



**TOWARDS  
RESILIENT WITH  
HEALTH,  
EQUITY AND  
SAFETY FOR  
ALL (TORCHES)  
PROJECT**

**A collection of  
community  
stories**



Supported by players of



Awarded funds from







ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ) works with partners in Zimbabwe namely Family Aids Caring Trust (FACT), Forum for African Women Educationalists Zimbabwe (FAWEZI) and Leonard Cheshire Disability Zimbabwe (LCDZ) and with support from ActionAid UK (AAUK) and funding from People's Postcode Lottery (PPL), to create communities where women and girls, including people with disabilities, are free from violence, have amplified voices and agency

### The TORCHES project uses the:

1. SASA! Together model- a community mobilisation approach based on the analysis and understanding of power imbalances as the root cause of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).
2. TUSEME model-contributes to raising the academic performance of students through boosting their confidence and motivation levels at school.



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# ABOUT US



**SPEAK UP & TAKE ACTION  
TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST  
WOMEN AND GIRLS!**

In the communities in Zimbabwe where ActionAid, People's Postcode Lottery programming is taking place (Nyanga, Chitungwiza and Shamva) rates of Violence Against Women and Girls and other harmful social norms that impact women's and girls' and people with disabilities' lives have been shown to be above national averages, and this is something that this programme works to address.

”

In Zimbabwe, 1 in 3 women and adolescent girls have faced physical or sexual violence. Women, adolescent girls and people with disabilities (PwDs) in Zimbabwe face violence in their communities and challenges accessing the support they need.

**Everyone  
Wins**  
with balanced power!

**#EndViolence  
#GenderEquality**



# A couple's joy restored through the TORCHES project's SASA! Methodology

Testifying the impact of the project during the second phase awareness close out, a couple from Ward 27, Nyanga District in Manicaland province of Zimbabwe, shared their experiences of how SASA! has transformed their lives and became gender sensitive.

Girlie Towa (49) narrated how her four children (three boys and a girl) were on the verge of dropping out of school because her husband, Taurai Munetsi (48) was a drunkard who was failing to support her with paying school fees.



“My husband had a strict personality. He didn't do anything at home, he used to get drunk all day and beat me if I asked for money or asked for help with household chores. I felt sorry for my children, they saw me being beaten. Moreover, I was unable to pay their school fees with the little funds I got from my gardening products. When my husband beat me, I would ease my sorrow through singing and writing poems,” said Girlie.

“Growing up, I thought that there are certain chores designated for women and that a man who helped his wife was foolish or had been given love potions. Before the coming of SASA, my wife would do all the household chores without my help, be it ploughing the land, laundry, cooking and fetching firewood. I was not conscious of how this was wrong. I used to assault my wife and she has a huge scar on her back because I hit her with a sharp stick, but to this day I regret doing it,” said Taurai.

After attending the SASA! sessions, Taurai discovered that helping his wife with the chores has not only increased their harvest but has also helped him to spend more time with his family.

“I have learnt a lot from the SASA! sessions, I have reformed to the extent that I no longer drink alcohol. The sessions transformed my way of thinking that violence does not solve problems. We now plan things together as a couple. I even help her with all the chores instead of burdening her, which has now resulted in us having increased yield because as we work as a team, we are able to cultivate a much bigger portion. My children can go to school now,” said Taurai.





## From being a beast to a loving Father

Judah Mateza (43) of Ward 4 Nyanga is a man whose life and family were transformed by SASA Together. His home was changed from being a miserable home of fear to a happy home.

“I was very ruthless like a beast before the SASA! program. I used to use a lot of power over my wife and through the inheritance of patriarchal systems I did not see anything bad about using a lot of power over my wife and I thought it was a sign of being a real man. To show that I was more powerful than my wife I would beat her if she made any mistake. Every discussion would end up in a fight. Every day when I came from the beer hall my children would run away and hide in their rooms which made me feel that I was a powerful hero. I used to spend much of my time in beerhalls drinking and smoking as a way of trying to forget my problems,” said Judah.

Judah added: “SASA! has changed me and some of my fellow men. Since I started attending SASA! sessions I realised that I was destroying my own family through my behaviour. I now value my wife and help her with household chores so that she is not burdened by more work. SASA! is now our aunty, we now have an aunty in our home who helps us to live peacefully and solve our family problems. I have noticed that when you share power with your wife and children then they will love and respect you more and there is a bond that is created.”

## Change at the doorstep

Jasmine (43) is a single mother and resides in Ward 4, Nyanga District. She has a physical disability. She is a Community Champion and supported under the TORCHES project.

Taking the community champion work was the first time for her to take a leadership role in her community. Jasmine’s disability did not deter her from doing the SASA Together sessions until her community began to expand, and this demanded a lot of walking. Under the TORCHES project she received a bicycle in 2022 to ease her mobility but she did not use it. The bicycle remained parked at her homestead as she could not paddle as one of her legs was weak to push the paddle.

