



# Emthonjeni Women's Forum Annual Report 2025

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People and Organizations Working for Gender Equality and Rights



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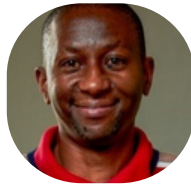
- 2025 in pictures

# OUR TEAM



**Sikhathele Matambo**

Executive Director



**Bonanza Khuphe**

Finance & Admin Manager



**Plaxedes Moyo**

Programmes Manager



**Francina Shanana**

Finance Officer



**Shirley Mabuto**

Programmes Officer



**Nobesuthu Ndlovu**

Programmes Officer



**Nozithelo Mapholisa**

Programmes Officer



**Nokuthaba Sibanda**

Programmes Officer



**Maureen Ndlovu**

M&E Officer



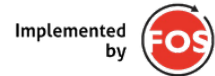
**Lizinethi Beta**

Counsellor



**Nkosinethando Ndlovu**

Communications Officer



SIGRID  
RAUSING  
TRUST



**Our  
Partners**



# ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW

## Executive Summary

“Despite a challenging operating environment marked by funding reductions, legislative uncertainty, and worsening economic conditions, EWF supported 4,901 direct beneficiaries across multiple projects.”

In 2025, Emthonjeni Women’s Forum (EWF) implemented various interventions in line with our strategic pillars of GBV prevention; Economic Justice and sustainable livelihoods; Psychosocial Support Research, Advocacy and Policy Development to improve the lives of women. EWF provided direct support to 4,901 direct beneficiaries through 8 projects, despite facing significant funding cuts.

### Key achievements include:

- **GBV Prevention** : EWF reached 4,901 people (3,638 females and 1,263 males) through outreach efforts and established 60 ward-level GBV committees, strengthening community coordination for prevention and response to gender-based violence.
- Revitalised 6 child protection committees in Tsholotsho, improving community-level safeguarding mechanisms.
- In Umzingwane, women have taken the lead in launching community-driven initiatives that support school development and provide food for vulnerable children. Alongside this, they are strengthening their economic resilience through income-generating activities such as baking, poultry production, and resale businesses.
- Strengthened local ownership and sustainability, demonstrated by communities independently mobilizing resources of 1,500 bricks towards the construction of a shelter, laying a foundation for a gender-just society free from violence.



**609**

EWF provided psychosocial, legal, and welfare support to 609 survivors



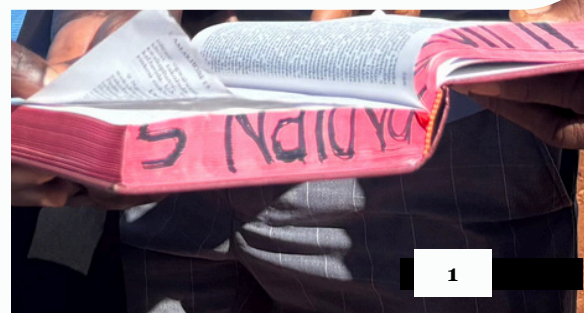
**252**

EWF facilitated 252 successful court applications



**170**

170 convictions, and over 388 referrals.



- **Economic Justice and Sustainable Livelihoods:** EWF established 7 economic livelihood groups amounting to 14 groups involved in greenhouse projects, nutrition gardens, goat farming, poultry farming, peanut butter making, and sewing. These groups have raised a cumulative total of USD 4,317.00.
- Under the Self-Help Group (SHG) approach, 13 new SHGs have been formed, bringing the total number of SHGs to 20. Collectively, the SHGs raised a cumulative total amount of USD 5,267.87.
- EWF's interventions implemented through Internal Savings and Lending (ISALs), Self-Help Groups, and livelihood projects has led to women diversifying their income sources, strengthened food security, and increased their financial autonomy.
- Economic empowerment enhanced household well-being by enabling school fee payments, better housing, and small enterprise investments, while reducing dependence and vulnerability to violence.
- **Research, Advocacy and Policy development:** EWF conducted a research study on the digital divide and its impact on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response in urban Bulawayo and rural Umzingwane. The study revealed that while digital platforms such as WhatsApp and toll-free lines have improved access to GBV support services, barriers including high data costs, poor network coverage, digital illiteracy, privacy concerns, and gendered control over devices continue to limit access, particularly for rural based women and girls. The findings informed recommendations for survivor-centred hybrid service delivery models that combine digital and in-person support, strengthened digital literacy programming, and advocacy for affordable, accessible, and inclusive digital GBV services.
- Access to documentation community cadres assisted 1,029 citizens to obtain 518 birth certificates, 58 death certificates, 453 identity documents etc. This was done in partnership with traditional leaders and schools enhancing access to documentation, education, and social protection.
- **Psychosocial Support:** EWF strengthened psychosocial support systems by providing counselling, court support, and welfare assistance to 609 GBV survivors. The intervention improved survivors' access to justice, safety, and emotional recovery, with 283 court applications granted, including protection and maintenance orders. There has been an increase in the use of digital counselling platforms which accounted for nearly one-third of all cases handled, reflecting increased trust, confidentiality, and accessibility of these platforms. In addition, 170 convictions were secured for GBV-related offences.



# Directors Remarks



## SIKHATHELE MATAMBO Director

It is my pleasure to present the 2025 annual report highlighting the work, achievements, and impact Emthonjeni Women's Forum (EWF) has made. Despite the various challenges experienced throughout the year, EWF remains committed to preventing GBV, promoting gender equality and contributing to a GBV free society.

In the first year of our new strategic plan, we have enhanced our programmes and deepened our partnerships, reaching over 4,000 vulnerable women, girls, men, and young people. Through community-based initiatives, we have focused on preventing GBV, providing psychosocial support, advancing economic justice, promoting sustainable livelihoods, and driving research, advocacy, and policy development.

Our achievements in 2025 were made possible through collective effort from all our constituencies including women who have risen as extraordinary agents of change.

### ***Achievements realised amongst others in 2025 include:***

- More women on farms taking up leadership positions. At Holly Lodge Farm, one woman has been appointed supervisor, and six others are now managing the dairy department.
- The Self-Help Group Approach empowered 20 groups translating to 256 women, who are now running individual businesses leading to improved household income and improved living standard.
- One SHG member has completed the construction of a fowl run and is rearing 100 broiler chickens for sale.
- The community women for the first time exhibited at the Insiza district Business Expo leading to exposure to varied markets as well as increased sales of their produce and wares.
- The Directors participation at the 69<sup>th</sup> Convention on the Status of Women enabled direct access to global policy discussions, advocacy strategies, and networking opportunities and strengthen EWFs capacity to influence gender equality policies locally, enhance program design through exposure to best practices, and open doors for strategic partnerships and funding opportunities.
- After value addition training, the sustainable livelihoods women's groups diversified their crops, and introduced open gardening next to their green house.

