



# Action Aid Zimbabwe Newsletter

November - December Newsletter 2024

# Country Director's Welcome Remarks



Joy Mabenge - Country Director

Dear Friends, as we bring 2024 to a close, I am delighted to welcome you to the November-December edition of our newsletter. This is a time of reflection, action, and renewal as we join the global community in commemorating the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), an important campaign running annually from November 25 to December 10.

At ActionAid Zimbabwe, our commitment to advancing women's rights and gender equality remains unwavering. This year, under the global theme **“Towards Beijing +30: UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls”**, we have intensified our efforts to address GBV, particularly in communities where vulnerability is heightened by economic hardships and social inequalities.

This edition of our newsletter highlights some of these efforts, showcasing stories of resilience and change from the communities we serve. You will also find updates on our broader work in livelihoods, social justice, and education, which intersect with our gender justice agenda to create sustainable change.

Throughout the 16 Days of Activism, we have implemented impactful programs, including community dialogues, awareness campaigns, to challenge harmful norms and amplify the voices of survivors. These efforts are deeply rooted in our belief that collective action can break the cycle of violence and create safe, equitable spaces for women and girls to thrive.

I encourage you, as our valued partners, stakeholders, and supporters, to continue advocating for a world free from violence, discrimination, and inequality. Together, we can build a Zimbabwe where every woman and girl can live a life of dignity and opportunity.

Thank you for standing with us in this journey. Let us remain united in action, even beyond the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence.

Enjoy your read!!

Joy Mabenge

# Women Living in Rural Areas Raising Awareness on Gender-Based Violence.



ActionAid Zimbabwe, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, (MWACSMED) initiated the Rusape district's campaign for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) for 2024 to raise awareness on the issues of affecting women.

This event aimed at igniting a community-driven effort to confront and dismantle the structures of gender-based violence in line with the 2024 theme **Towards Beijing +30: UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls.**

This event united women of all ages and different backgrounds to talk about how gender-based violence has affected them and part of these women were survivors of GBV.

Women used large banners that had messages related to the theme and the issues that women face as victims of violence such as “Empowered Rural Women = Empowered Nation”.

Gabriel Jaji, Provincial Development Officer for Makoni District who was the guest of honour said, “There is a need of a whole society approach in ending Gender based violence, in Rusape. I believe that when we come together like we did today we will send a message, and we will be heard, and we will end GBV in our lifetime.”



ActionAid Zimbabwe's Women Rights' and Economic Justice Program and Projects Manager, Ruvimbo Nhumana said, "We need everyone to be aware of GBV issues and what we mean when we talk about GBV." She added that there are types of violences that takes place at home, work and when we are traveling therefore awareness on GBV must be raised in all these places.

The campaign not only raised awareness on gender-based violence but it also raised awareness on the empowerment of women and girls through education and advocacy. Women shared testimonies of pain and struggle, with resilience and victory over adversity. Each participant left with a deeper understanding of their rights and the tools to assert them.

This event in Rusape was a milestone in the ongoing battle against gender-based violence, showing that with unity, education, and determination, change is not just possible but inevitable. ActionAid Zimbabwe, with its partners, not only celebrated activism but had ignited a fire that would guide and warm the hearts of many in their quest for justice and equality.



# Kick Out Child Marriages, Kick Start Education!



In creative way to commemorate 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, Madziwa Mine Secondary School Tuseme Club in Shamva held a girls' soccer cup to raise awareness on child marriages and drug abuse, themed, **“Kick out child marriages, kick start education”**.

The red card symbolized a clear no to child marriages whilst the yellow card meant a warning to perpetrators with the video assistant referee (VAR) standing for those who watch out against child marriages and raise the alarm.

The event started with a march with students, teachers and stakeholders taking to the streets banners with messages aimed at raising awareness on child marriages, drug abuse and gender-based violence.



Gilbert Marufu, Madziwa Mine Secondary head said, “We thought if we can use something that is interesting to learners and the community then they would easily understand the message as gender-based violence is affecting some our learners who are even failing to come to school as a result.”



A scene from the commemorations

Enet Tini, Tuseme club mentor said they used soccer as a crowd puller to get their message across and noted that the Tuseme Club uses various creative ways to communicate their messages including poetry, drama, and music. "Soccer is a crowd puller, and it gives us the opportunity or the platform to talk about child safeguarding," she said.



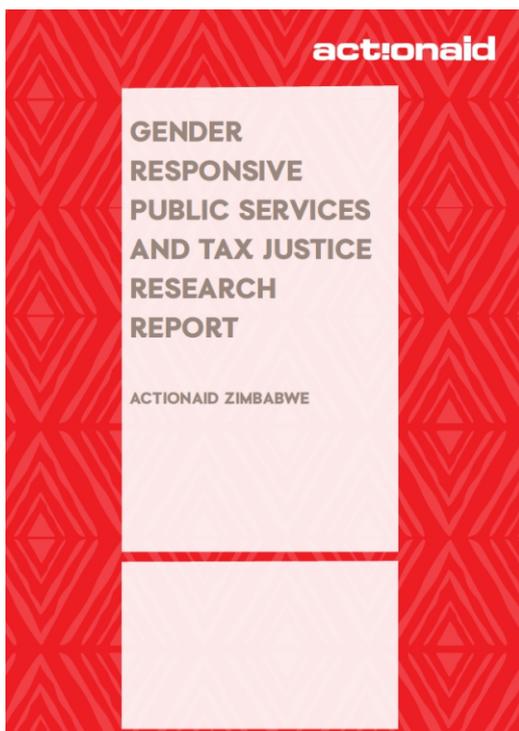
A scene from the commemorations

“By playing soccer, girls and women can create time to relax and refresh so that they are not overwhelmed by the demands of household chores and care-giving responsibilities.”