“In my whole life I have never had a chance to have a disability assessment by professionals. It is rare that women with disabilities are put on the forefront to fight for their rights as we are always forgotten,” said Jasmine.

She painfully explained how all efforts by traditional or spiritual healers who visited her during her youthful days failed to heal her. After the assessment, LCDZ Orthopaedic Technicians prescribed Jasmine’s orthopaedic shoes and Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO).

Six months after receiving her gadgets, her passion for championing the plight of the “downtrodden women, especially those with disabilities was reignited.

Jasmine is no longer hesitant to walk long distances and she is now more enthusiastic to further her constituency. Her self-esteem has been restored.

She is now learning to ride her bicycle which had been gathering dust in her house. This is a development she never dreamed of during her youthful life. As community champion with a disability Jasmine promised to fight for the rights of all girls and women including those with disabilities.





# Every learner matter - Disability inclusion in education

Eliminating barriers to education and creating inclusive learning environments have been long-standing objectives of Leonard Cheshire Disability Zimbabwe (LCDZ) and ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ) under the Towards Resilient with Health, Equity and Safety for All (TORCHES) project. This commitment is further addressed by creating safe and accessible environments, ensuring learners with disabilities are supported and working with schools and communities to tackle stigma and discrimination.

Wadzanai Primary School in Shamva District is one of the schools that has embraced inclusive education for children with disabilities. One of the specialist teachers, Mrs Bwanali said that when AAZ partnered LCDZ in an Empowered Adolescent Girls for Improved Quality of Life in 2019, the school had only five children with intellectual challenges and six with hearing impairments.

“Wadzanai Density Suburb, the school’s main catchment area, has many children with disabilities who are not enrolled in schools. Some parents feel it is not worthy to educate a child with a disability while others are just embarrassed to display such children to the public. Some parents genuinely lack resources to acquire assistive technology for their children”, pointed out Mrs Bwanali who teaches deaf children at the school.

With more awareness campaigns in the area, this time under the TORCHES project, several children sought enrolment at the school. This was coupled with the provision of assistive technologies in the form of hearing aids, wheelchairs, spectacles, and suitable furniture for the special classes whilst enrolment has risen to unprecedented heights.

TORCHES project went further and built disability friendly toilets at both Wadzanai Primary and Secondary schools. The Primary School Head, Mr Lazarus Gwehwa said that inclusive education had been accepted by the community and the school now has a challenge of attracting and retaining qualified staff for children for the special needs teachers.



**Children with disabilities at Wadzanai Primary School ~ Shamva**

“As a school we are grateful that TORCHES project has assisted us in training our teachers on how to handle children with different types of disabilities in inclusive settings.

You also taught our teachers Sign Language and enrolment of children with hearing impairments (13) and those with intellectual challenges has almost doubled in both classes. We now have two Special Classes for 34 children with Learning Disabilities. Children from as far as fifteen kilometres now attend lessons at the school. The school is in dire need for two more qualified personnel for the increased numbers of learners of children with disabilities,” said Mr Gwehwa.



# LET'S HEAR FROM THE COMMUNITIES!



"In grade one, my class position was usually thirty-seven or thirty-eight out of forty-five because I had visual challenges and every time I would have to sit on the front of which I was not comfortable with the setup. I can now see properly; I no longer struggle to read what is written on the chalk board as well as reading texts books and I can decide where I want to sit because my vision has been enhanced. I treasure the spectacles and with them my sight has been highly boosted. My academic grades have improved. Last term I was on position number twelve, and I hope to do better next term."

Ropafadzo has been struggling with clear vision since she started school, and she was unable to read clearly what was written on the chalkboard.



"When I started being a SASA champion, I noticed that cases of early child marriages were on the rise and ward 6 would record at least three cases per month. Since May 2023 to November 2023, no cases of child marriage were recorded in ward 6. This is because of the coming of SASA! Together which strengthened the alternatives which were already put in place to educate communities about consequences of early child marriages. Some of the girls in the community also implore the Tuseme club in schools that it has proved to be effective in reducing child marriages and school dropouts. Issues of child marriages are addressed in the form of dramas."

