

March - April
2025

act:onaid

NEWSLETTER



ActionAid Zimbabwe
INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY- FOR ALL
WOMEN AND GIRLS:
RIGHTS. EQUALITY.
EMPOWERMENT.



THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR'S WELCOME REMARKS

Joy Mabenge,

ActionAid Zimbabwe Country Director.

As we celebrate Women's Month, we are reminded of the profound legacy of Everjoice Jeketa Win, affectionately known as EJ. This year's International Women's Day theme, "For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment," resonates deeply with the values and principles that EJ championed throughout her life. Her unwavering commitment to advocating for women's rights and social justice aligns perfectly with this theme, emphasizing the urgent need for equality and empowerment for all women and girls.

EJ was a formidable feminist and activist whose work transcended borders, inspiring movements and shaping policies that advanced gender equality. As the International Head of Women's Rights at ActionAid International, she played a pivotal role in embedding feminist principles into global development, ensuring that the voices of marginalized communities were heard and prioritized. Her dedication to advancing gender-responsive public services and economic justice was instrumental in empowering women and ensuring that gender equality remained a non-negotiable priority in global frameworks.

In honor of her remarkable contributions, we are proud to announce the establishment of the EJ Solidarity Hub. This dedicated space will serve as a resource for continued advocacy, collaboration, and support for women and girls, ensuring that EJ's commitment to gender justice lives on. It will be a testament to her enduring influence and a platform for future generations to continue her important work.

As we continue doing women's rights work, let us reflect on EJ's legacy and recommit ourselves to the values she embodied: resilience, compassion, and an unwavering pursuit of justice. Together, we can strive to create a world where the rights, equality, and empowerment of all women and girls are realized.

Thank you for joining us in honoring EJ's extraordinary legacy and for your continued commitment to the fight for women's rights.

Happy Reading!!

AAZ PARTICIPANTS DURING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY COMMEMORATIONS IN MUTARE



AAZ Country Director, Joy Mabenge with the Rural Women Assembly members during IWD exhibition.

On March 7, 2025, ActionAid Zimbabwe joined the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, and Small and Medium Enterprise Development in celebrating International Women's Day in Mutare Rural Manicaland Province. This significant occasion was dedicated to advocating for and recognizing women's rights through our Local Rights Programs (LRPs). This year's theme, "For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment," was particularly meaningful as we reflected on our collective journey towards gender equality and empowerment.

The event gathered smallholder farmers, donor agencies, and civil society organizations, with a focus on advocating for gender-responsive public services and promoting economic empowerment through the active participation of women in agroecology.

A highlight of the celebration was the participation of ActionAid Zimbabwe's Rural Women Assembly (RWA). Women from our Chiendambuya and Nyazura Local Rights Programs showcased their achievements by exhibiting organic seeds, crops, and value-added products. This initiative facilitated knowledge sharing and underscored the importance of agroecology as a sustainable practice within the agricultural value chain.

The event effectively advocated for gender equality, highlighting the necessity for equal access to opportunities for women and addressing barriers that hinder their participation. It also highlighted the importance of Economic Empowerment, emphasizing that investing in women is not only a human rights imperative but also essential for building inclusive societies. Awareness of Systemic Barriers was also one of the key topics and the need to identify gaps that limit women's access to opportunities and promoting policies aimed at dismantling patriarchal structures was discussed to be vital.



Rural Women Assembly members showcasing their agroecology products during IWD exhibition.

ACTIONAID ZIMBABWE LAUNCHES GENDER RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICES AND TAX JUSTICE RESEARCH REPORT

By Wallace Mawire

ActionAid Zimbabwe launched a gender responsive public services and tax justice research report meant to uncover why taxes collected are not translating into effective public service provision, especially for women and girls in marginalized communities.

ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ) is actively involved in addressing poverty and promoting gender equality across several districts in Zimbabwe, including Hopley and Mbire, which are the two districts the study has focused on.

The organization's approach focuses on economic justice, climate justice and women's rights. A key component of the organization's work is the Gender Responsive Public Service (GRPS) framework which aims to make public services inclusive, gender-equitable and universally guided by human rights standards, according to Dr Selina Pasirayi, Programmes Lead at AAZ.