The event also included a fun drama that featured students who used the platform to raise awareness about child marriages and GBV in the community.

# ActionAid Zimbabwe Gender Responsive Public Services and Tax Justice Research Report

ActionAid Zimbabwe produced a report titled **GENDER RESPONSIVE PUBLIC SERVICES AND TAX JUSTICE RESEARCH**, to uncover why the taxes collected were not translating into effective public service provision, especially for women and girls in marginalized communities.



This study revealed that, despite substantial national budgetary commitments, the improvement in service delivery at the local level has remained minimal. The survey for the report was conducted in Hopley in Harare and Mbire in Mashonaland Central, where it was noted that women and girls face significant barriers in accessing basic services like clean water, quality education, and healthcare.

ActionAid Zimbabwe uses the Gender Responsive and Public Services framework, which emphasizes publicly funded, universally accessible services that are gender equitable and adhere to human rights standards. According to the report, 20% of respondents cited a lack of water facilities as a major issue, which particularly affects women and girls, as they require water more than men.

The national budget allocated approximately ZWL\$8 trillion for primary and secondary education; however, the study revealed that infrastructural deficits and resource shortages were rampant at the local level, adversely affecting those in marginalized areas. In these communities, most of the children who drop out of school are girls, while boys continue to attend, highlighting how the system deprives the girl child of educational opportunities.

The findings from the study reveal stark disparities in the availability and quality of gender responsive public services across the Hopley and Mbire districts. While both communities face significant challenges, the rural Mbire district appears to be particularly underserved, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions.”

Most schools in the area have limited toilets, and girls are the most affected by this lack of facilities. Research in these areas revealed that mental health services were almost non-existent in rural and peri-urban regions, while access to sexual and reproductive health rights services is hindered by cultural barriers and gender discrimination.

There is a lack of specialized staff who can effectively support these communities by providing mental health and sexual and reproductive health services. Moreover, the facilities are underfunded and suffer from poor infrastructure.

The study emphasized the need for the government to align budgetary commitments with policy directives, enhance infrastructural and administrative capacities, and ensure equitable access to public services. To address these challenges, the study proposed strategic actions for the government and civil society organizations, including adopting progressive taxation, earmarking taxes for critical sectors, and intensifying tax justice advocacy.

This calls stakeholders to action, urging them to work collaboratively to ensure that public funds are used effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of all community members, particularly the most vulnerable—women and girls.

# Fighting GBV Using Edutainment Drama

FACT Zimbabwe under the TORCHES project celebrated the annual 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence at Ruwangwe growth point, with community members and Ruwangwe Secondary School Tuseme club members being present, under the theme **“Towards Beijing +30: UNiTE to end violence against women and girls”**.



The event was supported by different government stakeholders such as Ministry of Health and Child Care, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe Republic Police, Department of Social Development, Ministry of Women Affairs Community Small Medium Enterprise Development, Nyanga Rural District Council, Nyangani FM and the Nyanga North Member of Parliament's office. Other organisations present were World vision, Simukai Child Protection Programme and Nature Conservation and Development Trust.



The Tuseme club members used drama as a way of speaking out against child marriages in front of the audience. The club articulated challenges faced by girl students such as being forced to drop out of school due to child pregnancies and child marriages.

In the same manner the, SASA Drama group used this stage to show how it is possible for men to support women and be part of those who fight to end violence against women and girls.

The drama portrayed a man who used his power to forcefully use money that belongs to his wife and the scene ended with another man holding his friend accountable and helping him to start using his power in a positive way.

During the event it was highlighted that one in three females experience gender-based violence in their lifetime in Zimbabwe which is disheartening and gender-based violence and early child marriage continues to be perpetuated against women in Zimbabwe and children, which is a great concern.

Francis Mwonzora Registered General Nurse under the Ministry of Health and Child Care for Nyanga District said, “Gender Based Violence, Child marriage and other harmful practices are not linked to a single religion or culture. These practices happen to girls of every faith, and it is the leader's responsibility of highlighting in their sermons, the dangers of Child marriages.”

He added that we should also take note that child marriage is a developmental issue which affects the country's economic growth. “No country can progress when its youthful population is relegated to marriage and childbearing” said Mwonzora.

As the event concluded, the whole community, stakeholders including religious leaders were encouraged to take action to protect women and girls. Every member present at the commemoration was encouraged to report gender-based violence to responsible authorities.

# ActionAid Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe Gender Commission 16 Day of Activism Against Gender Based Violence event in Harare.



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