Despite the successes, we remain mindful of the challenges such as persistent inequalities, economic hardships, need for diversified funding streams, and culture of silence that perpetuates GBV. It is against the backdrop of realisation of need for diversified funding streams that EWF has been fortunate to be part of the Zimbabwe We Are One Fund which is a collaborative initiative aimed at responding to GBV in Zimbabwe. It is a fund established to support survivors of violence. Please donate any amount towards EWF from this link: <https://weareonefund.org/#donate>

Our work this year would not have been possible without the unwavering dedication of our team, community volunteers, Board members, funding partners, and stakeholders within the referral pathway. Their collective commitment has enabled EWF to deliver on its mission and drive the positive change we strive for. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one for the invaluable contributions and steadfast support.

As we move forward, we remain committed to a society free from GBV and we will continue amplifying community voices to ensure lasting impact.

*S. Matambo*

# CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

As part of strengthening EWF's strategic direction and enhancing organisational resilience in a rapidly changing environment, EWF conducts contextual analysis of the operating environment. The analysis highlights how changes in legislation, economic conditions, entrenched social norms, technological opportunities and risks, environmental shocks, and evolving legal frameworks collectively affect the women we serve, survivors of GBV and ultimately EWFs operations.

**Political:** Despite the enactment of laws protecting women from GBV, there is unfortunately weak enforcement of GBV laws, compounded by limited government prioritisation of gender issues, and slow justice delivery systems continue to hinder survivors' access to protection and support services. This is in addition to political and cultural resistance to gender equality initiatives that create backlash against EWFs advocacy for women's rights and social justice. The implication thereof is that survivors face barriers to justice.

**Economic:** Zimbabwe's challenging economic environment continues to have significant implications for GBV work. High unemployment levels, women's economic dependency, and the rising costs of living has increased household vulnerability and contributes to heightened risks of gender-based violence. This is especially so among women and girls who are most vulnerable to economic dependence and poverty. The economic pressures often limit survivors' ability to leave abusive situations or access essential services. In addition, the limited livelihood opportunities and economic insecurity continue to place greater demand on psychosocial support and economic empowerment initiatives. At an organisational level, the dwindling funding has increased EWFs operational costs and programme implementation expenses, while also affecting staffing. This has prompted EWF to diversify funding streams and expand economic empowerment programmes under its Economic Justice and Sustainable Livelihoods pillar.

**Social:** Increased GBV reporting and service uptake reflect growing trust in EWF and greater demand for psycho social support yet harmful social norms, entrenched gender inequality, and persistent patriarchal practices, including normalising violence, tolerance of infidelity, and child marriages continue to drive GBV in communities. EWF continues to intensify community dialogues, behaviour change campaigns, and male engagement initiatives through its GBV prevention pillar in challenging norms and promotion of transformative change.

**Technology:** The increased use of online counselling has improved access for survivors in remote areas. This access is however hindered by the digital divide that affect most women especially those in rural communities. This is exacerbated by high data costs, poor connectivity, and low technological capacity. Technological facilitated GBV has risen, with women more vulnerable to revenge porn, stalking, trolling, leading to exclusion from online civic spaces. The Cyber and Data Protection Act (2023) brings welcome relief to survivors of online abuse as it protects victims from abuse. Compliance with POTRAZ requirements and protection of participants information, though registration charges and training of data protection officers add further strain to already depleted resources. EWF continues to integrate TFGBV into its programming, intensifying multimedia campaigns, strengthening digital safety education, encouraging community-based reporting for those offline, and reviewing the IT policies to align with data protection regulations, while exploring collaborations with mobile service providers to develop accessible GBV prevention applications, thus expanding outreach and safeguarding women's participation in digital and economic spaces.

**Environmental:** Heavy rainfall and flash floods in areas such as Tsholotsho and Insiza provided sufficient water for domestic use but has also disrupted programme implementation due to low turnout as a result of incessant rains and impassable roads. Artisanal mining in Insiza and Umzingwane is contributing to land degradation, increased STIs, teenage pregnancies, and exacerbation of violence. These dynamics have heightened vulnerabilities for women and girls, prompting EWF to incorporate targeted programming for teenagers in mining communities under its GBV prevention pillar to mitigate risks and strengthen resilience.

**Legal:** The rollout of Integrated Electronic Case Management Systems alongside the National GBV Strategy (2025–2027) has promoted the protection of women including survivors of gender-based violence. The IECMS has improved efficiency, despite excluding digitally illiterate survivors and widening the digital divide, particularly in rural areas. These developments reinforce the need for EWF to continue to align policies with national legal frameworks and ensure the strengthening of data protection systems, train a data protection officer, and provide survivor support in navigating digital systems, while leveraging the national GBV strategy to harmonize community-based interventions with state mechanisms and advocate for inclusive, gender-sensitive legal processes.

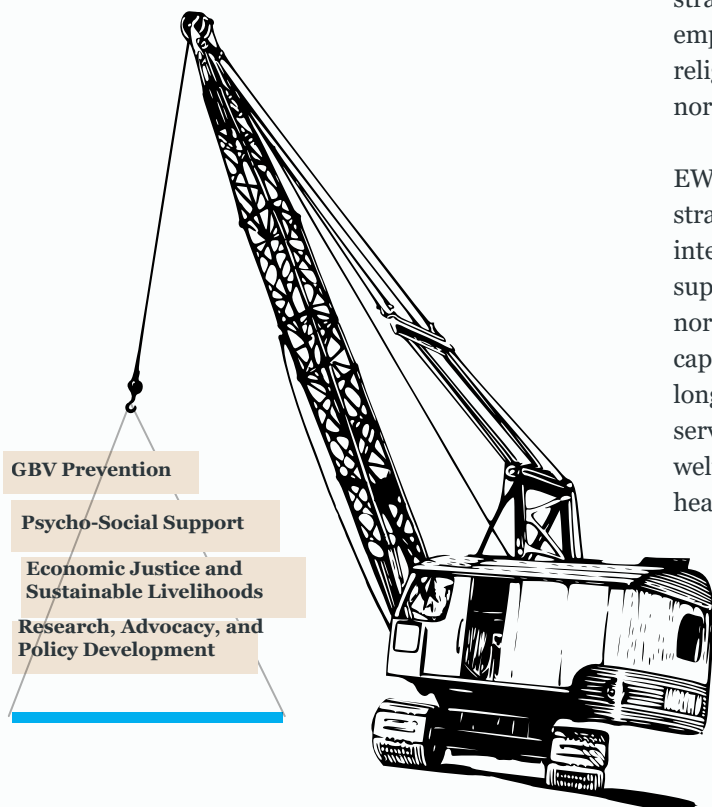
# STRATEGIC DIRECTION

“Sustainable change requires a holistic and multi-layered approach—one that addresses social norms, strengthens community systems, expands economic opportunities for women, and ensures survivors have access to timely, compassionate, and comprehensive support services.”

