



ActionAid Zimbabwe

**NEWSLETTER
MARCH - APRIL
2023**

**Digital Innovations for Women
in The Face of Climate Change**

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THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR'S WELCOME NOTE

Joy Mabenge, ActionAid Zimbabwe Country Director.



Greetings! It is my pleasure to welcome you to the March to April 2023 edition of our newsletter. In this issue, we focus on work around women's rights and climate justice in line with the International Women's Day (IWD) commemorations which ran under the theme **"DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality."**

IWD is a global commemorative day to celebrate the social, political, economic, and cultural achievements of women, combined with the call of action for the strengthening of gender equality and accelerating women's empowerment and participation in decision-making.

ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ) continues to champion the cause for the advancement and protection of women and girls' rights across the wide spectrum of our interventions. We pride ourselves in ensuring women-led responses to combat poverty and climate change induced shocks and hazards. As we reflect on the various IWD commemorations held in our operational districts, we bring to the fore and celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness on women's rights issues and lobby for enhanced gender equality.

On IWD 2023, we continue advocating for gender equality through protecting the rights of women and girls in all their diversity in digital technology. We remain supporting decent work for all as a proven pathway to reduce inequality in a sustained manner. While the digital world offers immense opportunities, it is not immune to the persistent backlash against women's rights and gender equality.

As the world celebrated women's month, the necessity and urgency to increase women's meaningful participation and inclusion in leadership and decision making could not be overemphasized. The removal of all barriers that hamper access to economic and climate justice for women and girls is top of the agenda as we celebrate women.

AAZ also joins the rest of the ActionAid International family in asserting a collective **#THANKYOU** to all the women responders who have played a vital role in recent, and historic, crises and emergencies.

I invite you to delve into this issue to get updates on AAZ's work around women's rights and the 2023 IWD commemorations. I hope you find this issue informative. Happy reading!

HARNESSING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EXTRACTIVES SECTOR

AAZ under the Fair Green & Global III project, and its partners, Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA), The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCCOD), Center for Natural Resource Governance (CNRG), and Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), forming the Platform and Gender Extractives group held the 7th Edition of the Gender and Extractives Symposium under the theme: "DigitALL innovation for gender equality in the extractives industry."

According to the 2022 Zimbabwe Mining Sector Report, the extractives sector contributed US\$5.4 billion to the economy. The extractives sector offers a variety of opportunities through government initiatives aimed at enabling marginalised people, especially women, to participate productively in the sector. However, the increasing inequalities caused by the inaccessibility of digital technology to women have made it difficult for women to fully participate in and benefit from the mining sector.

This includes the lack of internet services to access and share digital information that empowers them. It is against this background that the Platform on Gender and Extractives (PGE) decided to run the 7th Edition of the Gender and Extractives Symposium under the theme "DigitALL innovation for gender equality in the extractives industry."



Women during the Gender and Extractives Symposium

The symposium was attended by 50 women from different mining communities in Zimbabwe, namely Mutoko, Goromonzi, Chiadzwa, and Kadoma, the Ministry of Women Affairs, Zimbabwe School of Mines, and the University of Zimbabwe.

According to the International Telecommunication Report, the internet gap in Sub-Saharan Africa is

more than 40%, and women are 23% less likely than men to own a mobile phone, making it difficult for women in extractives to access information using digital technology.

Representing ZELA and Zimbabwe Diamond Allied Workers Union (ZIDAWU), Proud Nyakuni emphasised the importance of women in extractives embracing the use of digital technology to move towards a just transition. She elaborated on the ZELA chatbot, which is embedded on WhatsApp and called Envirobot. An innovation to assist women to access information on mining so that they are aware of their rights and hold the government accountable during mining activities.

AAZ's Women's Rights and Economic Justice Manager, Rumbidzayi Makoni anchored her discussion with the women on digital technology for an inclusive economy. In the discussion, she encouraged women in extractives to make use of digital financial tools such as mobile money and banking apps to have access to finances and practice mining in a way that preserves and protects the environment.

"There is need to foster multi-stakeholder partnerships and platforms to facilitate coordination and collaboration among different actors in the mining ecosystem to improve digital access for women in mining," she said.

What They Said at the Symposium



"An inclusive economy needs women to practice sustainable mining, such as the use of drones and sensors."

Rumbidzayi Makoni
AAZ Women's Rights and Economic Justice Manager



"Women should know the importance of digital technology and must be willing to participate in all government sectors in order to be empowered."

Forget Bauren
Ministry of Women's Affairs



"Digital activism is key in advancing women's rights as it gives women opportunities to communicate their needs collectively."

Tracey Mutowekuziva
CNRG

AAZ URGES THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT DIGITAL INNOVATIONS FOR WOMEN IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE INDUCED CRISES



Women from Nyanga District during a visit from ActionAid UK, amplified some of the challenges they face during climate induced shocks such as gender-based violence.