Ruvimbo Nhunhama, AAZ Programmes and Policy Manager, Women's Rights and Economic Justice presenting on the research findings during the launch.



In a presentation on unfinished business focusing on feminist alternatives for Inclusive public services from local to global level, Ruvimbo Nhunhama, Programmes and Policy Manager, Women's Rights and Economic Justice at ActionAid Zimbabwe, the study specifically aimed to assess budget allocations for essential services, identify bottlenecks in funding usage, evaluate governmental measures for service delivery, review legal frameworks, estimate financial needs for service upgrades and provide fiscal recommendations to improve service access and quality.

Nhunhama said the study sought to identify the gaps between national policies and their practical application at the local level, especially concerning service delivery to marginalized communities.

The report notes that in terms of water provision, despite substantial national budgetary commitments, including an allocation of ZWL\$389 billion in 2024 for major projects like the Gwayi-Shangani dam, the improvement in water access at the local level remained minimal.

The report notes that in Hopley and Mbire, 20% respondents directly cited a lack of water facilities as an issue, including significant challenges with water quality and accessibility. Issues of a disconnect between national investments and local impacts are highlighted. The study also revealed critical issues in the education sector highlighting Infrastructural deficits and resource shortages at the local level. It says that over 92% of schools lacked essential facilities like electricity and proper sanitation.

Infrastructure shortfall was linked to high drop out rates and compromised educational quality, with a particularly dire student to toilet ratio in Mbire, which poses severe implications for gender equality in educational access. Other issues highlighted in the report include mental health services which are said to be in stark contrast between policy intentions and actual service availability. Strategic plans aimed to integrate mental health into primary healthcare systems are lacking.

It says that access to mental health services in rural and peri-urban areas like Mbire and Hopley are non-existent. It is said that the community's needs, especially in Mbire where mental health challenges are exacerbated by climate change impacts are unmet due to a severe shortage of mental health professionals and facilities.

Issues of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) have been highlighted with the report saying that while national policies supported the services, actual access was hindered by cultural barriers and gender

discrimination. It says that the lack of specialized staff and inadequate Healthcare infrastructure in Hopley and Mbire severely restricted women and girls' access to essential health services.

The report launch was attended by organizations like the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, Harare City Council, Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA), Women Coalition of Zimbabwe (Wcoz), HIVOS, Oxfam, Women in Law Southern Africa (WLSA), SFAIDS, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Local Government, Self Help Development Foundation and the Female Students Network, just to mention a few.

Officially launching the report, Mrs Lilian Matsika Takaendesa, Chief Director Gender Policy Planning and Programme Management in the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development said that women and girls suffer more when service delivery is poor since most caregivers are women and girls. Takaendesa hailed ActionAid Zimbabwe for launching the report which she said would also help guide government efforts in gender responsive budgeting issues.

She also said that her ministry is pushing for gender equality and women empowerment to be a standalone pillar in the forthcoming country's National Development Strategy (NDS2) framework to enhance national development issues. She also said that it was important for stakeholders to be involved in monitoring gender budgeting and its implementation initiatives for national development.

Scenes from the launch



ACTIONAID ZIMBABWE ADVOCATES FOR GENDER EQUITY ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

On March 8, 2024, ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ) joined the global community in celebrating International Women's Day, emphasizing its unwavering commitment to supporting women in the ongoing fight against gender inequality and social injustice. This year's theme, "For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment," highlighted the pressing need for effective public service delivery, as inadequate translation of tax revenues into essential services continues to perpetuate gender disparities, particularly affecting marginalized communities.

In conjunction with this celebration, AAZ launched its recent report on Gender Responsive Public Services and Tax Justice, which sheds light on the disconnect between tax collection and the provision of vital services. This research reveals that many communities, including those in Hopley and Mbire, are not benefiting from government initiatives, a situation that perpetuates gender inequality and hampers the rights of women and girls.

The report's findings draw attention to significant challenges faced by these communities. Alarming, 20% of respondents identified a lack of water facilities as a critical concern, signaling serious issues regarding water quality and accessibility. Furthermore, in the education sector, the situation is dire, with over 92% of schools in Mbire lacking essential infrastructures such as electricity and proper sanitation. Such deficiencies not only obstruct women's empowerment but also

exacerbate systemic gender inequality.