Emthonjeni Women’s Forum’s strategy is guided by a commitment to advancing gender equality, strengthening women’s rights, and building resilient communities free from gender-based violence.

The strategy is built around four core pillars: **GBV Prevention, Psycho-Social Support, Economic Justice and Sustainable Livelihoods, and Research, Advocacy, and Policy development.** These pillars contribute to tackling the structural drivers of GBV while promoting women’s agency and leadership at household, community, and institutional levels. Our strategy also lays emphasis on engaging men and boys as allies, empowering youth, and working closely with traditional leaders, religious institutions, and local authorities to shift harmful norms.

EWF’s approach places communities at the centre of change. The strategy prioritizes community ownership, localization of interventions, and participatory models such as dialogues, peer support networks, and self-help groups. By combining social norm change interventions with economic strengthening and capacity development, EWF promotes both GBV prevention and long-term resilience. Survivors are supported through integrated services that bring together legal, psychosocial, medical, and welfare assistance—ensuring a continuum of care that promotes healing and justice.





# PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION



# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN NUMBERS

**4901**

*Direct beneficiaries empowered through outreach.*

**609**

*Survivors received integrated psychosocial, legal, and court support*

**131**

*Women beneficiaries from economic initiatives*

**1029**

*Individuals registered for civil documentation, including 518 birth certificates, 58 death certificates and 453 national ID's*

**20**

*Self-Help Groups established with 291 women members, indirectly benefiting 536 children.*

**17**

*Women assumed new leadership roles.*

**1**

*Research on the digital divide in gbv prevention - a comparative analysis of urban and rural areas in zimbabwe*

**16**

*GBV related advocacy issues*

# Implemented Projects Overview

150

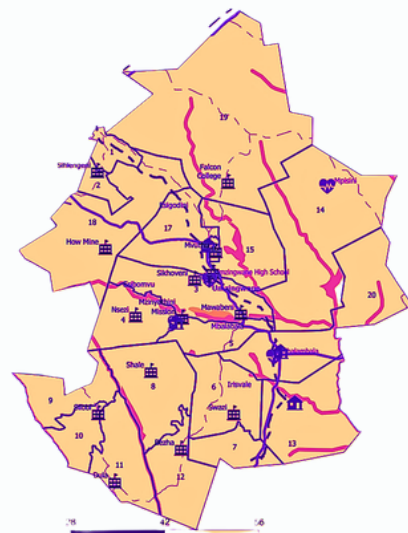


Amplify her voice project reached 150 participants comprising young women, men and community leaders.

3



Three women-led community initiatives were launched, focusing on education, health, and income generation, while mentorship groups strengthened women's solidarity and resilience.



## Amplify Her Voice

Emthonjeni Women's Forum, with support from HIVOS, implemented a three-month project titled *Amplify Her Voice* in **Ward 14, Umzingwane** district of Matebeleland South Province. The project sought to increase young women's participation in leadership and decision making processes. The project equipped young women with leadership, digital, and entrepreneurship skills to drive community change.

## Umzingwane

EWF reached 150 participants, primarily young women, through the project. The project resulted in the young women launching women-led initiatives such as supporting meal preparation at a local secondary school, providing sanitary pads for vulnerable school-going girls, and clearing school grounds for the construction of an ECD block. In addition, the mentorship programme strengthened young women's solidarity, confidence through peer learning, skills sharing, and entrepreneurship mentoring. Young women were mentored on business start-up and growth, savings and reinvestment schemes, poultry farming, baking and online marketing. The digital skills training resulted in the young women successfully creating and updating WhatsApp Business profiles, linking them to Facebook, ultimately enhancing their economic opportunities

**Women from Ward 14 Cooking at Bayethe Secondary School**



Under the Amplify Her Voice project, 8 young women in Bayethe came together and requested for land from the local traditional leadership to farm and contribute to *isiphala sika sobhuku*. (Isiphala sika sobhuku is a traditional concept where members of the community contribute grain that caters for vulnerable families within the community). Furthermore, they have been supporting Bayethe Secondary School through weekly donations of food items, including rice and vegetables, towards the school feeding scheme. To strengthen their economic independence, the young women formed an Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL) group, contributing R10 each on a weekly basis and issuing small loans with interest among themselves. By the end of 2025 the women had raised 1200 Rands assisting them in growing their businesses.

**Women from Ward 14 tilling the ground for “isiphala sika Sokubhuku”**





The second group of young women focused on contributing to structural development in their community through initiating the clearing of a piece land earmarked for a primary school as well as providing labour to moulding bricks and establishing a vegetable garden to sustain the school's nutrition program.

Through the mentorship programme, seven women launched new enterprises in baking, vending, and poultry rearing, while 23 others expanded their small businesses using digital marketing skills.

**7**

Women  
launched new  
enterprises

**23**

Young women  
expanded their  
small  
businesses

**25**

Young women  
equipped with  
digital skills  
training to  
manage  
WhatsApp  
Business profiles



# Self- Help Group Approach



The year 2025 marked the second year and expansion phase for the Self-Help Group Approach project. The project seeks to empower economically vulnerable women socially, economically and politically, providing them with a platform to build collective confidence, strengthen their livelihoods and actively participate in decision making both at household and community levels improving their household and children’s wellbeing. EWF established 20 Self Help Groups comprising 291 women, indirectly reaching 536 children (235 boys and 301 girls) .

**25**  
Broilers



**Juliet Moyo**  
(Sidlaphansi SHG)

**100**  
Broilers



**4x**  
Growth

July 2025  
**BEFORE**

Now  
**AFTER**

# Self-Help Group Approach

## EXPANSION & SCALE-UP 2025

EWF established 20 Self Help Groups comprising 291 women, indirectly reaching 536 children (235 boys and 301 girls) supported through the project.

