

Table of Contents

- 01 Who we are
- 02 Meet the team
- 03 Message from the Director
- O4 Counselling & Psycho social support
- GBV Prevention & Women Empowerment







Emthonjeni Women's Forum (EWF) was established in May of 2010 and its mandate is to assist women overcome gender-based violence and realise their potential power to overcome all adversity as well as creating a platform where they can share and exchange information on various issues brought about by gender inequalities. EWF also focuses on women's rights, especially women's participation in governance issues at local level.

Geographical location: EWF is headquartered in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe with specific areas of operation in Insiza, Umzingwane, Tsholotsho and Bulawayo.

EWF uses the **rights-based approach and women empowerment** approach towards realising the potential power women have and building their voice, choice, and agency.

Our structures: EWF works with various community-based structures including community-based counsellors, male champions of change and advocacy action teams.

AIM: To reduce gender-based violence, specifically domestic violence and dependence of women for economic survival

VISION: To see asociety that is Gender Based Violence free, seeks gender justice and equity, offers equal access to positions of responsibility and full participation in economic development.

MISSION: To provide an opportunity and platform for targeted communities to challenge the behaviours, beliefs and customs that promote Gender Based Violence, inequity and gender injustices.

VALUES

Justice, Respect, Passion, Integrity, Responsibility, Confidentiality, Accountability, Professionalism





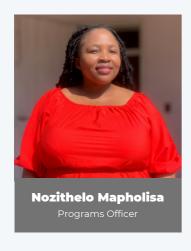
OUR TEAM



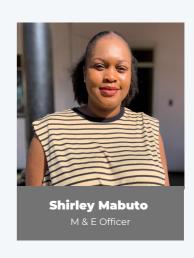


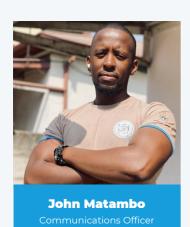
















NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

2022 saw the gradual opening up and easing of restrictions with COVID infections slowly declining. This led to renewed mobility and the much yearned for in person interactions. We felt optimistic and reinvigorated.

The year also marked the beginning of our strategic plan journey (2022-2024) which saw the board and staff identify the following strategic pillars of focus for the next three years. The strategic pillars are:

- •Advocacy: To promote and protect women's rights.
- **Psychosocial Support:** To enhance the empowerment of GBV survivors in making informed decisions about their situations.
- •GBV Prevention & Women empowerment: To contribute towards an enhanced culture of GBV intolerance.
- **Economic Justice:** To contribute to women thriving in gender just economic opportunities.

I would like to express my gratitude to the EWF team and Board of Trustees for the sterling input towards the strategic document and it has been with excitement, great expectation and renewed vigour that we began the implementation of the document in 2022.

The year saw the wrapping up of our 6-year SASA! Faith intervention in Insiza, an intervention with so much learnings and takeaways and we pride ourselves in women taking back the power within the faith communities.

We have also continued our work against girl child enslavement guised as child marriages, and working within the informal sector on gender equality and ending sexual harassment within the informal sector. We have within the year laid groundwork for advocacy on the amendment of the Customary Law and Local Courts Act to align with the Zimbabwe Constitution Section 17 on gender balance of Traditional court assessors.

It is equally important to note and appreciate that our work would not have been a success without the support of our funding partners, board of Trustees and EWF staff. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to their support to a worthy cause. Together we shall overcome gender-based violence!

We also bade farewell to our Programmes Manager Melissa, and we wish her all the best and are grateful for the six dedicated years to EWF

There is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: Violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable. Ban- Ki moon



The EWF counselling and psychosocial support pillar has been a key aspect of the organisation's mission to provide post care GBV support services in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) in the communities. Throughout the year, EWF provided a range of counselling interventions to support GBV survivors, these include in-house counselling, rehabilitative counselling, couples counselling, community-based counselling, court support services, community counselling visits, and online counselling. Survivors were provided with counselling, assisted with completion and application of protection orders and maintenance forms.

During the course of the year EWF reached out to a total of 422 survivors where 16 0f these were couples, 93 were walk- in-clients, 58 were reached online, 64 were reached during court support visits, 34 were reached during community outreach, 156 reached by our community-based counsellors and 16 perpetrators underwent rehabilitative counselling. 84 were assisted with applying for Protection Orders and of these 66 were granted. 72 applied for maintenance and 59 were granted. The age range of those applying for maintenance fall between 18- 67 years reflecting their vulnerability and need to be assisted in economic empowerment. Of the total reached in 2022, the nature of abuse is categorised as 90 physical abuse, 199 emotional, 102 economic and 31 sexual abuse.

