

VOICES

Women and Youth Empowerment



EDITORIAL NOTE

We are proud to present a collection of inspiring stories showcasing the transformative impact of Hivos' Women Empowerment Project through our partnership with Women Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ), Women's Institute for Leadership Development (WILD), Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust (YETT), Gender Links, General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (Gapwuz) , Gender Media Connect (GMC) and Zimbabwe Gender Commission in our different project such as S(HE) Matters, Women and Youth Inclusion for Equality (WYI4E) and Women and Youth Leadership and Participation (WYLP).

Our partnerships have enabled us to make significant impact in promoting gender equality and social inclusion for women and young people across different regions. This quarterly newsletter seeks to highlight the great work made by women and youth who have overcome numerous challenges to achieve their leadership goals under our different projects.

At Hivos, we believe that empowering women and youth is essential for building vibrant, inclusive communities and fostering equitable socio-economic development.

Together, we can create a more just and equal world where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Our Women Empowerment projects are funded by the European Union in Zimbabwe and the Embassy of Ireland in Pretoria.

Your comments and suggestions on the stories featured in this edition will be greatly appreciated.

People Unlimited

Advocating for Gender Equality: Shingirai Tanaka Chikazhe's Vision

Shingirai Tanaka Chikazhe, the Executive Director of the National Junior Councils Association of Zimbabwe (NJCA), oversees 92 junior councils. The NJCA serves as a watchdog, ensuring local authorities address children's issues in local government service delivery and decision-making. The NJCA also trains young people to understand leadership roles and service delivery.

Chikazhe started as a project coordinator, was voted as the President of the NJCA in 2014, and appointed as the executive director in 2017. The NJCA takes gender issues seriously, although it currently lacks a gender policy. The association, composed of current and former junior councillors, has a near 50-50 gender balance. The NJCA has seen an increase in female leadership within junior councils, with many junior mayors and chairpersons being girls. This change has led to a more inclusive approach to addressing issues in local governance and service delivery.



**Shingirai Tanaka Chikazhe,
NJCA Executive Director**

The NJCA also actively promotes gender equality through various programmes and taking part in international celebrations. Chikazhe credits his understanding and appreciation of gender issues in leadership to his female mentors.

He believes the increasing number of women in leadership positions in various sectors is a positive development. He acknowledges the competence of women in leadership roles and strives to maintain a 50-50 gender balance in the NJCA. He encourages local authorities to consider gender equality during junior councillors selection process.

Suggesting that if a male is elected mayor, a female should be elected deputy mayor, and vice versa. Chikazhe also emphasises the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in leadership positions. He notes that many young women participate actively in junior council but often withdraw after their term of office, suggesting a need for ongoing support and encouragement for these young women to maintain their confidence and continue in leadership roles.

Chikazhe identifies himself as a gender champion and is committed to standing up for gender issues. He recognizes the need to address gaps, such as supporting young women as they transition out of junior council. He appreciates the efforts of the government organizations like Gender Links in promoting gender equality and learns from them to enhance his advocacy efforts.

The NJCA Chair, shared his experiences and perspectives on gender issues, particularly in the context of societal roles and responsibilities. He emphasized the importance of unity and collaboration between men and women to achieve development and progress. He argued that there are no issues that are solely women's issues, as these issues affect the whole family and society. Furthermore, he highlighted the need for both men and women to be educated and sensitised about the participation of women in decision making.

Successfully manoeuvring through the high-speed world of politics: Mary Mliswa



Hon. Councillor Mary Mliswa, Hurungwe Rural District, Council Chairperson

“Effectively manoeuvring through the complex landscape of politics while facing challenges related to discrimination and sexism requires a combination of strategic thinking, resilience and determination.”

My political journey began when I was abroad when ZANU PF established structures. Being someone who always had a keen eye on political affairs, I was fortunate enough to be born in a family that had a keen interest in politics. My parents served as liberation war collaborators and our home in Zambia served as a base for the liberation war fighters. My brother served as a Member of Parliament in constituencies within Mashonaland West province.