GROUP CAPITAL & INCOME GROWTH

HOUSEHOLD & CHILD WELL-BEING

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT & COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

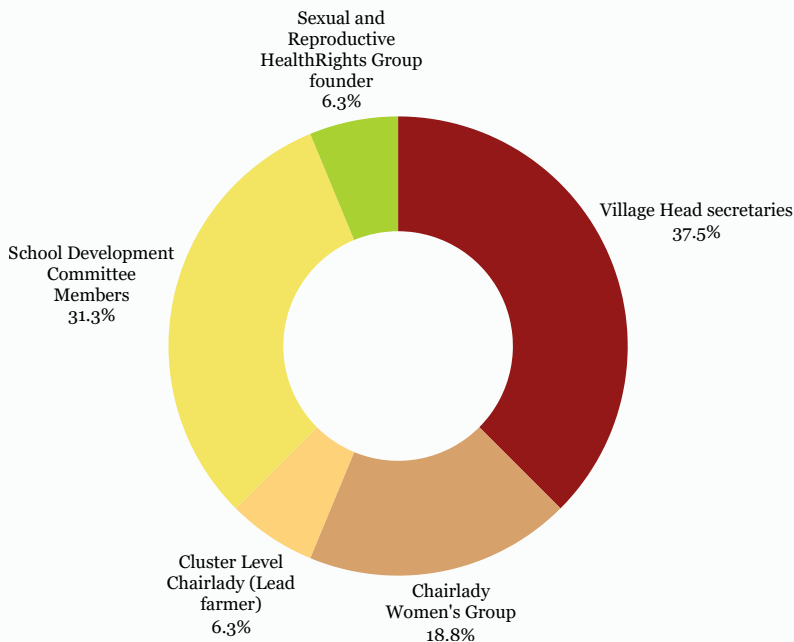
- There has been steady growth in group capital from US\$15 to \$300 as of November 2025 enabling members to access larger loans ranging from US\$50 – US\$300 to expand their businesses, from Vuthani, Vezubuhle Siyaphakama, Asakheni, Masiyephambili and Sidlaphansi SHGs. Attributed to this, Juliet Moyo\* from Sidlaphansi SHG in ward 20, started with just 25 broilers in July 2025 and has now grown her business to 100 broilers.
- 7 members from Vuthani SHG were able to pay US\$20 in school fees per term, US\$20 a month for transport and US\$10 a month for lunches for their children. Lister Moyo\*, highlighted that she purchased 3 new school uniforms complete with shoes and sunhats for her 3 children, ensuring they attend school well dressed.
- Siyaphakama SHG runs a social funds, where members each contribute US\$2 to provide fast cash relief for essential household needs like groceries. They also have a social initiative where each member contributes US\$1 to buy plates, cups and dishing spoons.
- Women report improved, healthier meals that now include a greater variety of relish.
- 4 SHGs have independently mobilized resources to purchase their own group uniforms, reflecting strengthened cohesion and collective power amongst women.
- Members now hold independent regular meetings focused on social discussions that build women's confidence to participate in broader community dialogues. For instance, Sipiwe Moyo\* attended a community meeting where she confidently raised concerns about the safety of young children who walk 5 km to the nearest school proposing that younger children be accompanied to school or transport arrangements be made for them by parents to ensure their safety.

# Empower Her Faith! Uniting Against GBV

The SASA!Faith project is currently in its second year of implementation and has progressed to the second phase, the Awareness phase. The SASA!Faith is adapted from the SASA! methodology and works specifically with faith communities and religious leaders to promote gender justice, healthy relationships and non-violence. The awareness phase is focused on helping the community recognize how the imbalance of power specifically power over others is the root cause of violence against women. During this stage, faith leaders and members use religious values like justice and dignity to spark critical discussions, moving the community from silence to a collective understanding that such violence is a violation of faith. It aims to make the invisible visible by highlighting how traditional norms and power structures contribute to gender-based violence. The approach recognizes that faith leaders and religious teachings hold significant influence over community values and behaviours, making them key partners in the fight against GBV.

As a result of sustained engagement with women through the SASA!Faith sessions, the graph illustrates the range of leadership positions women assumed across their respective faith spaces, reflecting increased confidence, agency, and participation in decision-making roles.

## Women in Church Leadership



As a result of advocacy trainings under the SASA! Faith project, women initiated and led advocacy initiatives within their communities. The collective efforts launched through these actions are outlined below.

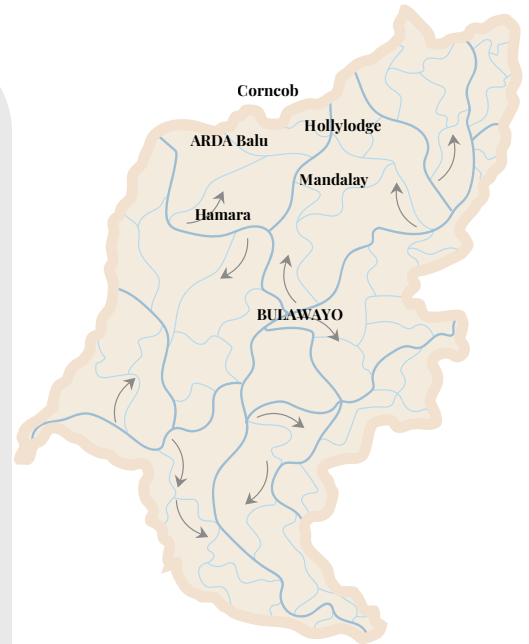
Advocacy Issue	Ward in Insiza District, Mat South	Action Taken	Outcome
<p>Rising cases of children under 17 being taken to mining sites by parents during the school term contributed to increased school dropouts. In response, women advocated for strengthened child protection measures and enforcement of child protection laws by the Department of Social Development.</p>	<p>Ward 1</p>	<p>Women engaged the Department of Social Development, which, in addition to existing child protection laws, gazetted a district by-law stating that any parent found taking a child to mining sites will be reported to the police, while individuals who fail to report such cases will face penalties.</p>	<p>Officers from the Department of Social Development have begun monitoring activities at mining sites to strengthen enforcement of the by-law.</p>
<p>Due to high rate of 'house' break-ins targeting women, the women engaged the police and advocated for establishment of a neighbourhood watch.</p>	<p>Ward 1 (Thandanani Village)</p>	<p>Lindiwe Ncube* a member of SASA!Faith advocacy teams mobilised 90 volunteers (86 men and 4 women) to form a neighbourhood watch committee</p>	<p>A neighbourhood watch committee has been established leading to reduced incidences of break ins</p>
<p>The bushy area surrounding Zhulube Clinic contributed to an increase in reported cases of assault against women, leading Community Activists to advocate for the clearing of the bush.</p>	<p>Ward 1</p>	<p>CAs advocated for clearing of the area</p>	<p>The area has been cleared by the Ministry of Lands together with local volunteers, and safety in the community has improved.</p>

## Empower Her Faith! Uniting Against GBV

\*Not Their Real names

# Promoting Gender Equality in the workspace

The promoting gender equality in the workplace is now in its fourth year of implementation, focusing on strengthening workplace gender equality and promotion of a safe workplace free from gender discrimination, GBV including sexual harassment. The initiative is implemented across Umguza farms such as Corncob, Mandalay, ARDA Balu, Hamara, and Holly Lodge as well as Bulawayo-based corporate institutions including Bulawayo City Council (BCC), Zimbabwe Power Company (ZPC), and Zimbabwe Hotel and Catering Workers Union (ZHCWU). The project targets both employees and management and seeks to address gaps where workplaces either lack or have weak policies that fail to adequately safeguard women from exploitation and abuse.