The most affected by violence fall between the 18-59 years age group. EWF continued with the utilisation of the referral pathway by working with the local courts in Esigodini, Filabusi and Bulawayo Tredgold courts, Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association, for legal aid, Musasa for shelter and the Zimbabwe Republic Police Victim Friendly Unit.

The pie chart below represents the EWF Counselling categories and the number of survivors reached under each.

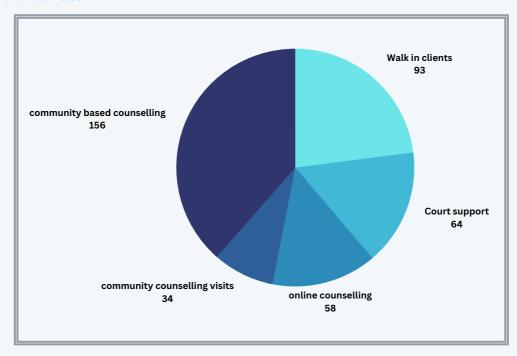


Table 1 below shows reported cases classified under the four main categories of abuse.

Physical	Emotional	Economic	Sexual
90	199	102	31

Table 2 shows the major services sought in court

Protection Orders		Maintenance	
Applied	Granted	Applied	Granted
84	66	72	59

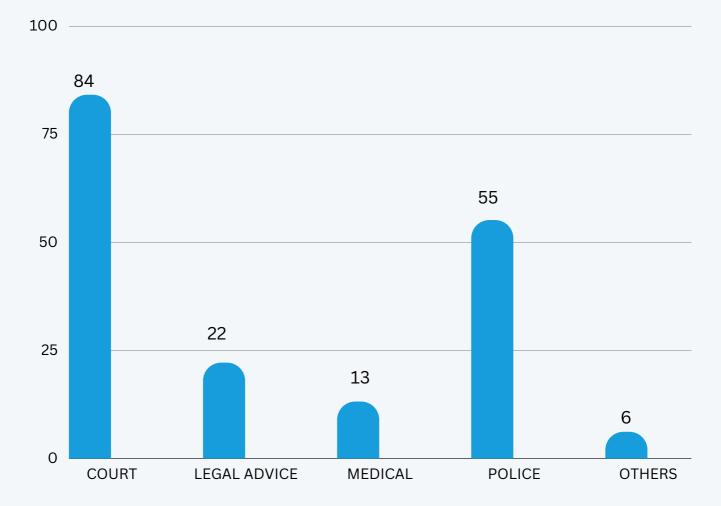
Clients were also referred for further case management to the following GBV service providers:

- Court 66
- Legal advice and assistance 22
- Medical service 13
- Police Victim Friendly Unit 55
- Family 2
- hurch 1
- Traditional Leaders 3

•

Cases referred included issues of protection orders, estate registration, property sharing, divorce, child access, child custody, child support and sexual reproductive health and rights.

The bar graph below shows the referrals made by EWF Counsellor



Achievements

- 422 clients were reached through counselling where 404 were female survivors of GBV and 18 were males rehabilitated through couple counselling.
- · 93 clients were assisted as walk- in clients
- 64 clients assisted through court support services.
- 34 GBV survivors reached through conducting community counselling visits.
- 75 survivors assisted via toll-free line.
- 53 community- based counsellors were trained in Tsholotsho.
- · 156 clients assisted by community-based counsellors in uMzingwane, Tsholotsho and Insiza.
- 18 male clients who were rehabilitated through couple counselling.
- 66 survivors referred to other GBV service providers.
- $\bullet \quad \ \ 8 \ quarterly \ GBV \ management \ meetings \ held \ in \ uMzingwane, Tsholotsho \ and \ in \ Insiza.$
- 2 Community based counsellors strengthening activities conducted.

Challenges

- Some clients could not be followed up as they do not have mobile phones.
- Lack of counselling office space in Umzingwane & Tsholotsho courts compromises privacy.



