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Monthly Newsletter

   
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Information Integrity and Gender-Based Violence

Emthonjeni Women's Forum was part of discussions on information integrity conducted by International Republican Institute (IRI) in partnership with Community Podium. Information integrity refers to the reliability, accuracy, and truthfulness of information. When the truth is distorted, victims of GBV often find themselves further isolated, silenced, or doubted by those who should support them. Maintaining information integrity in discussions surrounding GBV is not just an ethical obligation; it is a matter of life and death.

In the digital age, information spreads faster than ever before, reaching vast audiences in mere seconds. While this ease of communication offers significant benefits, it also poses challenges—especially when it comes to issues like gender-based violence (GBV). In the fight for gender equality, the integrity of information and communication is key. Misinformation or distorted narratives about women's rights can harm progress, stifle empowerment, and deepen gender inequalities.

EWF Empowers Women with Goat Rearing Skills Amidst El Niño Drought



As the devastating effects of the El Niño-induced drought take hold, communities across Zimbabwe are facing food insecurity, reduced agricultural productivity and an increase in Gender Based Violence (GBV). In response, Emthonjeni Women's Forum (EWF) recently conducted a goat-rearing training for women in two wards each of Insiza and Umzingwane. This initiative aims to economically empower women particularly leaders and survivors of violence against women with sustainable livestock farming skills, as a means to secure source of income.

This training focused on best practices for goat management, including breeding, disease control, and market strategies, helping women diversify their livelihoods in a time of uncertainty. One of the attendees, Simangele Mpfu, a woman already involved in the goat business, shared how the training has opened her eyes to better management and growth strategies. *"I have been in goat rearing for a few years, but I was doing it on a small scale, mostly for household needs. This training has taught me how to grow my herd and improve the quality of my goats, which will allow me to tap into larger markets. The drought has affected my crops, but with goats, I have something more resilient to fall back on,"* she said.

For many of the women, goat rearing represents a new opportunity to secure financial independence and improve food security for their families.

CHALLENGES ON ACCESS TO DOCUMENTATION IN TSHOLOTSHO



Emthonjeni Women's Forum conducted an awareness meeting on access to documentation in Tsholotsho ward 9. Women and children in Tsholotsho Ward 9, face significant challenges in accessing documentation, particularly birth certificates. The issue is rooted in the migration of parents, who often leave their children in the care of grandparents or other relatives without ensuring they have the necessary legal documents. This gap in documentation affects the children's ability to access essential services like education and healthcare.

One notable case highlighting the severity of the problem is Jowa Primary School, where 60 out of 350 children are without birth certificates. One participant explained, "Many of the children do not have birth certificates because they are living with their grandparents, who are unable to obtain the necessary documents for them." Grandparents often lack the legal authority or the resources to secure birth certificates, leaving the children undocumented and vulnerable.

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Did you know that, according to Zimbabwe's current legislation, paternal grandparents cannot acquire birth certificates for their grandchildren? This is outlined in the Births and Deaths Registration Act, which states that only the mother or father of the child has the legal right to register the birth. This regulation has sparked debates, as it appears to contradict the Constitution of Zimbabwe, which emphasizes the rights of children to identity documents and the duty of the State to ensure that every child is registered promptly after birth. The exclusion of paternal grandparents from this process can hinder a child's access to important legal documentation, especially in cases where the parents are absent or unable to register the child. EWF advocates for legal reforms to align the Births and Deaths Registration Act with the inclusive spirit of the Constitution.

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Mental Health Session to Promote Workplace Wellness and Equality

Emthonjeni Women's Forum (EWF) recently held a session focusing on promoting mental wellness as a key component for achieving equality and quality of life among female workers in the workplace. The session highlighted how mental health challenges such as stress, anxiety, and burnout, often go unaddressed, negatively impacting both individual well-being and organizational performance.



Participants learned that promoting mental wellness and emotional intelligence leads to more compassionate leadership, open communication, and reduced workplace stigma surrounding mental health issues. This, in turn, fosters an environment where employees feel safe to seek help without fear of judgment. EWF encouraged organizations to integrate mental health policies and emotional intelligence training in their organisations, highlighting that mentally healthy workplaces not only benefit individuals but also improve team dynamics, increase productivity, and contribute to long-term success. Emotional intelligence was positioned as a key factor in creating balanced, empathetic leadership, ultimately driving workplace equality.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH



Under the EmpowerHerFaith! Uniting Against GBV project, 40 Community Advocates (CAs) have initiated awareness sessions in their faith spaces, focusing on GBV, HIV, and power dynamics. To date, 180 sessions have been conducted, reaching 460 people, with positive feedback from participants. The CAs have also been actively referring cases for post-violence services, ensuring survivors receive appropriate support.

The greenhouse project in Insiza has made significant progress with the successful planting of tomatoes. Participants have started tending to the crops, ensuring proper irrigation and monitoring growth. Early results are promising, with the community anticipating a productive harvest in the coming months.



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