The low numbers of women in structures motivated me to take on the challenge of being a Member of Parliament for Hurungwe West constituency and later was appointed as the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution for Mashonaland West Province.

The decision to embark on this journey was made with proper consideration of the societal expectations placed on women, including the nurturing instinct that often overshadowed their ambitions. Nevertheless, I was resolute in my conviction that it was time for young women like myself to have a strong voice and challenge the prevailing norms.

Another contributing factor that served as a driving force to my participation in politics was the male-dominated structures which did not allow for full participation of women. I was determined to prove that women were equally capable and deserving of holding positions of power. In rural areas, there is a common belief that politics is a domain reserved only for men. Despite the numerous challenges faced by women in politics, including discrimination and sexism, it is essential to develop a resilient attitude to navigate through these obstacles.

Women in politics often encounter arrogance and prejudice from their male counterparts, requiring them to cultivate a thick skin to remain focused on their goals of community development and positive change. It is crucial to shield oneself from negativity and maintain a united front with other women and level-headed men in politics to achieve significant progress.

Some of the strategies I used to overcome negativity, included the use of humour and resilience.

It is also important that one remains calm and composed in the face of adversity. It is important to note that the government of Zimbabwe with the leadership of HE President Dr ED Mnangagwa is making strides to promote women's political participation both at local and national levels through special measures like the Quota for women at these levels.

Holding positions of leadership in politics, such as Minister of State, Member of Parliament and Mayor can be daunting for women, leading to self-doubt and concerns about performance. I overcome these challenges through continuous learning, a genuine interest in public service and unwavering determination. I also encourage other women to possess these qualities for them to properly navigate the political landscape and achieve positive results.

The role I currently hold as the Hurungwe Rural District Council Chairperson is even more fascinating than my expectations. It is worth noting that less than 10% of women are Council Mayors/Chairpersons in Zimbabwe. In my council, only two female councillors were elected through the First Past the Post (FPTP), while 8 including myself were appointed through the 30% quota system.

This situation raises the question of how women can effectively manage in such circumstances. Despite my previous exposure and experience, transitioning from a ministerial role to working at the grassroots level has presented new challenges that I am willing to take on. Now, I am directly dealing with the day-to-day service delivery issues and the call to action as enunciated by HE President Dr ED Mnangagwa on the 1st Nov 2023.

The low numbers of women in structures motivated me to take on the challenge of being a Member of Parliament for Hurungwe West constituency and later was appointed as the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution for Mashonaland West Province.

Balancing my personal life with political activities is a significant challenge that I face. As a mother, wife, and politician, finding equilibrium is crucial. I have had to engage in discussions with my children to ensure they understand the demands of my political responsibilities. It is important to maintain open lines of communication and find ways to manage both personal and professional commitments effectively.

One of the top priorities in my new position is establishing effective coordination between Council officials and Councillors. The technocrats must be actively involved and practical to achieve tangible results. It is not enough to simply develop impressive work plans on paper, we must ensure that these plans are successfully implemented for better quality service delivery.



GMC RAISES PUBLIC AWARENESS ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT



Gender Media Connect (GMC) hosted two radio programs on Women's Day to raise awareness and motivate for action against sexual harassment in the media sector in Zimbabwe. The radio broadcasts, held in partnership with national radio station ZiFM and Hevoi FM, a regional station for Masvingo in the south of the country, highlighted the prevalence of sexual harassment and emphasized the need for prompt action to fight it.

The radio programs commenced with discussions on the various forms that sexual harassment takes, with the invited guests sharing personal perspectives and experiences. The guests underscored the detrimental impact of sexual harassment on victims and emphasized that sexual harassment constitutes a grave infringement of human rights, with enduring psychological repercussions for victims.

Panelists on both programs delved into the root causes of sexual harassment in the media sector, attributing it to entrenched patriarchal norms and power dynamics that normalize such behavior. They also highlighted the role of education and awareness in cultivating a culture of respect and equality. Panelists urged listeners to actively engage in combating sexual harassment and to collaborate in establishing an environment where women in media can operate without fear or harassment.