The 'Strengthening women's agency to fight GBV and claim their rights' project is premised on EWFs four strategic pillars of work which include Advocacy, Psychosocial Support, GBV prevention as well as Economic strengthening. Under the **advocacy pillar**, 59 informal traders were trained on voice, choice and agency in Bulawayo and trainings on GBV and Gender Equality, targeting traditional leaders from Insiza and uMzingwane were undertaken. The aim of the training was to respond to Zimbabwe Constitution Section 17 on gender balance by ensuring the inclusion of female court assessors in traditional courts. **To prevent GBV**, the project focused on raising awareness in Insiza, uMzingwane and Bulawayo communities on the ills of child marriages, trained young men on GBV and Gender Equality and commemorated calendar events such as International Women's Day as well as 16 days of activism against Gender Based Violence. 8 GBV management meetings were conducted both in Insiza and Umzingwane to respond to GBV issues within the districts of operation. The GBV management meetings resulted in strengthened mutual accountability among GBV stakeholders. **Under Psychosocial support**, survivors were provided with space to heal and empower and assisted in making informed decisions as indicated in the previous section. The Counsellor also offered court support services at Esigodini and Filabusi Magistrates Court.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Voice, Choice and agency

• 59 female informal traders, were trained on voice, choice and agency and feminist principles which resulted in engagement meetings with the Victim Friendly Unit and Bulawayo City Council Gender Focal Person. Women are now speaking out against sexual harassment (women publicly naming and shaming perpetrators) and reporting cases of sexual harassment.

Child Marriages

- 9 community dialogues reaching 225 people (169F, 56M) on child marriages were conducted in Insiza,
 Umzingwane and Bulawayo. The dialogues resulted in communities with increased consciousness on
 harmful norms that perpetuate child marriages. The awareness has also led to traditional leaders in
 ward 11, Insiza further conducting community education on child marriages.
- 300 young men were trained on GBV and Gender Equality, resulting in young men in ward 11 Insiza
 mobilizing other peers to be the agents of change in their communities through publicly condemning
 GBV perpetrators.

Psycho social Support

 422 GBV survivors were offered psycho social support leading to them making informed decisions about their choices.

Court assessor's advocacy

• Two trainings on GBV and Gender Equality, targeting 86 traditional leaders from Insiza and uMzingwane. The trainings have led to two Chiefs now having a female assessor each and six out of seven headmen have a female assessor each.

Lessons Learnt

• If women are aware of their rights, they are better able to use their power together and take action on GBV, this is visible to informal traders who are now able to join their power with each other and speak out against SGBV.



The SASA! Faith GBV Prevention methodology titled 'Taking action now! Reducing GBV in Insiza' entered its 6th and final year with the focus being on sustaining the work beyond EWF intervention. This project falls under the GBV prevention and programming strategic pillar as well as the economic justice and advocacy pillars and it sought to reduce gender-based violence through psychologically and economically empowering women and working towards transforming gender norms at community level that perpetuate violence against women.

Advocacy

The advocacy component focused on assisting GBV survivors realise the voice and power to speak out especially against poor or inadequate GBV related service delivery and to strengthen the referral pathway. The advocacy teams worked closely with the traditional, religious, and different stakeholders to assist survivors of GBV. The Advocacy teams played a critical role in empowering communities and in referring GBV cases to EWF counsellor and or the local courts.

By fostering open dialogue and challenging societal norms that perpetuate violence, these advocacy teams successfully contributed to reducing the stigma associated with GBV, encouraging survivors to seek help, and increasing community empathy and support for survivors.

GBV Prevention

SASA! Faith methodology contributed to the change in attitudes and behaviours of communities towards GBV. A total of 60 Community Activist (CAs) graduated after completion implementing the SASA! Faith methodology. The CAs played a pivotal role in addressing gender-based violence (GBV) within the faith community. Community activists witnessed an increased willingness among community members to intervene and challenge instances of GBV, both within their own families and in the broader faith community. Survivors were supported, and provided with the necessary resources for healing and justice within the faith space. Religious leaders actively address GBV from their pulpits and incorporate messages of gender equality and respect into their teachings. This shift in behaviours signify growing commitment within the faith community to create safe and inclusive spaces, free from GBV and discrimination.

Economic empowerment:

The focus on economic empowerment led to the formation and strengthening of Internal Savings and Lending's (ISALs) for survivors in addition to creating a social safety nets where women can borrow money, contributed towards the economic security of women and the power with among the survivors of GBV. Through ISAL groups, business skills trainings and technical support to ISAL groups, women in Insiza have created viable business initiatives and have a source of income and productive assets ultimately enabling them to have improved ownership, management and improved income.

