

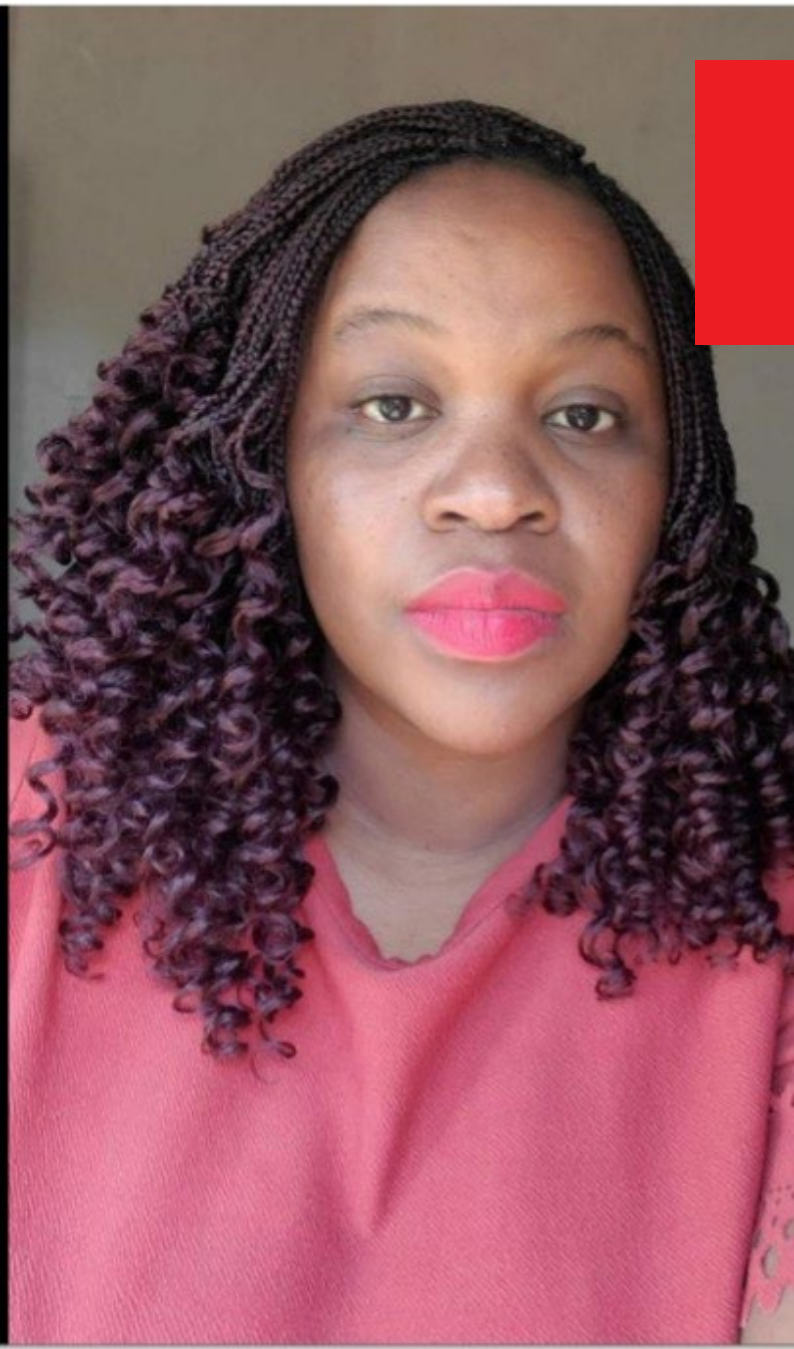
September to  
October 2025

**act:onaid**  
Zimbabwe

NEWSLETTER



**REFLECTIONS & RESILIENCE:  
ACTIONAID ZIMBABWE'S  
2025 PARTICIPATORY  
REVIEW & REFLECTION  
PROCESSES**



## THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR 'S REMARKS

### **Dear Partners, Colleagues, and Supporters,**

As we gather to reflect on the achievements and lessons of the past year, I am proud to share with you the outcomes of our Participatory Review and Reflection Processes (PRRPs) across Binga, Chimanimani, and Bikita. These processes have been a cornerstone of our work, ensuring that the voices of communities—especially women, youth, and marginalised groups—are at the heart of our planning and decision-making. The insights gained will directly shape the new ActionAid Country Strategy Plan (CSP) 2026-2029, guiding us toward more impactful, accountable, and sustainable programming.