# Promoting Gender Equality in the workspace

- The project's 4th year of intervention focus has been on strengthening institutions response to sexual harassment and promotion of gender equality in the workplace. The project saw strengthened institutional response systems to cases of sexual harassment with Bulawayo City Council and Zimbabwe Power Company adopting regular policy reviews, mandatory staff induction, and continuous awareness on sexual harassment.
- Following mental wellness trainings for management, Bulawayo City Council has integrated mental health into the Human Resource meetings and have initiated mental health trainings.
- Advocacy efforts have led to the construction of four flush toilets at Corncob Farm in April 2025
- Many women have assumed leadership positions in the workplace as follows:
  - At Holly Lodge Farm, one woman was appointed as a supervisor and six women were selected to manage the dairy department.
  - At ARDA Farm, a woman now facilitates bi-weekly GBV and health sessions, demonstrating expanding opportunities for women's leadership and professional development.
- Following the Training of Trainers, 29 Gender Champions were equipped across Bulawayo wards and are now using WhatsApp groups to share information, report incidents, and coordinate responses to sexual harassment.



# WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO ACCESS DOCUMENTATION

EWF is in its second year of implementing the Women's Rights to Access Documentation project in 10 wards of Tsholotsho District, Matabeleland North Province and 3 wards of Insiza District, Matabeleland South. The second year of intervention's focus has been on information dissemination and more on local led advocacy work around local level policy change and implementation.



- EWF achieved significant progress in strengthening collective and community-led action around access to documentation, in Tsholotsho and Insiza. As a result of the **1 Cadre: 10 Registrants** initiative and the **“Every Child, Every Village, Every Document”** campaign, the number of registrants increased to 1029, showing improved community mobilisation to access to documentation.
- In Tsholotsho, four chiefs and ten headmen committed to mobilising resources towards the installation of a solar system of the Tsholotsho District Civil Registry and to jointly advocate for quarterly mobile registration exercises to address ongoing service delivery disruptions caused by power outages.
- Advocacy efforts have led to the mobilisation of R1.200 so far with plans in place to mobilise for more funds towards the completion of the Nkunzi sub-office in Tsholotsho.
- Advocacy efforts have also led to councilors assisting 92 beneficiaries from ward 2 and 16 Tsholotsho with transport support to access documentation services.
- Community cadres, in collaboration with Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and school heads, reduced the number of unregistered learners at Tshitashawa primary school from 171 to 28.



**23**  
GBV survivors  
received support



**60-70%**  
Projects directly led to a 60 -70%  
increase in farm-based income for  
women



**131**  
Creation of new jobs  
through greenhouse etc.

## The Gender Gap – Promoting Women’s Access to Land Rights

The Gender Gap: Promoting Women's Access to Land Rights project is in its 3rd year of implementation in Insiza. The 3rd years' focus has been on strengthening women's voice, choice and agency, improved food security and sustainable livelihoods. The project is being implemented in Wards 7, 8, and 10 of Insiza District, Matabeleland South Province. The overall goal of the project is to transform gender norms by promoting women’s access to land rights, reducing gender-based violence, and advancing gender equality in the agricultural sector.

Through strengthening women’s sustainable livelihoods and improved voice and agency, women under this project have managed to ensure that women are at the forefront of economic empowerment in their communities. Women have after the value addition training diversified their crop scope. This has culminated in them participation at the Insiza Business Expo for the first time, realising high sales and establishing markets for their crops. The outcomes for the year include:

- Qinisela Greenhouse in ward 7, increased their income by 65% through through sales of tomatoes, bell peppers and onions, reducing their vulnerability to GBV.
- Through financial literacy trainings women gained strong financial literacy and confidence, enabling them to manage business finances effectively, make informed decisions, and sustain and grow their enterprises.
- The project created jobs for 131 people 77 women, 19 men, and 35 youth through collective enterprises in horticulture, poultry, and sewing.
- The Thuthukani Sewing Group in Ward 8, Insiza, expanded its production and now supplies uniforms to 4 local schools and 2 schools in Mberengwa.
- Awareness sessions on gender equality and GBV prevention have contributed to reduced GBV cases and improved household relations, with 41 participants out of 120 reporting adoption of joint decision-making practices in their households.
- Traditional leaders have publicly endorsed women’s rights to land and allocated 3 plots for women’s income-generating projects, a major milestone in dismantling patriarchal land control systems.



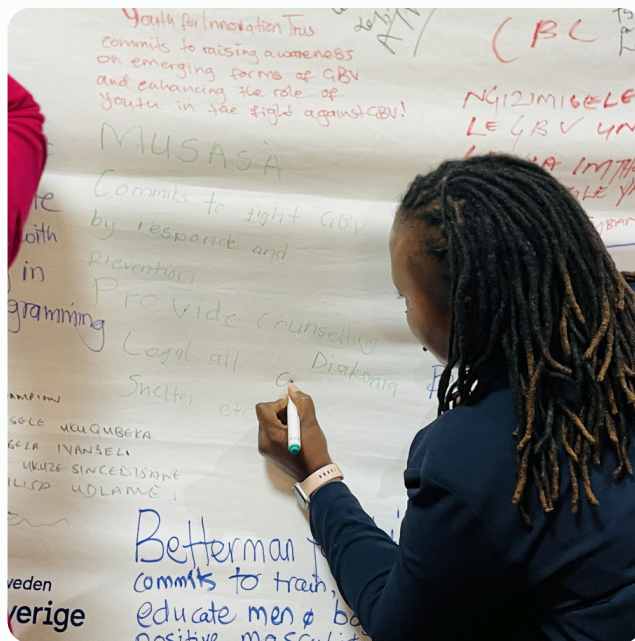
# STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S AGENCY IN FIGHTING GBV AND CLAIMING THEIR RIGHTS.