Key Achievements

- 58 (43f 15m) Community Activists (CAs) with capacity on GBV prevention and response who are able to conduct sessions in the faith space and around their communities on their own.
- 3 women from Ward 16 opened tuck shops in their homes where they sell groceries for a living.
- 1 woman from Ward 17 purchased a gold detector which she hires it out to the artisanal miners.
- Ward 16 formed a catering team that hires out its services and cutlery at community funerals and weddings.
- There has been strengthened co-ordination amongst the CAs and the religious leaders in addressing GBV in the faith communities.
- 42 CAs have recruited 82 mentees on SASA! FAITH that will contribute to continuous conversation on GBV in the faith spaces.
- The advocacy teams advocated for an administration block in Ward 18 Fort Rixon and a clinic in Ward 17 Gcabayi.
- 17 GBV focal persons were selected to raise awareness on GBV issues within the community.
- 100 women were trained on producing reusable sanitary wear towards menstrual hygiene and as a means to improve their economic livelihoods.

Lessons learnt

- If men are engaged on GBV prevention, they are better able to create forums that contribute to GBV prevention.
- Addressing men's attitudes and behaviours towards gender norms is crucial for promoting gender equality in faith spaces.
- Building partnerships and collaboration with local organisations and stakeholder can help sustain the project beyond its duration.



My name is Blessed Mani of Insiza Ward 16 and I am also a Community Activist. Before the formation of ISAL groups in our ward, just like other women in my ward we had challenges of being too dependent on men as we had no source of income of our own. I realized that I became limited in controlling and owning assets. That was the case even at ward level, economic dependence on men increased the cases of Gender Based Violence in village. Women including myself did not own livestock, and worked for long hours in the fields for subsistence. When Emthonjeni Women's Forum came to our area and introduced the ISALs concept under the SASA! Faith project we as women got engaged in activities that helped us to generate money.



We also encouraged each other to buy cattle and register them in own stock cards.

The program has contributed to change in attitudes and behaviours of men towards uplifting women in economic initiatives. Gender Based Violence cases are also decreasing in our ward as most women can now help their spouses financially and reduce stress levels which is one common trigger in Gender Based Violence cases. I wish that Emthonjeni Women's Forum can continue with this program so as to empower more women in my community. My dignity has been restored and l am able to contribute to household decision making and budget together with my husband

The project titled "Women as strategic partners in peace building" is being implemented in two wards of Insiza district and falls under the GBV prevention pillar. The 2 wards take action to improve community resilience, trust and inclusiveness in conflict mitigation and healing to build social cohesion. This has been done through communities conducting community lead initiatives to dialogue on conflicts. This has created community ownership for communities to be aware of the best ways they can use to deal with conflict. Community peace structure meeting have been working closely with community leadership and stakeholders in curbing conflicts in the district. It is through this project that community peace structures have managed to facilitate dialogues that have strengthened the referral pathway which has contributed to the mitigation and transformed conflicts. Coordination with traditional leaders have assisted in prevention and mitigations of conflicts in Insiza.

Key achievements

- Peace Committees have been able to solve cases especially on teenage pregnancies, which has contributed to protection of women and girls. This is evident through young girls that have been reconciled with their families.
- Peace Committees have coordinated with stakeholders in peace building initiatives this has contributed to social cohesion amongst communities.
- Peace Committees have strengthened the referral pathway and ensured coordination at community level which has contributed to conflict management.

Lessons learnt

- Responding to issues of conflict resolution requires collaboration with community leaders for a strengthened referral.
- If stakeholders such as the police are engaged continuously cases of gender- based violence decrease.



Peace committees (PCs) resolving

conflicts in the communities.

PCs assisted a woman who was being abused by her husband. The woman would sleep outside for days as the husband would come with numerous girlfriends and chase her away from home. This affected the children as well as they ended up not attending school on some days. Thembani* would often beat her and berate her with insults, leaving her feeling helpless and alone. Despite her struggles, Amanda* was too afraid to leave Thembani*. She felt trapped and believed that she had nowhere to turn. However, one day, Amanda's* neighbours noticed bruises on her arms and decided to take action. The neighbour engaged Thenjiwe Malunga one of the PCs from Sizimisele village and together they decided to help Amanda escape her abusive marriage. They contacted the village head, who provided Amanda* with a safe place to stay and legal assistance to help her file for divorce.

Amanda's* story is a powerful reminder of the importance of community support in helping survivors of domestic violence. It takes a village to help someone escape an abusive situation, and with the right resources and support, anyone can find the strength to leave and start anew.