The radio programs are part of broader efforts by GMC to implement tangible measures to combat sexual harassment. Among these strategic initiatives is the establishment of a Female Journalists Protection Fund aimed at providing support and resources to female journalists facing harassment in the media industry.

STUDY AIMS TO CREATE A SAFE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT IN ZIMBABABWE



Gender and Media Connect (GMC) is undertaking a nationwide survey to assess the status of sexual harassment policies and practices in newsrooms. The survey, which will look at reporting mechanisms, complaints handling and investigations by media houses, will inform interventions that can lead to a safer working environment

To date, researchers have spoken to human resources personnel, editors, station managers, journalists, reporters, and presenters in Harare, Masvingo, Mutare, Gweru and Bulawayo to gather perspectives from a wide range of media professionals.

Following the launch and validation of research findings, GMC will use findings to support media outlets in developing robust systems for preventing and addressing sexual harassment. This will directly support initiatives in the sector such as the Zimbabwe Media Commission's Sexual Harassment Policy, launched on April 11th whose aim is to end sexual harassment in newsrooms.

The survey will therefore be instrumental in helping media companies establish effective mechanisms for handling sensitive cases, fostering a safer and more respectful work environment for all.



CELEBRATING THE EFFORTS OF THE YOUNG WOMEN AND WOMEN FROM THE WOMEN'S BUSINESS BOOT CAMP

The 20 enterprising young women and women competitively drawn from the 10 provinces of the country who participated in the Women's Business Boot Camp and Skillfare Training (WBBS) hosted by the Institute for Young Women's Development on 17 April 2024 are already putting the knowledge and skills acquired from the training to good use.

Just a few days after the training, some have not only developed business plans, company profiles, and marketing materials for their businesses but have also sought business advice to improve the quality of their products, particularly those in the catering industry.

Their accomplishments so far, serve as a testament to the effectiveness of the WBBS in equipping them with valuable skills, and knowledge, to navigate the business terrain. The WBBS training hosted by IYWD with support from Hivos and the Embassy of Ireland, aimed to support aspiring women entrepreneurs and enhance their business acumen.

The program provided comprehensive training sessions, mentorship, and access to resources to foster the growth of their enterprises. The WBBS endeavored to harness young women and women's agency and leadership by providing continuous business coaching, mentorship, and accompaniment aimed at improving young women's and women's socio-economic standing.

Young women and women had an opportunity to learn from seasoned business people who facilitated the training which include Dr.Divine Ndhlukula, representatives from Youth Empower Bank, Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MWACSMED), Zimbabwe Microfinance Women's Bank and AFC Bank among others, who engaged with young women and women on ongoing programs and opportunities.

During the WBBS, Dr Divine Ndhlukula stressed the importance of a business plan while guiding the participants in developing a well-structured and strategic business plan. "Your business plan should clearly articulate their vision, identify target markets, explore growth opportunities, and establish financial projections".

After gaining new knowledge from the boot camp, some of the young women and women returned to their drawing boards to create business plans for their various enterprises to turn their business dreams into actionable plans for success. Charity Mungwai, a resident of Gokwe, mentioned that she created a business plan for her catering company after attending a boot camp.

She aims to attract more customers to her business. Caroline Mutasa who is also into the catering business echoes her plans for her restaurant business, she mentioned, " I am still working on my Business work plan for my Restaurant business which I'm running and will share with fellow sisters for inspiration as part of peer-to-peer mentorship".

CELEBRATING THE EFFORTS OF THE YOUNG WOMEN AND WOMEN FROM THE WOMEN'S BUSINESS BOOT CAMP

After understanding the significance of a strong brand presence at the boot camp, Martha Paul who is into the furniture business was inspired to create a professional business profile for her business. "Besides the business profile, I have started networking with new people I meet and share about my business.

In addition, I approached the MWACSMED to enquire about the countries that are under Comesa and the list of items I don't need to pay duty since I deal with all household goods". This boot camp is a force to reckon with since young women and women are already tapping into the nuggets learned, setting a strong foundation for their businesses to thrive.