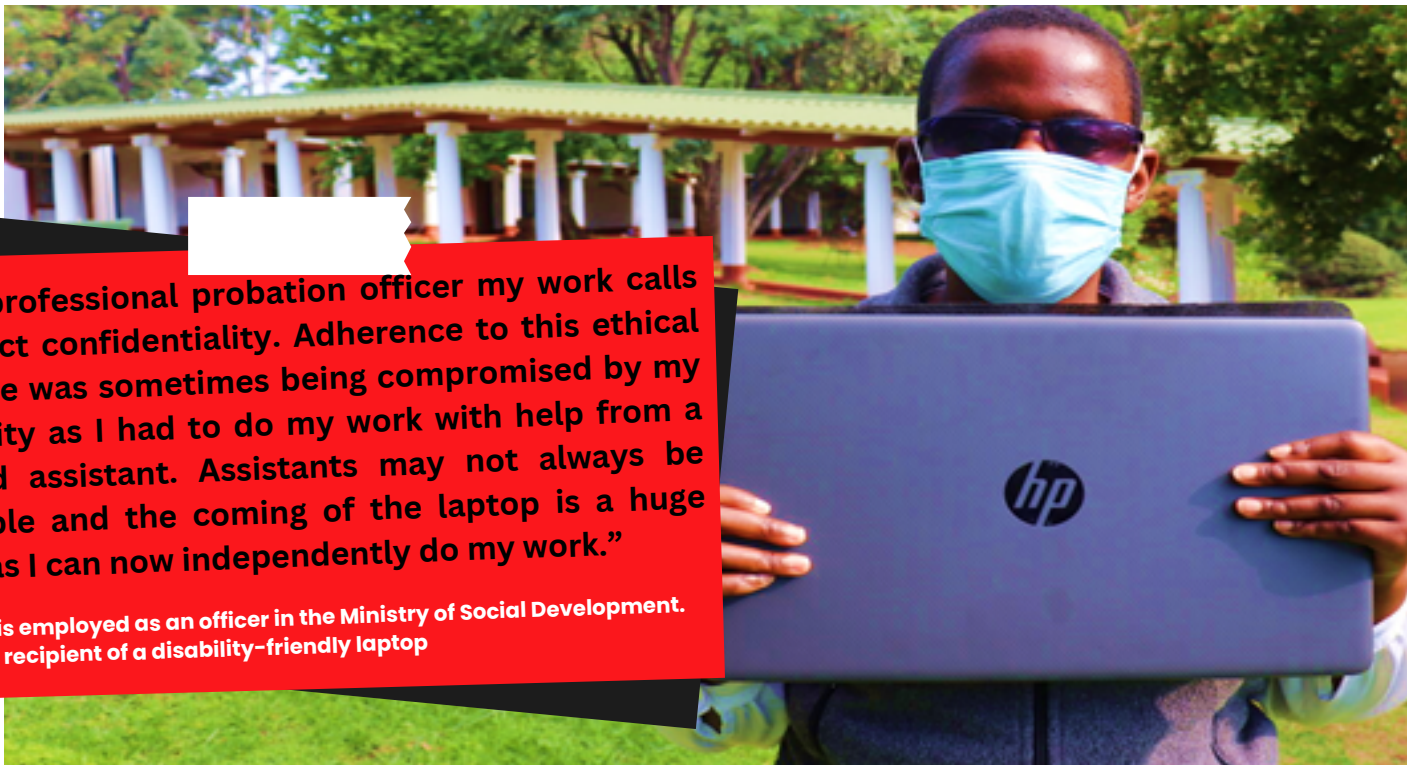
Tanaka Maduveko, SASA champion, ward 6, Nyanga





“Mercy explained that she was afraid to report her husband as it would cause challenges with family members. I managed to discuss with the couple which took almost six months for the husband to understand that balancing power leads to safe and healthy relationships. The situation changed when the couple agreed to attend SASA! Together sessions in 2023 and focus was mainly on managing household finances together which strengthens families and ensure women and men have the capacity to manage finances.”

**Stella Nhira, SASA! champion, ward 7, Nyanga**



“As a professional probation officer my work calls for strict confidentiality. Adherence to this ethical practice was sometimes being compromised by my disability as I had to do my work with help from a sighted assistant. Assistants may not always be available and the coming of the laptop is a huge relief as I can now independently do my work.”

**Nyasha is employed as an officer in the Ministry of Social Development. She is a recipient of a disability-friendly laptop**

# IMPACT VIDEOS



## The Impact of SASA! Together Methodology in Nyanga

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQgAQytPTqE&t=31s&pp=ygUSYWN0aW9uYWVkiHppbWJhYndI>



## SASA! Leaders bring hope to community on GBV reduction

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=as5vTUUwm8w>



## Couple overcomes economic violence by balancing power in their relationship.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=as5vTUUwm8w>