The PCs also rallied around Amanda*, providing emotional support and helping her to rebuild her life. They helped her to find capital to start selling vegetables and helped her to furnish her new home. With the help of the PCs, Amanda* was able to leave her abusive husband and start a new life. She felt empowered and grateful for the support she received and was able to move forward with a renewed sense of hope and peace.

The village head assisted in providing shelter for the woman. This helped in ensuring that the woman and children are safe. Working with community leadership has strengthened the referral pathway which has contributed to project sustainability. The intervention assisted Amanda to be free from gender-based violence. This intervention creates a platform for women to feel safe in their community.

Peacebuilding trainings provided the PCs with invaluable skills and knowledge to effectively resolve conflicts such as active listening, empathy, and communication skills. Additionally, peacebuilding trainings foster a culture of non-violence and reconciliation, encouraging community members to seek peaceful solutions and work towards sustainable peace.

*Not real name

The 'Promoting Gender Equality in the Workplace' project targets the promotion of gender equality of farm workers and various workers unions affiliates in Bulawayo and Umguza districts. It aims to address gender inequalities in the workplace and promote a safe and inclusive working environment for all workers. This project aims to raise awareness about gender equality and foster a culture of respect and non-discrimination in the workplace. It involves engaging employees, management, and trade unions in discussions and activities that challenge harmful gender norms and promote positive attitudes towards women. Additionally, the project seeks to encourage companies to develop and implement gender policies that specifically address gender-based discrimination and harassment. Furthermore, it aims to provide psychosocial support and counseling services to victims of sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence in the workplace. As such the project implemented several activities to achieve its goals.

Achievements

The Promoting Gender Equality in the Workplace project has made significant progress in promoting gender equality and addressing gender-based discrimination and harassment in the workplace leading to;

- Increased awareness and understanding of gender equality among 200 females and 100 male farm employees in Umguza district, and 30 trade unions affiliates from Bulawayo district.
- Formation of 4 Gender equality and sexual harassment committees across 5 farms comprising 6 members each responsible for championing gender equality in the workplace.
- 5 farms (Hamara, CornCob, Mandalay, Arda Balu and Holy Lodge) have been supported with gender policy formulation resulting in improved knowledge and appreciation on development and implementation of a gender policy that addresses gender-based discrimination and harassment in the workplace.
- 50 female farm employees have accessed psychosocial support and counseling services for GBV and work-related harassment through EWF's toll-free services.
- Companies such as Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority from the Energy sector industry and Greys Inn from the Hotel and catering industry have already adopted use of suggestion boxes in responding to Sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority has successfully appointed 6 gender focal persons, youth champion and the inclusivity champion in each departments/station that reports to the senior gender focal person of the company.

Challenges

- Engaging with workers requires working around their work schedules, calling for patience and ability to working at odd hours to suit their schedules.
- Issues of gender equality for employers is an uncomfortable topic and takes longer for them to have an appreciation of the importance of equality and its implications on work productivity.

Lessons learnt

- If workers are given a platform to discuss their grievances without the presence of management, they freely discuss without fear of intimidation and or retaliation.
- If workers are more awareness of their rights, they are better able to hold their employers to account.

Voices from the field

"As a result of enlightenment, as farm workers we are now able to identify gender inequalities and we have engaged management on the issue." Tryphine Silindi, Hamara, Gender equality and sexual harassment committee member.

- 1. "Thanks to this project, my voice is finally being heard in the workplace, regardless of my gender." Margaret Nyirenda, Vice chairperson Mandalay Workers committee.
- 2. "I never thought I'd see the day when male and female workers were treated equally and given the same opportunities." Edward Sinda ,Corncob farm manager.
- 3. "This project has helped us break down barriers in achieving gender equality and work together towards a common goal." Nonhlanhla, Arda Balu employee.
- 4. "I feel like I can finally speak up without fear of retaliation, and it's all thanks to this initiative." Anna Mutsvanga, Chairperson for the Umguza farms.
- 5. "With the support and resources provided by this project, we've been able to create a more inclusive and welcoming workplace for everyone." Tawanda Hove, Hamara farm.