Further, recognizing the importance of continuous learning and mentorship, as shared at the WBBS Sharo Matode is actively seeking advice from industry experts and experienced entrepreneurs for her butchery business. "I learned a lot at the WBBS, all the guidance imparted at the training is invaluable as it provided me with insights into marketing strategies, operational efficiency, and customer service, now I have refined my business approaches".

Rumbidzai Chizarura among other participants highlighted her takeaway was the importance of effective marketing and branding. "I realized I could enhance my business by learning graphic design, offering fliers and videos, and improving social media management" By carefully crafting and distributing materials marketing her trade, she will expand her reach,

attract new customers, and strengthen her brand presence. Undoubtedly, the young women and women who participated in the WBBS have thus far shown zeal to improve their businesses to achieve financial growth and enhance economic independence. The IYWD anticipates receiving reports on increased revenue streams, improved profit margins, and expanded market reach from the WBBS participants.

The knowledge gained from the WBBS has empowered them to make informed business decisions that lead to sustainable growth and stability. The IYWD is proud of the young women and women who have improved their businesses and look forward to more success stories.

The creation of business plans, and professional profiles, ongoing peer-to-peer mentorship, is a sign that the young women and women are set to thrive. Celebrating their achievements this far not only highlights the effectiveness of the WBBS but also inspires and motivates other aspiring women entrepreneurs. We believe the program's impact extends beyond financial gains, fostering personal growth, building social networks, and promoting gender equality in the business world.

The WBBS laid a foundation for sustainable economic development and opened doors for young women and women to realize their entrepreneurial dreams.

THRIVING TOGETHER WHILE EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN AND WOMEN FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELL-BEING THROUGH A WOMEN'S BUSINESS BOOT CAMP AND SKILLFARE TRAINING

Acknowledging the array of socio-economic obstacles that young women and women encounter, the Institute for Young Women's Development with support from Hivos and the Embassy of Ireland, organized a Women's Business Boot Camp and Skillfare under the S(H)E Matters project.

The project, which the IYWD is implementing seeks to improve the socio-economic standing of women who are part of its flagship #VoteRunLead Reloaded program by providing business mentorship and training; and advocating for women's economic justice to relevant players and stakeholders.

This project thus builds upon IYWD's learning lessons and recommendations on strategies for enhancing women's political participation from a previous intervention called VoteRunLead2023 that engaged and accompanied a group of 80 aspiring political candidates within a program called #VoteRunLeadReloaded.

The IYWD, on 17 April 2024, hosted a Women's Business Boot Camp and Skillfare breaking the ground commencing the implementation of the S(H)E project implementation commenced. The WBBS sought to provide a supportive and encouraging space for young women and women to enhance their business skills, expand their network, and boost their confidence in entrepreneurial pursuits.

Overall, the WBBS provides young women and women with comprehensive business training and skills development, empowers them with tools to start or scale their businesses, creates a supportive network for them to exchange,

experiences and build partnerships, promotes gender equality, and enhances the socio-economic well-being of young women and women. A total of 20 young women and women who were competitively selected from the country's 10 provinces participated in the boot camp together with various stakeholders including Youth Empower Bank, Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MWACSMED), Zimbabwe Microfinance Women's Bank and AFC Bank among others, who engaged with young women and women on ongoing programs and opportunities.



Dr. Divine Ndhlukula, Chief Executive Officer, Securico Security Services Pvt Ltd

The WBBS offered training sessions, covering various aspects of entrepreneurship. Topics included business planning, financial management, marketing strategies, and legal frameworks in business registration. Expert facilitators shared practical insights tailored to the unique challenges faced by young women and women entrepreneurs.

THRIVING TOGETHER WHILE EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN AND WOMEN FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELL-BEING THROUGH A WOMEN'S BUSINESS BOOT CAMP AND SKILLFARE TRAINING

Dr. Divine Ndhlukula, Chief Executive Officer, Securico Security Services Pvt Ltd, who possesses a wealth of experience in business, imparted Financial Literacy and Business Management nuggets during her training sessions, she emphasized having a business plan and financial discipline as crucial for one to thrive in the business world.