Globally, women are increasingly being seen as more vulnerable than men to the impacts of climate change. A United Nations report of July 2022 states that 80% of people displaced by climate change are women who face numerous challenges during climate induced shocks, such as increased sexual and gender-based violence cases, forced migration, and increased poverty.

In the context of climate change, evidenced by cyclones, floods and droughts that have affected Zimbabwe in the past 10 years, there is need to harness technology and digital innovation to advance climate justice for women. This includes recognising the potential of feminist economic alternatives in driving the climate justice agenda in the country for a more sustainable future for all.

According to United Nations 2022 report on the state of food security and nutrition in the world, the gender food

insecurity gap has widened—from less than 2 per cent in 2019 to more than 4 per cent in 2021, with 32 per cent of women versus 28 per cent of men moderately or severely food insecure.

The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) should promote solutions that replace fossil fuels with clean energy technologies such as the use of solar energy and other green fuels. Direct climate financing to assist in implementation of climate justice and digital technological innovations is critical,” reads part of the IWD commemorations press statement by AAZ.

Innovation and digital technology provide unprecedented opportunities to break trends and reach communities most likely to be left behind, especially women and other vulnerable groups.

AAZ promotes women's leadership and rights to ensure that women are empowered to make decisions about the needs of their community during humanitarian crises. Women bring vital skills, resources, and experience to humanitarian response and when crises happen, they are often the first responders, taking risks and playing critical roles in the survival of families and communities.

NKAYI WOMEN CALL FOR SUPPORT TO TAP INTO THE DIGITAL TO SPEED UP EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Nkayi women celebrated the IWD at Mateme Secondary School in Ward 1 of the district under the theme “Digital: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality”. Over 500 participants that included women, youth, government officials, traditional leaders, and various Non-Governmental Organisations attended the celebrations.

The occasion was graced by the Minister of Women’s Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Hon. Dr. S.G.G. Nyoni who is also a Member of Parliament for Nkayi North constituency.

In her speech, Minister Nyoni underscored the need for and importance of women using the digital platform to market their products, access loans, form online solidarity groups, and lobby for redress of issues affecting them.

Testimonies from gender champions showed that Nkayi women are fast thriving to be resilient and are tapping into the digital platform for their empowerment and upliftment. There were displays of various crafts produced by Nkayi women as well as samples of crops and vegetables from their Conservation Agriculture (CA) fields. The day commemorations were punctuated by thrilling performances by various women groups in the form of dance, songs, and awareness skits.



Nkayi CEO-Mr. S. Mpofu together with the Hon Minister S.G.G. Nyoni admire grafted fruit trees in Nkayi. AAZ partner HEFO has trained women groups on conversation agriculture and craft making.



Nkayi Rural Women's Assembly (RWA) member Ms. S. Munda displaying Nkayi women's wares. Women were trained which they are now selling and earning income to help their families.



A cross section of the Nkayi Women singing and dancing as they celebrate the special commemoration.

MAKONI WOMEN ADVOCATE FOR STRENGTHENING REFERRAL PATHWAYS

Community champions and AAZ partners converged at Saint Bedes in Makoni district to commemorate the 2023 IWD under the theme "Digital: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality." AAZ's local commemorative theme for the event was "Strengthening the referral pathways." The objectives of the celebrations were to advocate, push and strengthen the referral pathways, commemorate the IWD and celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness about gender inequities and increasing support for women worldwide and to promote a shared understanding of the obstacles to women's empowerment in the context of all key sectors of the economy, climate change, equal opportunities, leadership, food nutrition security.



Mai Mudiwa from Nyazura explaining integrated pest management using natural methods #Agroecology



(From left to right) Gender Champions, Mrs Chitura, Mrs Mudiwa, Mrs Sango and Mrs Nyagumbo from Local Rights Programmes in Chiendambuya and Nyazura holding placards with IWD messages during the celebrations

ADVOCATING AN END TO ABUSE OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN COMMUNITIES THROUGH RADIO

ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ) under the Towards Resilient with Health, Equality and Safety for All (TORCHES) project held a radio programme on International Women's Day (IWD) with its partners Leonard Cheshire Disability Zimbabwe (LCDZ), Family Aids Caring Trust (FACT) and The Forum for African Women Educationalists Zimbabwe Chapter (FAWEZI).

The radio programme was aimed at discussing mechanisms and strategies for embracing gender equality in communities. During the coverage, guests highlighted the plight of women in Zimbabwean communities in terms of sexual and gender-based violence, social and

economic development reiterating their call for gender inclusivity in decision-making at all levels.