The strengthening women's agency in fighting GBV and claiming their rights project is in its final year of implementation in Umzingwane and Bulawayo and sought to strengthen, consolidate and ensure project sustainability in 2025. As such the intervention consolidated community-based GBV response systems through the establishment of GBV Committees in Bulawayo and Umzingwane. These structures have strengthened coordination at community level and institutionalised survivor support mechanisms. Community-led prevention intervention efforts on teenage pregnancies were strengthened with community cadres actively engaging young mothers on issues of sexual and reproductive health, contributing to reduced vulnerability and increased awareness.

## STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S AGENCY IN FIGHTING GBV AND CLAIMING THEIR RIGHTS.

- Sixty ward-based GBV Committees were established in Bulawayo and Umzingwane, and they are now coordinating monthly survivor check-ins and referrals, ensuring continuity of support beyond donor funding.
- In addition, these cadres are engaging teenagers to address teenage pregnancies and empower young mothers. Empowerment is evident among young women with two girls from St Peters who have gone back to school and re-enrolled for Ordinary Level studies and vocational training respectively.
- EWF facilitated research on the digital divide in Bulawayo and Umzingwane, revealing gendered gaps in access to digital devices, internet connectivity, digital literacy, affordability of data, and the safe use of digital platforms for accessing information and GBV support services.
- The findings helped shape practical recommendations to improve the use of digital platforms in GBV response services. In addition, 75% of survivors said they would recommend digital services to other survivors, showing growing trust and confidence in the support they received.



- Advocacy initiatives in Ward 19, Umzingwane District mobilised community members to raise USD 55 and mould 1,500 bricks that have been set for the proposed construction of a ward-based shelter for abused women.
- 25 children at Godlwayo Primary School (Ward 19) have been re-enrolled under Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM), after community leaders addressed corruption and factionalism in Term 2 of 2025.

# PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

As part of our continued commitment to advancing the rights and wellbeing of survivors of gender-based violence, through our strategic pillar of offering psycho social support, we have continued assisting survivors of violence with emotional support, legal document assistance, medical assistance, shelter referral and provision of welfare assistance in the form of transport fares, food hampers and sanitary wear. A total of 609 survivors were assisted in 2025 where 330 were supported through court processes, 209 through online platforms, and 70 walks -in clients were assisted at the EWF offices. 283 court applications were granted offering protection, maintenance, and financial stability. The inclusion of digital counselling and a welfare fund enhanced accessibility, confidentiality, and emergency response, reinforcing EWF's commitment to a survivor-centred justice and recovery system.

## Refferal Partners



ZRP  
(VFU Dept.)



LRF



MUSASA



MWACSMED



ZLHR

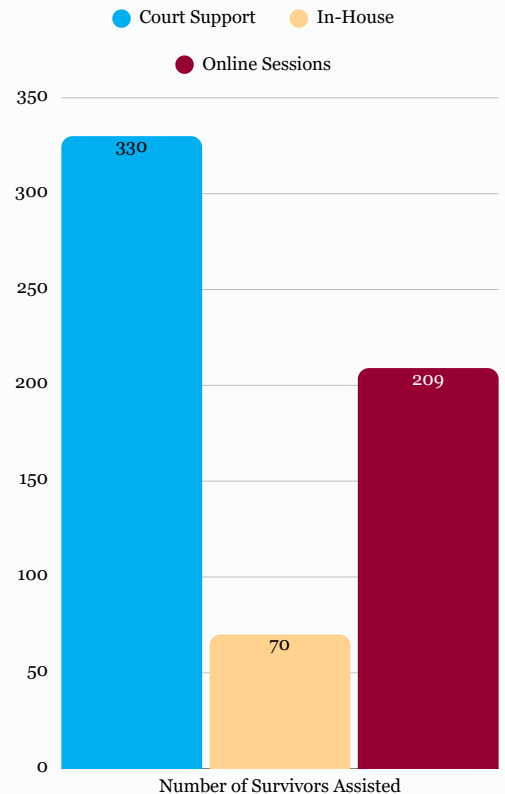


ZWLA

# Counselling and court support outcomes

## Overview

- WhatsApp counselling and toll-free lines now account for nearly one-third of all cases, reflecting growing digital trust and improved survivor confidentiality, a marked shift from earlier years when in-person sessions dominated.
- 15 men underwent rehabilitative counselling, resulting in improved understanding of harmful behaviours, increased accountability, and strengthened commitment to non-violent and respectful relationships.
- 219 applications for maintenance with 160 being granted.
- 147 applications for protection orders with 123 being granted.
- 15 survivors being granted child access and child custody
- 279 convictions secured from 104 protection order violations, 28 contempt of court, 79 maintenance defaults, 54 physical abuse, and 14 sexual abuses, resulting in 81 community service, 47 fines, 19 jail terms.
- 421 survivor's referrals, with 276 to Zimbabwe Republic Police-Victim Friendly Unit (VFU) for summons, protection orders, and abuse reporting. Other referrals were directed to MWACSMED (38), ZLHR (20), LRF (32), ZWLA (13), and health facilities (33), and other partners 9.
- The department officially secured a counselling and court support space in Tsholotsho and Nyamandlovu leading to a total of 44 survivors assisted in both courts



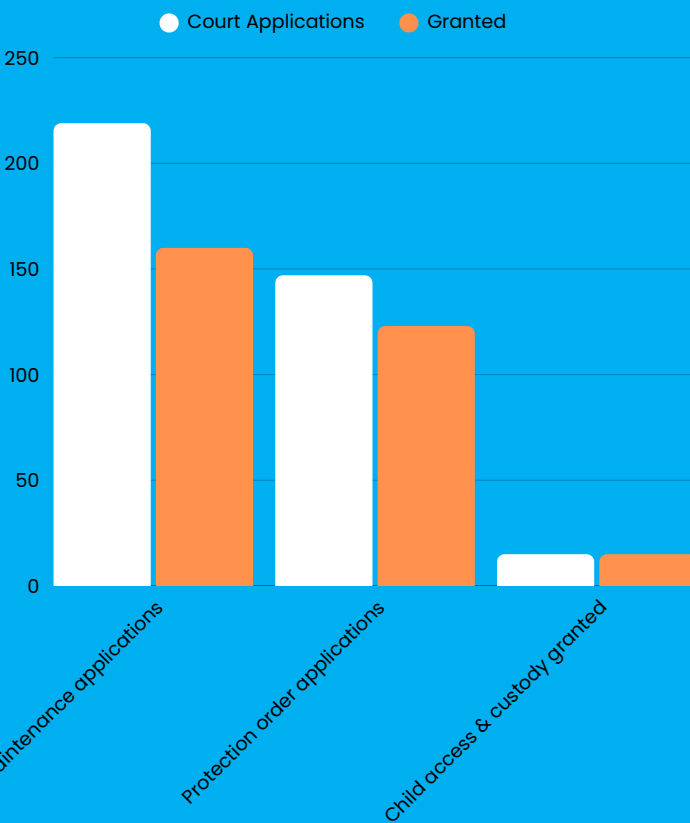
# Counselling and court support outcomes