In this edition, you will read a few inspiring stories of resilience—from Juliet Mukutu's thriving enterprise in Binga, to Rejoice's clean-energy breakthrough in Chimanimani, and the transformative dialogue that opened new pathways for community-corporate cooperation in Bikita. These successes remind us that when we listen, learn, and act together, we can break systemic barriers and create lasting change. I invite you to celebrate these few achievements, draw lessons from the challenges we face, and join us in shaping the future of our work.

Thank you for your unwavering partnership and commitment. Together, we are building a just and equitable society.

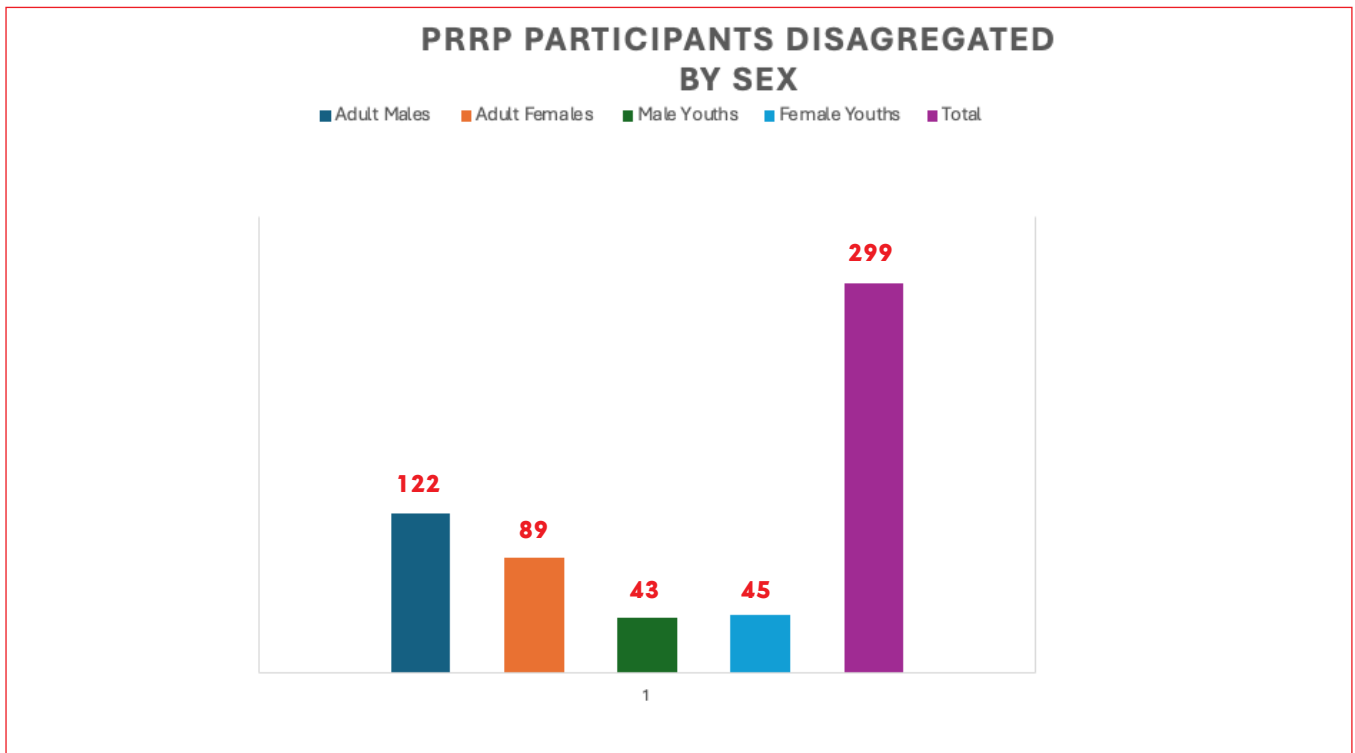
**Warm regards,**

**Dr. Selina Pasirayi**

**Interim Country Director, ActionAid Zimbabwe**



## OVERVIEW OF ACTIONAID PARTICIPATORY REVIEW AND REFLECTION PROCESSES (PRRPS)



### **PRRPs participants disaggregated by sex in Chimanimani, Binga and Bikita.**

During the period under review, participatory review and reflection processes (PRRPs) were implemented in Binga Local Rights Programme (LRP) (Nakaluba & Lubimbi wards), Chimanimani under the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA II) (Ward 21), and Bikita under the Zimbabwe Accountability and Citizen Engagement (ZIMACE) (Wards 11, 12, 30, 32 – lithium-mining area). PRRPs are a systematic, participatory cycle of reflection, learning and planning used across the

ActionAid International federation. They bring together communities, partners, staff and duty-bearers to assess progress, surface lessons and co-create evidence-based plans for the next programme cycle. PRRPs are done to ensure downward accountability, meaning programmes are owned by and answerable to the people they serve. They also capture real-time insights to improve effectiveness and relevance and generate data that informs country-level strategic plans. For example, the PRRPs will inform the ActionAid Country Strategy Plan (CSP) for 2026 to 2029.

## PRRPS IN BINGA LOCAL RIGHTS PROGRAMME



**Focus Group discussion for leaders in Ward 21 of Binga District as part of the PRRP processes.**

Binga LRP, implemented in partnership with Basilwizi Trust, is one of the 10 long-term development programmes implemented by ActionAid Zimbabwe (AAZ) across Zimbabwe. In Binga, the PRRP activities included community mapping of water sources and climate-resilient sustainable agriculture practices and focus-group discussions with women's groups, youths and traditional leaders. Validation meetings with Binga Rural District Council (BRDC) and the **Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development** were also conducted as part of the PRRP processes in Binga. The partners involved were BRDC (district planning & disaster-risk unit), Zimbabwe Red Cross Society (community-based disaster risk reduction-DRR), and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) supporting youth entrepreneurship.