Hillary Ncube , engaging co-employees on the need to address gender inequality in Hamara farm



Agnes Mbiya from ZETDC, presenting on challenges hindering progress on promoting gender equality in the workplace during a Union consultative meeting in Bulawayo

Under the 'The future is female: Empowering women together!' program EWF focuses on building women's knowledge and equipping them with skills not only to demand for transparency and accountability but to be effective leaders that are accountable and transparent in decision making processes. This improves women's push for gender sensitive development as well as the ability to mobilise each other and create a critical mass towards women empowerment. The project is being implemented in uMzingwane and Insiza District.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- EWF strengthened the capacity of 150 women in advocacy and local government processes. This has resulted in women taking leadership positions within their communities such as water point chairpersons, school development committees, community health chairpersons.
- In uMzingwane, women have utilised the advocacy knowledge gained from the intervention to engage their ward councillor towards the construction of a clinic in the ward. The engagements have led to the pegging of a clinic site in ward 19 by the local authority.
- In Insiza, women have attended and made contributions at the national budget consultation meetings
 facilitated by the Parliament of Zimbabwe. The social service delivery issues they raised include poor road
 networks, few clinics, schools and inaccessibility of water due to broken boreholes.
- 200 traditional and religious leaders were strengthened with knowledge on gender equality as well as being engaged to be agents of change towards the promotion of women in decision making processes in their communities. 'The engagements helped us understand the role of community leaders in enhancing gender equality and provided a platform where we can interrogate power imbalances and how we can empower women to take up leadership positions and participate in decision-making platforms. Ward 14, uMzingwane traditional leader.



Water For All: Nonkanyiso's promoting women's inclusion in water committees

Nonkanyiso Ndebele's (32) involvement in CEAA/EWMI leadership facilitated by Emthonjeni Women's Forum in December in Ward 19 of uMzingwane District last year, sparked her interest in promoting gender equality and women's inclusion in community water committees. Nonkanyiso, a mother of 2 at Zimbili village, noticed that her village had constant water challenges which included late borehole repairs, breakdowns which resulted in women walking long distances to access water. She also realized that women were often excluded from decision-making processes related to water management and that this was having a negative impact on the community.



Following the leadership training she received from EWF in December 2022, Nonkanyiso was awakened to the need for women's participation in leadership and decision-making. Pained by the experiences faced by women accessing water, Nonkanyiso took it upon herself to challenge the existing social delivery challenges by convincing women and men in her village to vote her in as the Chairperson in the upcoming water point committee elections, which were held on 31 December 2022. Nonkanyiso earned her community's trust due to her confidence in challenging and addressing issues in a male dominated space.

Nonkanyiso is the first female leader in her community in terms of women involvement in decision making. Her leadership has inspired other women.

The support from **Sigrid Rausing Trust** contributed immensely to the realization of EWF's 2022-2024 strategic plan that focuses on GBV prevention, Advocacy, Economic justice and Psychosocial Support. Various preventive programming activities were carried out including Imithombo sessions that targeted 90 young women who met to discuss various topics to increase their knowledge on GBV and increase their voice, choice and agency. The same participants were also trained in advocacy skills towards holding state actors to account on GBV-related matters. EWF continues commemorating women's rights-related calendar events to amplify GBV preventive measures reaching a total of 205 women. In line with International Women's Day theme a training on Online Gender Based Violence (OGBV) targeting 40 young women was held. Responsive measures included GBV Management quarterly meetings that contributed greatly to a coordinated GBV response in Tsholotsho. Counselling and court support services was also provided at Tsholotsho Magistrates Court. The support also enabled EWF staff attend to their mental wellness through a team building and wellness session.

High impact

Online GBV Training- EWF trained 40 women on OGBV. The activity aimed at raising awareness on OGBV and the Zimbabwe Cyber Security and Data Protection Act (Chapter 12:07)2021. The training was successful in highlighting the prevalence of OGBV in Zimbabwe and the need for women to be aware of their rights and the laws that protect them.

Through discussions, participants identified gaps in existing laws and policies and made recommendations for advocacy. These included the need for stronger penalties for perpetrators of OGBV, increased access to support services for OGBV survivors, and the inclusion of comprehensive sex education in school curricula to deter non-consensual posting of sexual media among others.

The training also highlighted the importance of building partnerships and collaborations with other organizations and stakeholders to effectively address OGBV. It emerged from the meeting that:

- Women face OGBV from intimate partners.
- Women in politics are very vulnerable and susceptible.
- LGBTIQ+ persons are mostly affected.
- Cyber Security and Data Protection Act [Chapter 12:07] has loopholes exacerbating women's access to justice.

This activity has resulted in EWF engaging a consultant to conduct a research on the prevalence and impact of OGBV in Zimbabwe.

https://communitypodiumnews.org.zw/?p=4560



Stakeholders and CSO's at IWD Commemorations in Bulawayo



Figure 4Stakeholders following proceedings during OGBV training

With support from:

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