The Oxford dictionary succinctly describes ‘Activism’ as, ‘the policy or action of using vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change.’ The need to bring about change has always been the catalyst and driver of activism. **Young people possess a profound power to create change.** So, although youth activism has been around for a long time, there is a new energy and urgency to the youth activism we see today. Added to this, young people are much more tech-savvy and agile. That means they are able to advocate more broadly and rapidly mobilise networks of young people around an issue. Today’s young activists are taking on the system and engaging with leaders on issues such as sustainability, development agendas, governance, health and well-being, education and climate-change to make a meaningful difference in the lives and the lived realities of other young people in their communities. We call them the **Change Generation.**

At SAT we get to experience the power, tenacity and agency of young people across the region everyday, and we are in awe. We know that young people are doing extraordinary work in their countries, as they seek to bring about positive changes in issues such as health and sexual and reproductive health and rights. We see many young people who volunteer their time and energy to make health and SRHR better for other young people by being activists for better services and positive change. That is why we established the **Adolescent Activism Awards** (AAA), to acknowledge and celebrate work and impact that adolescents and young people are having in their communities. The awards focus on young people who are seen to be making a difference on issues such as: advocating for safe schools; fighting gender based violence; increasing access to age appropriate sexuality knowledge and education; increasing access to HIV prevention and treatment; increasing health access in conditions of poverty; or strengthening links between health and environment activism.

This year to commemorate International Youth Day, on 12th August, the awards were announced on our social media platforms and across our Youth Hub and AfriYan partner networks, too much excitement. We even had to extend the deadline submission date for nominations of adolescents and young people.

The 2020 awards were slightly different however, in that we did not select one overall Adolescent Activist winner from across the region, but instead chose to innovate with our decision to crown AAA national country winners and runner ups in Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. What we consistently found across all the submissions received, was that young people are taking up opportunities to lead change within their communities. They are actively driving change and transformation. Their efforts are not just getting noticed but are having a meaningful and sustainable impact in the lives and futures of young people across the region.

We are therefore extremely proud to showcase the deserving winners of this year’s Adolescent Activism Awards. From **Botswana,** **Dorcus Motswadira** was recognised for her work in trying to address the gap in access to modern contraceptives for adolescents and young people in her community, and worked hard to ensure that people living with disabilities were not neglected. She embodies Agenda 2030, to
leave no one behind. From Malawi, Tanaka Chirombo reflects the aim of the awards, through his passion for preventative medicine who actively advocates on issues that impact young people living with HIV. Tanaka is also undertaking community awareness on current HIV cure research updates and uses these insights in his work as a peer supporter and a mentor at Mzuzu central Hospital in Malawi. Working with our partner AfriYan Namibia, Ndelipewa Mungoba was awarded as the overall national winner in Namibia for her excellent participation in SRHR issues which was evidenced by her ambassadorship of the year-long Free Flow Campaign. Ndelipewa is a true leader amongst her peers, working hard to inspire positive change in her community and the country at large. Hailing from Zambia, Abigail Kandepu epitomises service and dedication to improving the lives of other adolescents and young girls in her community of Chibuluma, which is rife with drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancies, early child marriage and many other vices that impact the futures of young people. Abigail believes in “walking the talk” and has immersed herself in the promotion of a good and healthy lifestyle that she believes can address some of the many challenges young people face in her community and ultimately change their future trajectories. Last, but no means least, we acknowledge Luckmore Pamidzai, who was the national Zimbabwe AAA winner. As is the case with all of our national AAA winners, Luckmore is a passionate youth advocate, professionally trained HIV Counsellor and a Community Adolescent Treatment Supporter (Africaid Zvandiri) and Deputy National Facilitator-Northern Region. He was recognised for his excellent leadership skills at district, provincial and national level for the promotion of access to SRHR and HIV prevention services. His work has not only benefitted young people in Mt Darwin District, but he was also instrumental in establishing and driving community engagements and clubs to address issues of gender based violence, menstrual health issues, teenage pregnancies and child marriages.

Over the coming weeks we will be bringing the personal stories and journeys of these amazingly talented and passionate young activists, so stay tuned. In closing, we would like to send a big shout out to the winners and runner ups. We say thank you to all the young activists who are on the front lines of social change. You are not only the future but you are actively shaping the world today and tomorrow for future generations to thrive. #ChangeGeneration

We would like to send a big shout out to all the winners and runner ups, you inspire us to be better. Over the coming weeks we will be bringing you the personal stories and journeys of these amazing young activists, so stay tuned. In closing, to all the young activists who are on the front lines of social change. You are not only the future, but you are actively shaping the world today and tomorrow for future generations to thrive. #TheChangeGeneration.

BOTSWANA:
Winner: Dorcus Motswadira
Runner-Up: Lilebo Faith Thipe

NAMIBIA:
Winner: Ndelipewa Mungoba
Runner-Up: Rivaldo Kavanga
MAWALI:
Winner: Tanaka Chirombo
Runner-Up: Lusungi Harawa

ZAMBIA:
Winner: Luckmore Pamhidzai
Runner-Up: Helen Tembo

ZIMBABWE:
Winner: Abigail Kandepu
Runner-Up: Sharon Stella Musonza

#FRIDAYYOUTHACTIVIST  #THECHANGEGENERATION  #SAT4YOUTH