During this event, AAZ commended the Government of Zimbabwe for its efforts to empower women and address gender disparities. The government has made commendable strides, including the integration of gender equality principles into the constitution and the implementation of quotas for women in parliament. Initiatives aimed at combating sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) have been initiated through various awareness campaigns and support services. Additionally, efforts to enhance women's economic empowerment are underway through targeted programs focusing on education, healthcare access, and leadership opportunities.

Despite these efforts, AAZ underscored the need for more consistent and robust actions to ensure these initiatives genuinely translate into improved outcomes for women. AAZ expressed the importance of creating a feminist future where equal rights and opportunities are accessible to all, fostering an environment where no one is left behind.

As International Women's Day 2025 unfolded, AAZ's call for a comprehensive approach to gender-responsive public services resonated deeply. AAZ remains dedicated to advocating for policies that will bridge the gap in service provision, empower women, and dismantle the systemic barriers that hinder gender equality in Zimbabwe.



CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF EVERJOICE WIN: ACTIONAID ZIMBABWE'S HEARTFELT TRIBUTE

On March 25, 2025, ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ) gathered with family, friends, and partners in Harare to honor the remarkable life and legacy of Everjoice Jeketa Win, affectionately known as EJ. A formidable feminist, activist, and leader, EJ dedicated her life to advancing women's rights, social justice, and anti-racism across borders, leaving an indelible mark on movements worldwide.

The event, held in a hybrid format to accommodate both in-person and global attendees, served as a poignant tribute to EJ's unwavering commitment to gender equality and human rights. Participants engaged in a variety of activities, including writing in a memory book,

reflecting on her impactful contributions, and sharing personal stories that highlighted her transformative years within the ActionAid Federation.

As the International Head of Women's Rights at ActionAid International from 2004 to 2011, EJ played a pivotal role in integrating feminist principles into global development strategies and policymaking. Her leadership helped ensure that grassroots feminist movements and youth organizations were prioritized in the fight for social justice. EJ's work fostered gender-responsive public services and economic justice for marginalized communities, making gender equality a central tenet of ActionAid's efforts.



The tribute included a eulogy reading by a family representative and heartfelt addresses from various speakers, including AAZ's Country Director, Joy Mabenge, and ActionAid International's Secretary General, Arthur Larok representative. AAZ's Country Director reflected on how EJ laid the foundation for ActionAid's commitment to Women's Rights and Feminist Alternatives, saying "EJ was a thought leader, unifier, giver, and prolific writer. At, we firmly commit to working to ensure that EJ's legacy does not die."

Among the speakers, Peggy Mugova, EJ's daughter, recalled her mother's co-founding of several civil society and women's rights organizations, including Just Associates. In recognition of her invaluable contributions, the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) appointed her as Professor of Practice from 2020 to 2022.

Throughout the tribute, attendees celebrated EJ's significant achievements while reflecting on her enduring influence within the feminist and social justice movements. The event fostered a spirit of solidarity among activists, emphasizing the importance of continuing her legacy in advocating for women's rights and social justice.

As ActionAid Zimbabwe honors Everjoice Win, the organization reaffirms its commitment to the causes she championed, inspiring future generations to carry forward her vision for a world where gender equality and social justice prevail. EJ's legacy will undoubtedly continue to resonate, serving as a guiding light for activists and advocates working tirelessly towards a more equitable society.



EVERJOICE WIN SOLIDARITY HUB AT AAZ OFFICES



NATIONAL OFFICE

26 Divine Road, Milton Park, Harare

+263-242-788123/5, 776127,

+263-772164449

info.zimbabwe@actionaid.org

zimbabwe.actionaid.org

www.facebook/ActionAidZimbabwe

www.twitter.com/ActionAidZim

ActionAid Zimbabwe



REGIONAL OFFICE

281 Chimurenga Street, Rusape

+263-25-3537,

+263-772395967

For feedback and comments please contact

Felistas Nyamayaro, Communications and Campaigns Officer on

+263771764270 or

Felistas.Nyamayaro@actionaid.org.