

VOCA

'young people's
voices on
human rights
issues'

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From Strength to Strength

Success Capital has come a long way from a passion project and advocacy blogging. We have reviewed our operating model, governance composition and initiated our 2016-2026 roadmap aimed at building intellectual capital among young people. Founded on the beliefs of empowerment through knowledge and change through dialogue, we have committed ourselves to meeting the needs of young people in Southern Africa.

In this ambitious commitment, we have acknowledged the need to build solutions that are sustainable. This can only be realized through ownership and responsibility for meaningful change being within the control of young people. The many challenges faced by young people are motivating. They present an opportunity for learning, sharing experiences for future leaders and provide an environment to strengthen the ability to solve some of the most complex problems in an ever changing and increasingly connected society.

I am excited to present our newsletter as a platform to not only share our work as an organisation, but to showcase the emerging interests in our society. At times these do not fall within the scope of our project or funded work but serve as critical insight into understanding the complexity and fabric of society. Young people are diverse, similarly their needs and the challenges they face. *VOCA* recognizes this dynamic and in the least, hopes to encourage dialogue and solutions building. This issue explores South Africa's *#FeesMustFall*, a diary entry from the founding leader of our new partner group - the *Feminist Collective* and other life experiences of young people in their journey.



- Obonye Robert, *Chairperson of Success Capital*

Relevance of the *#FeesMustFall* movement

Students have called for free quality decolonised education in South African (RSA) tertiary institutions. This call began long before 2015's National Shutdown at the union buildings. It started with the freedom charter's promise for accessible quality education to all. As intensity grew with instances of violence, commentators say student's calls are reaching beyond the 'sky'. Others in support of the movement have their own reservations with how far it's gone. I would like to remind ourselves on why this civic action necessary.

Statistics RSA's 2016 *Labour Markets Dynamics in South Africa* report shows that unemployment among people with a matric qualification or less is 59.1%. Those with tertiary education; 7%. This shows the critical role of education in at least, providing a means of living for many coming from poor and working class households. Students have struggled to complete their education because of funding. Others resort to sleeping in libraries and student debt limits further progress for graduates. The call has expanded beyond just fees. It presents an opportunity for dialogue that would have never occurred if it were not for students' actions.

- Kgotso Bopape, *Engineering student at the University of Pretoria*

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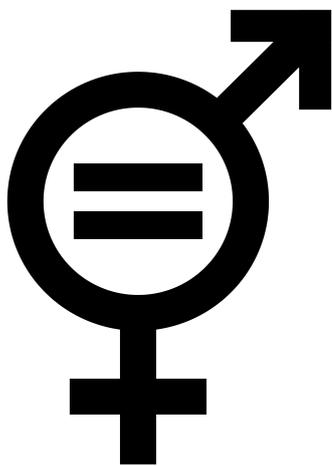
Many interventions that aim to resolve society's problems seem to achieve specific outputs that can be quantified into a statistic of participants, trainings or distributed items. Does this reflect what meaningful impact these 'solutions' have on persistent problems?

The culture of working for reporting is challenged by the evolving proble-

ms many vulnerable groups still face today. How does an advocacy campaign change the experiences of a young woman? Or a court case change the way a young boy is treated in boarding school? All forms of human rights work are essential, but there is a need to invest in how inequality can be addressed in the small but critical spaces embedded within society; be

it in school, at home, at church or at work. It is these spaces that feed into and form systematic inequalities faced by many in who seek justice, equality, health or livelihood. These are simple things we all should have access to, but many of us do not. We need to equip vulnerable people to own and resolve these challenges.

- Dumiso Gatsha, *Editor*



Equality for ALL

Human Rights seems to be abstract and unreachable in Mauritius when looking at sexual orientation. Discrimination exists in school, in employment. People who are different cannot lead a normal life. If someone of a non-conforming sexual orientation decides to establish a household, they cannot. They can't be in an ordinary relationship or marry. Sharia banners hang all over as if Mauritius is not a multicultural country. How do people who are diff-

erent walk or live comfortably when they're told they have disease? This environment clearly has an impact in increasing HIV incidences. We need a better way to address these challenges. Equality means all and not just most. All.

DEAR DIARY

Since I came out about my status my life has gone upside down. It's like I don't have a life here anymore. I feel out of place. Every aspect of my life has just vanished. I am always trying to be strong but when what I do is ruining me and going unnoticed, I feel like packing up and leaving.

I even wanted to go study abroad just to get out I love what I do but sometimes it seems not worth it. I don't have a life. The reality is my relationships will probably be the same because people fail to understand that being HIV+ doesn't make me dangerous or of no value.

For so long I have been thinking of just leaving. Truth is that if it doesn't make me run away it will kill me. Stress is further affecting my health. I don't regret my decisions but I hate the way my life is going. HIV is all I seem to amount to these days. Life is lonely and sometimes I feel like I'm losing my mind. I fix other people's problems but can't fix mine. It kills me.

- Masedi Thata Kewamodimo, *Coordinator of the Feminist Collective group, focusing on eliminating stigma and discrimination of PLHIV*

Freedom of Expression & Art in Gabane

Earlier this year, we gathered a group of young people from all walks of life. Young fathers, poets, activists, students and professionals. In the outskirts of Gaborone, we had several forms of art ranging from theatre plays, poetry, and singing to showcase how human rights can be articulated among peers. The day provided an opportunity for youth to learn about climate change, sexual minority rights, gender equality and how all these apply to our day to day lives. Success Capital is a youth led, managed and serving NGO in Botswana.

- Vaibhav Jeeta, *High school student in Mauritius*