Some of the ActionAid outcomes captured in the PRRPs in Binga included that 500 community members are advocating for Farmer-Managed Seed Systems (FMSS) and have adopted climate-resilient sustainable agriculture techniques, with 20% of households practising it, resulting in a 15% increase in average maize yields. Additionally, the district has approved a Water-Harvesting and Borehole Rehabilitation Plan for Nakaluba and Lubimbi wards.

In Binga, a notable success story from Lubimbi is that a youth-led advocacy campaign successfully secured a \$10,000 grant from the District Development Fund to construct a rain-water harvesting dam. This initiative is benefiting 250 households and has significantly reduced women's water-fetching time by 3 hours per day. Here's another inspiring story from Binga, made possible through the support of ActionAid Zimbabwe:



### \$10,000

**GRANT FROM THE DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FUND TO CONSTRUCT A RAIN-WATER HARVESTING DAM IN BINGA, LUBIMBI,**

## FROM STALLED SKILLS TO THRIVING ENTERPRISE: JULIET'S BUSINESS DREAMS REVIVED

Until recently, Juliet' Mukutu's entrepreneurial talent lay dormant. Like many women in her community, she had business ideas but lacked the structure, savings mechanisms, and networks needed to turn them into sustainable income.

When ActionAid Zimbabwe, in partnership with Basilwizi Trust, introduced an Internal Savings and Lending Scheme (ISAL) in her village, Juliet saw an opportunity she had never imagined possible. With no access to formal finance and few income-earning options, she joined the women's group and began contributing US\$5 twice a month. Those small but consistent contributions created a community capital pool that became the lifeline for women seeking to build dignified livelihoods.

Through the programme's training in income-generation, record-keeping, and basic business management, Juliet gained new skills and confidence. With an ISAL loan, she launched a small but diversified business—selling second-hand clothes, bread, and homemade foam bath. She sources stock through the club, relies on family support to broaden her reach, and even uses maize for barter when cash flow is tight. The group's village-approved constitution keeps everything accountable: clear leadership, transparent rules, and timely repayments.

Her determination has brought tangible gains. Juliet now contributes to her household income, supports her children's needs, and stands as a role model for women who once believed economic independence was out of reach.