**341**

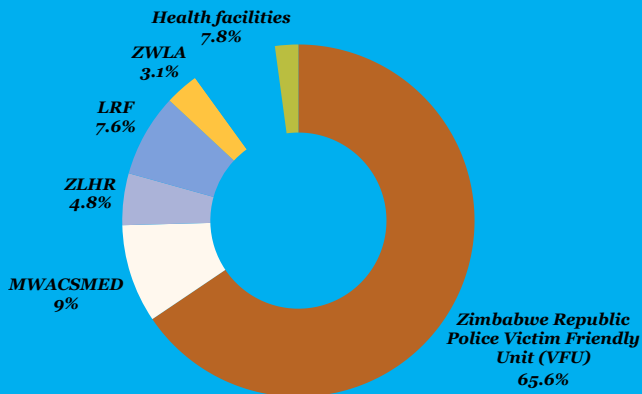
Survivors provided feedback, (83% is online)

**15**

Men underwent rehabilitative counselling

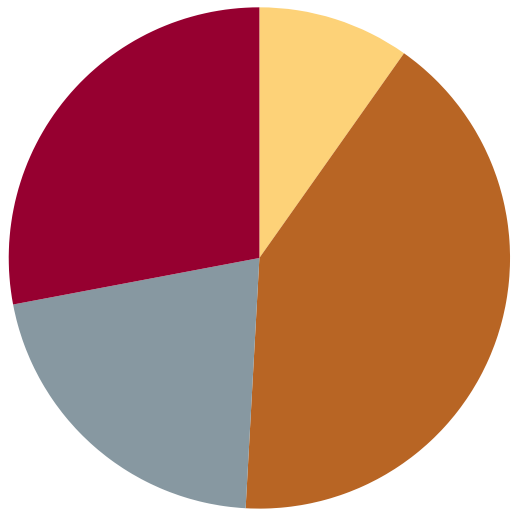


## Survivor referrals

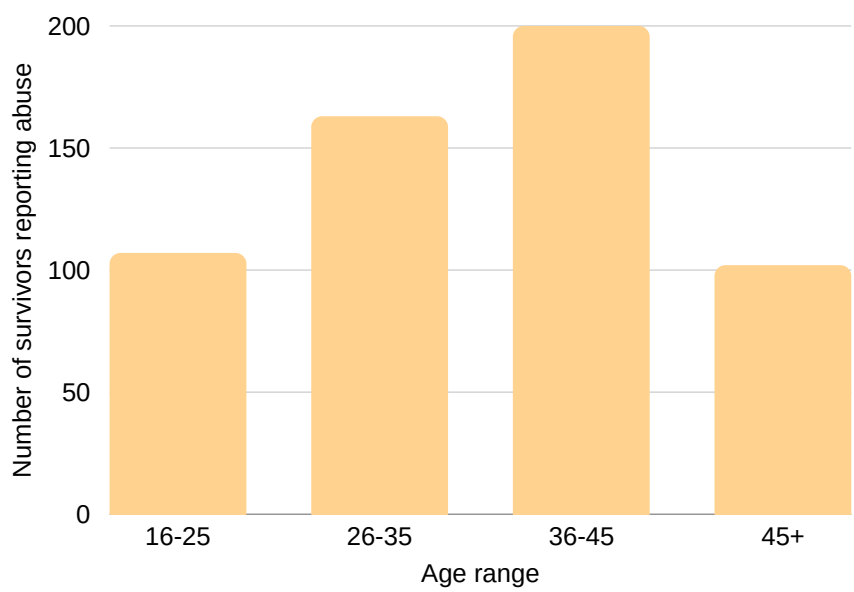


# TYPES OF ABUSE REPORTED

- sexual abuse
- economic abuse
- physical abuse
- emotional abuse



The data reveals a continuous cycle of abuse across age groups: young women (16–25) face early marriages and IPV; ages 26–45 face economic and emotional abuse; older women (46+) often suffer economic abuse by adult children, highlighting intergenerational GBV.

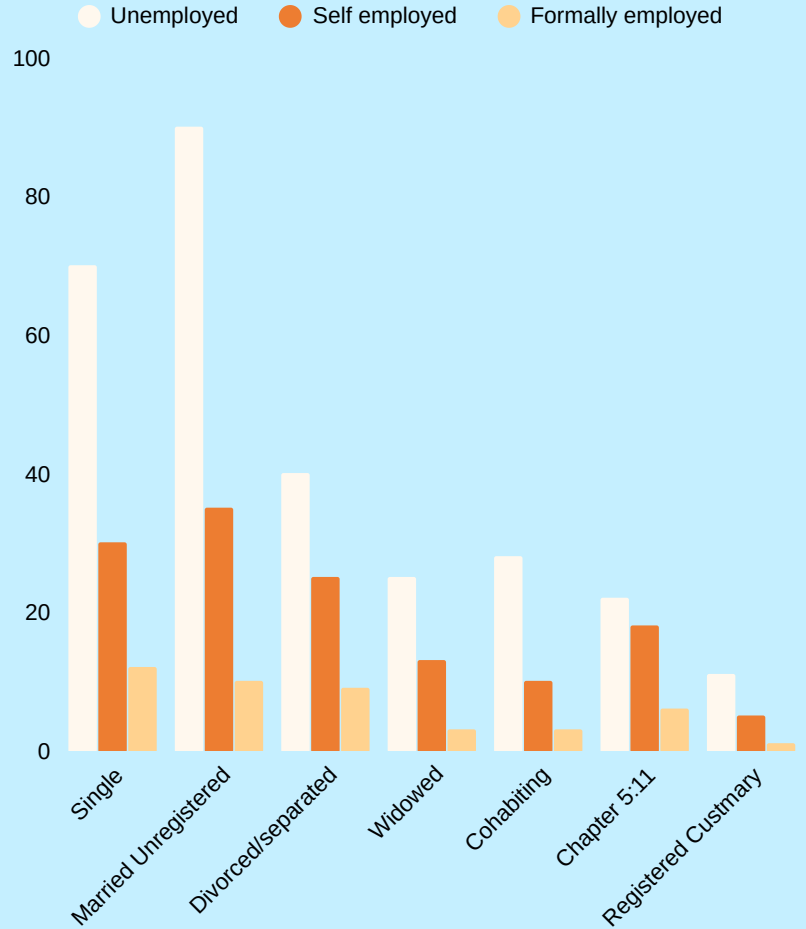


Economic abuse has the highest number of cases reported reflecting the growing financial vulnerability among women & and the need for more economic empowerment interventions targeting young women

# STATUS OF SURVIVORS

The data from the table above shows that:

- Unemployed married women face the highest GBV incidence, showing how economic dependency deepens vulnerability.
- Formally employed single women report fewer cases, highlighting that financial autonomy reduces exposure to abuse.
- Women in unregistered unions and informal work remain least protected due to limited legal recognition, lack of social protection and lack of awareness.



