



@emthonjeniwomen/ Emthonjeni Women's Forum

## November 2024 Newsletter



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### REFLECTING ON PROGRESS AND RE-COMMITMENT TO ACTION AGAINST GBV



On November 29th, Emthonjeni Womens Forum hosted a commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), focusing on Zimbabwe's progress and challenges in achieving the goals set at the Beijing Platform for Action. The gathering brought together civil society organizations (CSOs), stakeholders, and advocates to evaluate milestones, confront ongoing obstacles, and strengthen collective efforts to combat GBV.

The event also featured the launch of Her Stories, a compelling booklet sharing narratives of survivors, and a documentary spotlighting the strengthening of women's agency in the fight against GBV and their journey to claim their rights. Additionally, EWF presented ground-breaking research on the gender dynamics and the impact of drought on livelihoods in Umzingwane, offering valuable insights into how intersecting challenges disproportionately affect women.

Prisca Dube, a lawyer from Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), addressed an important issue on the perception of women's rights. *"The concept of women's rights has faced resistance because it wasn't effectively communicated in the first place,"* Dube noted. *"By excluding men from the advocacy process, we unintentionally framed GBV as a 'women's issue,' which has hindered broader societal engagement."*

Participants also highlighted the alarming rise in GBV cases, urging immediate and collective action. *"We must recommit to this fight,"* one attendee emphasized. *"Ending GBV isn't just about women it's about everyone uniting to ensure justice and equality."*

A powerful slogan adopted during the event captured the day's spirit: *"The fight against GBV starts with me, and it involves you."* This statement served as a reminder that addressing GBV requires both personal accountability and collective action.

Launching these impactful initiatives and facilitating discussions, the event reinforced Zimbabwe's and EWF's commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action and provided actionable insights and resources to drive the fight against GBV forward.



# 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GBV COMMEMORATIONS

*16 days of activism national Launch*



*16 days of activism provincial event*



## EWF HOSTS PUBLIC INTERFACE MEETING ON 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

On December 6, 2024 Emthonjeni Womens Forum convened a public interface meeting commemorating 16 days of activism against gender based violence. The gathering brought together workers from diverse sectors, including labour unions, civil society organizations (CSOs), informal traders, and farmworkers, creating a platform for open dialogue and collaborative action.

The discussions centred on how sexual harassment in the workplace creates hostile environments, limiting women's economic and professional growth, and perpetuates systemic inequalities. Participants highlighted the intersection between workplace harassment and GBV, noting that such toxic environments often spill over into broader societal challenges, undermining efforts toward gender equality.

Bambelela Arts through their play highlighted that *“Sexual harassment isn't just about unwanted advances—it's about power, control, and silencing women,”* Participants then echoed that *“We need stronger policies that protect all workers, not just those in formal employment.”*

Farm workers echoed similar sentiments, shedding light on the unique challenges faced in rural settings where isolation and lack of awareness exacerbate the problem. *“Many women endure harassment in silence because they fear losing their jobs,”* a farmworker explained. *“We need to break the silence and hold perpetrators accountable.”*

The meeting concluded in a call to action where participants pledged to raise awareness within their sectors, demand policy reforms, and work together to dismantle workplace cultures that enable harassment. EWF reaffirmed its commitment to providing platforms for dialogue and action, ensuring that the fight against workplace harassment remains a priority in the broader struggle for gender equality and women's empowerment.



As one participant aptly concluded, *“Ending workplace harassment is not just about women's safety—it's about creating environments where everyone can thrive, free from fear and discrimination.”*

## EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH ASSET OWNERSHIP: THE SUCCESS OF ARISE AND SHINE ISAL GROUP



Women in Insiza Ward 19 are rewriting the narrative of economic empowerment and asset control through savings and lending initiatives. The Arise and Shine ISAL Group from Montrose 6b has emerged as a shining example of how collective action and financial discipline can transform lives.

Arise and shine group was established in 2022 after participating in Emthonjeni Women's Forum ISAL (Internal Savings and Lending) training sessions with women from Insiza. The group comprises 10 dedicated members. Operating on a simple yet effective savings model, each member contributes \$10 monthly, pooling their funds to provide loans at a 10% interest rate. This sustainable approach has not only enhanced financial stability among the members but also empowered them to embark on meaningful projects, fostering economic growth and self-reliance within their community.

In December 2023, the group purchased 1 wheelbarrow and a goat for each member. These assets are improving their productivity and also enhancing their decision-making roles within their households.

*"Before joining Arise and Shine, I relied on my husband for every financial decision," said group member Angela Ndatshana. "Now, with my goat and wheelbarrow, I have assets I can control and use to contribute meaningfully to my family's income."*

The wheelbarrows have been instrumental in easing tasks such as gardening and carrying water, while the goats represent a long-term investment in livestock production. According to the group chairperson, the initiative has nurtured a culture of self-reliance and collective problem-solving.

*"We've learned that when women come together, we can achieve so much more," said Chairperson Benjy Tshuma. "These assets are a testament to the power of unity and discipline."*

The ripple effects of the group's success extend beyond its members. Their achievements are inspiring other women in the community to form similar savings and lending associations. *"Seeing these women succeed has motivated me to start saving and plan for my future,"* said a local woman who attended the group's year-end celebration.

Through initiatives like these, women in Insiza Ward 19 are reclaiming control over their economic destinies, promoting empowerment for themselves and their communities. The success of the Arise and Shine ISAL Group is a powerful reminder that when women are given the tools and support to thrive, they can accomplish remarkable things.