Yet her journey also exposes the structural barriers rural women continue to face. Markets are small and unpredictable. Transport is costly, and long walks limit how much she can grow. Without land to build a permanent shop, her business remains vulnerable. No government programmes or microfinance institutions



extend support to women like Juliet; the ISAL group remains her only financial platform.

Still, Juliet dreams boldly. She wants secure land for a shop, a vehicle to expand her business, and improved community infrastructure (fencing for gardens, water tanks, and boreholes) to reduce the unpaid care burdens that constrain rural women's enterprises.

Juliet's experience showcases the transformative power of ActionAid's approach: When women gain access to finance, skills, and solidarity, they can build viable livelihoods even in challenging environments. Her story also highlights the unfinished business. Addressing systemic inequalities in markets, services, and resource access is crucial to ensure women's economic empowerment is a collective, sustainable reality, rather than an individual struggle.



## PRRPS IN CHIMANIMANI (SPA II)

**Sarudzai Mudavanhu (right):** The tomato-selling trailblazer who turned PRRP participation into profit—one juicy venture at a time. She mastered entrepreneurial skills and agro-ecology tomato production, using natural manure instead of fertilisers—thanks to the Strategic Partnership Agreement II (SPA II) project implemented in Chimanimani and Chipinge by Green Governance Trust in partnership with ActionAid Zimbabwe.



The Strategic Partnership Programme (SPAII) implemented through community-based organisations in Binga, Mbire, Chimanimani and Chipinge, aims to empower young people—especially young women and marginalised groups—to claim their rights to democratic space, quality public services, climate-resilient livelihoods, and protection in crises. In Chimanimani, the PRRP activities included participatory problem-tree analysis on climate-induced disasters, training of community disaster-risk committees on early-warning systems, and joint development of a District Climate-Resilient Agriculture Plan. The partners involved were Chimanimani Rural District Council (CRDC) (planning & environment), Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) (water-resource management), and local faith-based organisations (community mobilisation).

Some of the notable outcomes of AAZ's SPA II work in Chimanimani, as captured in the PRRPs, include: 78% of participants reported increased knowledge of agro-ecology and climate-resilient sustainable agriculture practices.

A 20% emergency fund was established by Chimanimani Rural District Council for rapid response to floods, which disbursed ZWL 1.2 million within three months of activation.

A community-led seed bank was revived, preserving 12 heirloom varieties of sorghum and millet.

A success story from Chimanimani is that of a women's collective in Ward 21, which secured a \$5,000 micro-grant to establish a vegetable-garden irrigation scheme. This initiative has yielded impressive results, increasing household income by 20% and contributing to a significant reduction in malnutrition rates among children under five, from 32% to 23%. Sarudzai, featured above, is one of the proud members of the women's irrigation scheme.

Another short story from the SPA II project comes from Rejoice, whose journey is shared below.

## REJOICE'S JOURNEY TOWARDS CLEAN ENERGY AND SAVINGS

Rejoice, a 28-year-old mother, once spent a dollar a day on firewood or trekked long distances to collect it, draining her time and finances. Through the SPA II project, implemented by Green Governance Zimbabwe in partnership with ActionAid Zimbabwe, she became a champion, gaining training in advocacy, climate justice, value-addition and leadership.

The project's Green Village concept introduced fuel-efficient cookstoves and basic solar training. With a stove, one bundle of firewood now lasts up to two weeks—saving money, cutting forest pressure, and freeing time for childcare and community work.

“Before this stove, I spent a dollar every day on firewood. Now one bundle lasts me two weeks. I can use that money for other family needs and no longer exhaust myself searching for wood.” said Rejoice.

In Chimanimani and Chipinge, 144 households have received stoves, saving thousands of dollars collectively and reducing deforestation. The stoves also lower indoor smoke, improve health, and give women space to engage in local decision-making.

Rejoice sums it up: “This fuel efficient is not just a stove— it's hope for my family and community.”



**Ronald Taruvinga, Green Governance Zimbabwe Field Officer for Chimanimani and Chipinge (wearing a cap), explains the benefits of this energy-efficient stove to Chimanimani local leaders. The stove, now used by Rejoice, is showcased at the Green Hub and Agroecology Demonstration Site in Chimanimani, where community members can learn and replicate it in their own homes.**



## PRRPS IN BIKITA (ZIMACE)

Sifelani Kwaramba from Ward 12, Bikita, shares the challenges faced by women and communities impacted by mining activities in the district.