"If one does not have a business plan, they are not prepared to venture into business, a business plan is essential as an entrepreneur. It helps you set clear goals and guidelines for how you will manage your business", she echoed.

Mentorship and coaching was another integral session of the training, an important part of the WBBS. Dr Tarisayi Magaya from the AFC Bank took participants through a session on the importance of peer-to-peer mentorship and coaching. Dr Tarisayi Magaya echoed that, "Peer-to-peer mentoring is essential to follow some best practices and it is important to start by selecting a peer mentor or mentee who has similar or complementary goals, interests, and experiences".

Young women and women participants were paired and encouraged to form Whatsapp groups to share progress as they interacted and learned from each other. The groups are meant to provide guidance, encouragement, and advice to each other to refine their business ideas, set achievable goals, and navigate potential obstacles. In addition, the boot camp facilitated networking opportunities that allowed young women and women to connect with fellow participants, successful women entrepreneurs, and industry experts.

experiences and build partnerships, promotes gender equality, and enhances the socio-economic well-being of young women and women. A total of 20 young women and women who were competitively selected from the country's 10 provinces participated in the boot camp together with various stakeholders including Youth Empower Bank, Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MWACSMED), Zimbabwe Microfinance Women's Bank and AFC Bank among others, who engaged with young women and women on ongoing programs and opportunities.

The creation of business plans, and professional profiles, ongoing peer-to-peer mentorship, is a sign that the young women and women are set to thrive. Celebrating their achievements this far not only highlights the effectiveness of the WBBS but also inspires and motivates other aspiring women entrepreneurs. We believe the program's impact extends beyond financial gains, fostering personal growth, building social networks, and promoting gender equality in the business world.



Young women and women (the select 20 from the country's 10 provinces)

THRIVING TOGETHER WHILE EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN AND WOMEN FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC WELL-BEING THROUGH A WOMEN'S BUSINESS BOOT CAMP AND SKILLFARE TRAINING

We are confident that the WBBS's supportive environment fostered a sense of unity and solidarity among young women and women entrepreneurs, promoting collective growth and development.

We believe successes following the boot camp will be monumental, the participants were equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and support, and the program empowered participants to take control of their lives and pursue entrepreneurial ventures. Through economic independence and increased confidence, these women will be agents of change, positively impacting their families, communities, and society. The IYWD's commitment to women's economic empowerment has laid a solid foundation for sustainable growth and continued innovation in the pursuit of gender equality and inclusive socio-economic development.



*Tambudzai Madzimure, Project Manager,
S(H) E Matters Hivos Southern Africa*



Amplifying the Voices of Women and Youth

Creative business idea for better future

Success
Story

ESTHER Tabva is a woman aged 37 who is based in Gutu Mpandawana ward 34, Masvingo province. She has been a beneficiary of the HIVOS project since 2022, attending activities such as citizen journalism training, electoral process training, and women's movement policy dialogues. From all these activities Esther has learnt more about advocacy, women's participation in leadership and electoral processes and women's rights. From all these activities Esther has learnt more about advocacy, women's participation in leadership and electoral processes and women's rights.

"From these activities I challenged myself to take up and aspire for leadership positions within my community. Being hungry for more information, I then affiliated with Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) so that I can have access to regular updates about women's rights, participate in platforms for collective activism on issues affecting women and get mentored on leadership," Tabva said.



As a starting point in her leadership journey, she was elected Vice Chairperson of the WCoZ Economic Cluster, after which she was later elected a Treasurer for the ISAL Money Flow project in Gutu.

"I immersed myself in leadership processes and started participating in community development processes like Full council meetings and Budget Consultation meetings. In August 2023 Harmonised Elections, I then run for elections as Proportional Representation (PR) for the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) party however I did not make it. Despite not making it through in the elections I gained experience, exposure, popularity and confidence. I therefore appreciate WCoZ for all these skills, knowledge, achievements and self-growth," she said.



Highlights of the Women and Youth Inclusion for Equality (WYI4E) Closeout Meeting