analysis, write up,
dissemination

Thank you