The Zimbabwe Accountability and Citizen Engagement (ZIMACE) project, titled Fostering Effective Local Environment Governance and Management in Zimbabwe's Lithium Sector for Global Impact, targets Bikita and Goromonzi districts. The project aims to drive policy, practice and systemic changes to ensure sustainable resource use, community empowerment and environmental rights protection by increasing accountability of authorities, companies, improving government buy-in for environmental compliance and enhancing coordination among stakeholders for more effective governance.

In Bikita, PRRP activities focused on fostering collaboration and addressing critical issues. This included multi-stakeholder dialogue on the Mines and Mineral Bill with Sinomine Bikita Minerals, community mapping of water-source depletion and pollution hotspots, and training on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and human rights monitoring. The partners involved were Bikita Rural District Council (BRDC) (environment & natural-resource unit), Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) (mobile human-rights clinics), and local CSOs (youth and women's rights networks).

Some notable outcomes from the ZIMACE project in Bikita, as captured during the PRRP, include:

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Sino Bikita Minerals and BRDC, establishing a Community Share Ownership Trust (CSOT) with an initial contribution of US \$200,000.

The district passing a resolution to create an Environmental Officer post, with recruitment currently underway.

1,076 community members, 56% of whom are women, were trained on rights-based advocacy, with 42% reporting increased confidence to engage mining companies.

A notable success story from Bikita highlights the impact of community-led initiatives. After conducting a water-quality survey, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC), supported by ActionAid Zimbabwe under the ZIMACE project, facilitated a public hearing. This led to a significant commitment from the mining company, which agreed to drill three community boreholes and install a solar-powered water-pumping system. This initiative will directly benefit 1,800 residents of Wards 11 and 30.

Stay tuned for the next inspiring outcome from our ZIMACE initiative—impact you won't want to miss which follows!



### THREE

**COMMUNITY BOREHOLES AND A SOLAR-POWERED WATER-PUMPING SYSTEM INSTALLED, DIRECTLY BENEFITING 1,800 RESIDENTS OF WARDS 11 AND 30.**



# BREAKING THE SILENCE AND LINGERING TENSION: HOW DIALOGUE TRANSFORMED MINING RELATIONS IN BIKITA

When Bikita's massive lithium mine (Sinomine Bikita Minerals) was in conflict with local communities, Bikita Ward 12 Councillor, Brighton Mushekwa (right) saw years of grievances turn into "smouldering discord". ActionAid Zimbabwe's ZIMACE project stepped in with a structured environmental-governance framework.



- **First step:** AAZ met each party—community, Bikita Rural District Council, and Bikita Minerals—to map concerns.
- **Dialogue launch:** A joint meeting was held; all sides agreed dialogue was essential.
- **Results:** The mine hired 80% of its workforce locally and to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines mutual expectations in terms of corporate social responsibility initiatives that are community centred.

Councillor Mushekwa notes:

**"We can now engage Bikita Minerals on behalf of the community, and the company can reach us through our leaders."**

While issues like air- and water-pollution remain, communication channels are open—a huge shift from the previous stalemate.

The success has sparked demand to extend ZIMACE to other mining wards, such as those around Mkondo Mine, ensuring Zimbabwe's lithium boom benefits the people who live where it is extracted.



# 80%

**MINE WORKFORCE HIRED**

## 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**

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**For feedback and comments please contact**

**Takaitei Bote, Communications and Campaigns Officer**

**email: [info.zimbabwe@actionaid.org](mailto:info.zimbabwe@actionaid.org)**

**[takaitei.bote@actionaid.org](mailto:takaitei.bote@actionaid.org)**

Photo Credits Cover Picture:

Picture 1:

Women's focus-group discussion in Binga Ward 21 – part of ActionAid Zimbabwe's Participatory Review & Reflection Process (PRRP).

Picture 2:

Key-informant interview with Sifelani Kwaramba, mining-host-community representative for Ward 12, Bikita District, during ActionAid Zimbabwe's PRRP fieldwork.