AAZ TORCHES Project Manager, Betty Sithole said: "On the IWD, we are calling for an end to violence against women and girls in communities, and community members should hold men who use violence against women accountable. Husbands should stop harassing, beating, or mistreating their wives at home because they are as important as men. Violence is never acceptable, let's treat all women and girls with dignity."

FACT Project Officer, Winnet Kaugare said, "Women face challenges to access services therefore it is important to decentralise gender-based violence services so that people can access these services in their local areas rather than travelling long distances to access services. We also need to embrace innovation and technology to reduce unpaid care work burden for women because it's one of the challenges that women are facing in rural areas."

TORCHES Project aims to prevent violence against women and girls and addresses power imbalances between men and women as the root cause of violence.

A promotional poster for a radio talk show. At the top left is the ActionAid logo. Next to it is the FACT logo (Family Aids Caring Trust) and the Leonard Cheshire Disability logo. The text reads: "The International Women's Day (IWD) is a day of women and girls hence serving as a platform to continue pushing Towards Resilient Communities with Health, Equity and Safety for all (TORCHES). The TORCHES consortium is therefore engaging communities through a radio talk show". Below this, it says "When: 07 March 2023 @ 20:00 hrs" and "Where: ZiFM Stereo 106.4 FM". It also says "Tune in and be part of the discussion and contribute to the achievement of communities that embraces equality." There are four photos of the participants: Brian Sithole (HOST), Betty Sithole (AAZ TORCHES Project Manager), Nqobile Nkiwane (FAWEZI Senior Programs), and Winnet Kaugare Jowa (FACT Project Officer). At the bottom right, there is a logo for "PEOPLE'S POSTCODE LOTTERY" with the text "Thank you players of the @postcode lottery for supporting our activities".

AAZ ZAGP VALUE PROJECT'S PIG CHAMPION FARMER MRS LETWINNER NYAGANO HOSTS NATIONAL IWD COMMEMORATIONS



Mrs Nyagano showing some of her new pigsties to Mr. Moses Mhike, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Women Affairs (in blue suit) looking on is Mashonaland West Pork Producers Business Syndicate Chairperson Mr. Peter Musavhaya (in blue shirt).

For Letwinner Nyagano, 60, a pig champion farmer based in Chegutu district, the coming in of the AAZ led ZAGP VALUE project has opened doors of opportunity beyond her wildest dreams. Since joining the project in 2020, she has grown her piggery enterprise from a 9-sow unit to a current 89 sow unit.

Nyagano is passionate about empowering other women pig producers around the country, she is running a recognised training programme and selling genetics locally and exporting to other countries in the region such as Mozambique and Malawi.

In recognition of her meteoric rise as a champion woman pig producer was selected to host the National IWD commemorations at her farm where she showcased genetics imported from South Africa, feed formulation techniques and standard pigsties.

“Nyagacity is a place that with hard work and dedication, women can be champions in any chosen field. I am honoured to witness the good work happening here which is testament to their empowerment,” said Mr. Moses Mhike, the Permanent Secretary in the ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium

Enterprises Development in a speech on behalf of the Minister.

Nyagano paid tribute to the contribution of AAZ in the upgrading of her pig enterprise through the importation of top-quality pig breeding stock from South Africa to boost production and productivity.

“The ZAGP VALUE project has transformed my pig business, for instance we were trained as artificial inseminators, capacitated on on-farm feed formulation and given opportunity to purchase superior pig breeds imported from South Africa,” said Nyagano.

The performance of the new breeds imported by the project have increased her productivity to above industry benchmark, for instance litter size increased from an average 10 to 13, birth weights have also increased from 1.3kgs to 1.8kgs and the weeks to marketing have reduced by two weeks to 20 from 22 weeks with the same cold dressed mass of between 55 to 58kgs.

Nyagano is supporting other women under the project in her area to upgrade their piggery enterprises.

UPDATES SECTION:

ActionAid Zimbabwe Celebrates its 20th Anniversary.



2023 marks the 20th year, ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ) had been implementing poverty alleviation, gender equality and social justice programmes in Zimbabwe. AAZ is part of the ActionAid International (AAI) global justice organisation with a presence in over 45 countries in Asia, the Americas, Europe and Africa, Zimbabwe included.

Since its establishment in 2003, the organisation remains grounded in communities from which it derives its mandate, with a geographic footprint embedded in Local Rights Programmes (LRPs) formerly known as Development Areas which are

long term programme areas supported by child sponsorship in partnership with community-based organisations (CBOs). Programmes have also been implemented in project areas supported by various institutional and high value donors, individuals, trustees, and foundations.

To celebrate AAZ's work over the years, the organisation is planning various commemorative activities as the year progresses. Stay Tuned!

Cover Picture Caption: Women from Mbire standing in front of a hay baler provided by AAZ under The Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRF) Zambezi Valley Alliance (ZVA) project.

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