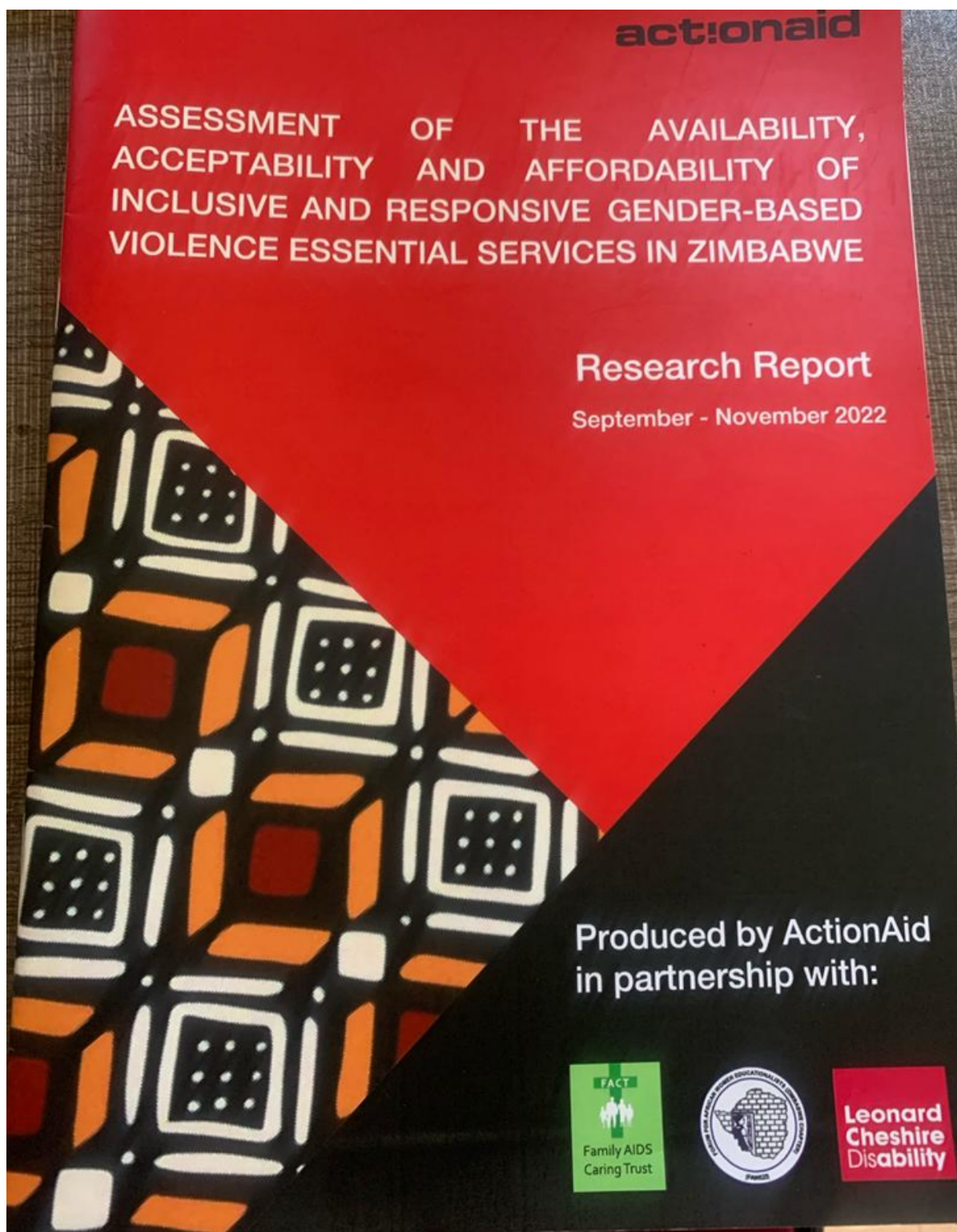
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDBnc0uCRYg&t=139s>



**DID YOU KNOW!! 55.6% of persons with disabilities have no access to GBV essential services in Zimbabwe.**

**Read more from the ActionAid Zimbabwe research report on:**

<https://zimbabwe.actionaid.org/publications/2023/research-report-assessment-availability-acceptability-and-affordability-inclusive>



# GBV Word Search

I	N	V	I	C	T	I	M	N
G	Z	C	H	A	N	G	E	E
H	R	H	E	L	P	F	S	C
O	S	E	Q	U	A	L	U	N
P	U	B	D	S	C	T	B	E
E	P	Q	I	N	T	Z	A	L
T	P	P	O	W	E	R	T	O
R	O	Q	D	K	A	G	P	I
O	R	L	H	P	Z	V	H	V
P	T	X	E	Q	U	I	T	Y
E	D	U	C	A	T	I	O	N
R	Z	F	A	I	T	H	Z	P

**EDUCATION**

**GENDER**

**POWER**

**REPORT**

**VICTIM**

**VIOLENCE**

**ABUSE**

**FAITH**

**EQUAL**

**SAFE**

**RAPE**

**SUPPORT**

**EQUITY**

**ACT**

**CHANGE**

**HELP**

**HOPE**





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