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EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH ACCESS TO DOCUMENTATION

The work of Emthonjeni Women's Forum in Tsholotsho district is empowering women through access to documentation. In a challenging operating environment, EWF has diligently raised awareness and provided direct support, helping women understand their rights and the importance of identity documents. Community cadres are working tirelessly at the grassroots level to guide their communities through the process of obtaining identity documents. . Community cadres provide foundational knowledge and personalized support which is enabling women to participate fully in society and exercise their citizenship.

The initiative of awareness is illustrated by individual success stories, often facilitated by dedicated cadres. For instance, Nomathemba a community cadre worked with a woman who was unable to secure formal employment in South Africa because she lacked a passport. Guiding her through each step, Nomathemba helped her first acquire her birth certificate and national ID card, and ultimately succeed in obtaining her passport, unlocking new economic possibilities. Similarly, a young mother, supported by the cadre, was empowered to secure a birth certificate for her child, ensuring the child's future rights and breaking the cycle of statelessness. These cases highlight how overcoming documentation barriers, with the help of community cadres, directly impacts on personal and economic empowerment.

The formation of village-level campaign committees and the proactive engagement of local leaders, such as the Ward 2 Councillor who provides transport to the district office, ensure that these efforts are community-owned and will endure beyond the project's lifespan.

THE IMPACT OF THE SASA! FAITH APPROACH



In Insiza District, where harmful cultural norms often fuel silence around gender-based violence, a transformation is taking root within the churches. Recognizing a troubling pattern of marital strife and separation among young couples, the Tower of Grace Church took a step in 2025 and established a dedicated committee to address GBV. SASA! Faith approach, implemented by Emthonjeni Women's Forum has enlightened congregants from seeing violence as a private family matter, the church has begun to embrace it as a community issue, with religious leaders using their pulpits to integrate messages of justice, dignity, and equality directly from scripture.

Empowered with the lessons from SASA! Faith, the committee moved beyond preaching to active intervention and support. They began guiding couples, using biblical teachings to promote peace and shared responsibility within households. This effort has fundamentally shifted the culture of the congregation, creating an open and trusted channel of communication. Church members, who once suffered in isolation, now feel empowered to openly seek help for their families, knowing they will be met with support rather than judgment.

Men in the congregation, inspired by their leaders, have begun actively supporting their wives with household chores and decision-making, leading to more harmonious families and reducing the burdens on women. As one pastor affirmed, *"These lessons have become an inseparable part of our ministry, ensuring that the work of fostering respectful, violence-free relationships will continue to grow long after the project itself has ended"*.

CULTIVATING SUPPORT: MENTAL WELLNESS AS A CORNERSTONE OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH



Emthonjeni Women's Forum (EWF), with support from FOS, conducted a basic counselling training for partner organizations GAPWUZ and LEDRIZ in Harare. The initiative targeted capacity building, psychological well-being of the staff and members who work on the frontlines of challenging social and economic issues. The training equipped participants with skills in active listening, crisis response, and basic psychosocial support.

The training underscored that individuals in the Civil Society Organisations sector, who routinely confront injustice and trauma can lead to burnout, compassion fatigue, and diminished impact. Proactively integrating mental health support, organizations like GAPWUZ and LEDRIZ are investing in long-term effectiveness of their staff members. A team that is mentally and emotionally resilient is better equipped to think strategically, serve communities with empathy, and drive meaningful, lasting change.

Ultimately, this training introduced a shift in organizational culture, centred on the deliberate creation of safe spaces. The safe spaces created by EWF's training empower individuals to share their struggles without fear, strengthening the entire organization.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

