

YOUR VOICE BELONGS HERE

A wider circle of young voices

Open Pod guide for students and community youth groups

Who can express interest

The Open Pod welcomes individual students outside the core school cohort and community youth groups, including churches and community-based youth organisations. Earlier operational documents use the name Open Studio Pod.

Start with a responsible adult

Under-18s should ask a parent, guardian, authorised teacher or responsible youth-group representative to register using the adult's contact details. Students aged 18 or 19 may register themselves. The Secretariat confirms age suitability, group scope and the supervision route before entry.

What to prepare

Choose a creative question and explore the current briefs. Use original work, fiction, metaphor or public themes. You do not need to disclose personal experiences or submit private journals. The individual pathway includes an elective response and a U1 companion response; the exact group allocation is agreed during onboarding.

What the waitlist means

Interest is welcome now. Entry limits, deadlines, age-specific arrangements and selection are confirmed during onboarding. The older provisional individual cap is not a public promise of available places. Planned for three consecutive days during the First Term 2027 mid-term break in Harare. Exact dates, final venues, fees and submission deadlines will be announced. Joining a waitlist is free and does not reserve a place.

YOUR VOICE BELONGS HERE

How contributions reach the festival

1 Join the Open Pod waitlist

Choose individual student or community youth group. Tell us the adult contact, location, organisation if applicable and creative interest. Do not include student names, health information or private stories in the enquiry.

2 Complete onboarding

The team confirms the responsible adult, appropriate brief, consent and assent, safeguarding route and technical requirements. Community groups need the same care and adult accountability as school groups.

3 Submit through the private route

After the team issues an entry code, the adult can use the contribution portal. A file upload is a private review submission. It does not publish work or create permission for publicity, recording or research.

4 Review and selection

The team checks completeness, rights, consent, safeguarding, artistic fit and capacity. It may request edits, agree private review or decline public display. Approved work receives presentation instructions.

YOUR VOICE BELONGS HERE

A contribution with care

The submission packet

Final work or an agreed preview; a 150–250-word artist statement; a public caption of no more than 75 words; brief code; rights, sources, collaborators and AI-use declaration; technical needs; adult review and permission references.

Choice stays with the young person

A young person can pass on a topic, choose fiction, use an approved attribution option or ask to withdraw before publication. Public uses have separate choices and practical withdrawal limits explained before approval.

Community leaders

Name a safeguarding contact, use supervised communication and avoid private one-to-one contact between external adults and children. Confirm guardian permissions, participant assent and member-level permissions for group work.

Join the conversation

Register at www.themattersthatcount.org/open-pod. For entry-route questions use the Secretariat contact; do not email confidential support records or completed consent forms without an agreed secure route. Festival Secretariat: tapiwa@nojobsjustwork.com | www.themattersthatcount.org