## Most Significant Stories of change

### *Ward 14 women drive change through community led initiatives*

In Ward 14, Umzingwane, 30 young women from the Bayethe are running community projects funded from their own savings. Through Emthonjeni Women's Forum's "Amplify Her Voice" project, the women received training in financial literacy, digital skills, and mentorship. As a result women now clean at Bayethe Secondary School weekly, provide meals for students, and have revived *Isiphala sikaSobhuku*—a traditional grain reserve for widows, orphans, and child-headed families.

The women contribute R10 each per week to a savings scheme, which funds these activities and supports small business ventures among members. Every Wednesday, the group cleans the school and provides meals for day scholars who walk long distances to class. Attendance and concentration have improved as a result. *"We saw how hungry children struggled to learn,"* said member Sifanele Moyo. *"Now they come to class on time and perform better."* The women are also moulding bricks for a school kitchen to better serve the school.

# Silethemba Ncube's Story in Her Own Words

My name is Silethemba Ncube\* and I am a proud member of Ndalimane Self Help Group (SHG). Before joining the group, life was a daily struggle as I had no steady income. My family lived from hand to mouth and one of the hardest things I faced was seeing my child go to school in the same pair of shoes he had worn since Grade 1. I could not afford to buy him new pair shoes and it was heartbreaking to see him go on without the basic necessities.

Emthonjeni Women's Forum introduced the Self Help Group Approach in our village, creating a platform for economically vulnerable women to engage in weekly savings and loans, with each member contributing US\$1 each per week. In January 2025, I borrowed \$30 from our group and with it, started a small business selling potato crisps. I bought four large packets each containing 12 smaller Hello packets priced at US\$0.50 and set up a stall at my home, which is right by the roadside where many children pass by every day.

To my surprise, the business did well from the very start. I was able to sell all the 4 large packets in 3 days and reinvested the earnings and got 4 more large packets. Even after repaying the loan, I managed to keep my business running. Three months later, I'm still in business and it continues to grow. I have successfully diversified my products. In addition to Hello Chips, I now sell Matemba - dried fish, which I stock at US\$20, repackage and sell at US\$1, generating a total of US\$35 when sold out. I also purchase and resell a crate of tomatoes for US\$15, repackaging them for US\$1 each, yielding a total of US\$30 when sold out. This expansion has helped me grow my customer base and increase sales. This little venture has made a big difference in my life. When schools reopened, I used the profits from my sales to buy a brand-new pair of school shoes for my son, who is in Grade 3 at Nswazi Primary School. Seeing him smartly dressed and confident in his new shoes fills me with pride.

I always tell people, *'Even if you are to visit now, my child is a smart boy. He no longer lacks anything.'* The Self Help Group Approach has exposed me to opportunities around me that i was not aware of and this has enabled me to provide for my family. I look forward to expanding my business even further in the future.

***\*Not her real name***

# WE ARE ONE FUND

Soneni is hurt... She's afraid... She feels alone...

Every month, EWF receives more than 200 cases of domestic abuse are reported in the Matabeleland and Bulawayo region. For survivors like Soneni, the nightmare often continues long after the physical and emotional scars are inflicted. Survivors live with the weight of shame and blame, often at the hands of their intimate partners.

Emthonjeni Women's Forum (EWF) is dedicated to implementing both preventive and responsive measures against gender-based violence (GBV) while addressing behaviour change gaps for survivors. Our mandate is to cultivate a gender-just society that is intolerant of GBV. To achieve this, we focus on four key areas: a) GBV prevention b) psycho-social support c) Economic Justice and sustainable livelihoods d) Research, Advocacy and Policy Development. Established in 2010, Emthonjeni meaning "at the well" serves as a beacon of hope and restoration, a community thirst-quenching-well that sustains life. We create a safe space for women to seek support without fear of stigma, assisting them to reclaim their lives and promote positive change within their communities. In 2024 EWF provided counselling services to 853 clients with the majority being provided with either medical assistance through the provision of payment of medical bills and a welfare fund.

*My name is Soneni Ncube\*, and I live in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. For years, I silently endured physical abuse from my husband, Mqondisi Ncube\*. I reached out to Emthonjeni Women's Forum (EWF) after a friend recommended them. With EWF's support, I applied for a protection order to protect myself and my children. This journey of healing was made possible by EWF's dedication to helping women like me.*

With your support, EWF can prevent GBV, enhance women's sustainable livelihoods, and women's participation in decision making processes. Together, we can foster a future where women are free from GBV, and economically secure. To accomplish our goal of protecting women's rights and ensuring sustainable livelihoods, your funding and support in cash and in kind will go a long way in ensuring EWFs sustainable growth and efficacy of programmes. \*Not real names

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<https://weareonefund.org/#donate>

USAID's withdrawal, reduced program scale, and overall reach.


Legislative uncertainty under the PVO Amendment Act affected operational confidence for CSOs.

## Challenges


The growing demand for counselling and welfare support exceeded available human and financial resources.

Resource limitations among stakeholders weakened outreach visibility especially on issues to do with access to documentation.


# Lessons Learnt



Localisation is key to sustainability, especially as donor funding declines. Projects that involved community structures, local leadership, community ownership, succeeded beyond external funding.



Effective collaboration between civil society organizations, government ministries, and local authorities is essential for implementation and service-delivery. When these stakeholders coordinate and complement each other's efforts, they are able to streamline referral pathways, harmonize procedures, and respond more efficiently to the needs of the community.



Serialized, participatory community dialogues are more effective than once-off workshops in achieving sustained behaviour change. Regular, ongoing engagement creates space for reflection, trust-building, and collective problem-solving, allowing communities to internalise messages over time.

# Highlights of 2025





***Annual Report***  
***2025***



@emthonjeniwomen/ Emthonjeni Women's Forum



+263 785 651 529/ +263 292 882429



Tollfree (netone): 08010188



emthonjeniwf@gmail.com



www.emthonjeniwf.org



29 Jason Moyo & 1st Avenue ,  
Bulawayo  
Zimbabwe