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► Empowering women and youth: Advancing opportunities through AfDB-supported initiatives

Mid-term report of the SEDWAY
and BG4YE projects



► Empowering women and youth: Advancing opportunities through AfDB-supported initiatives

Mid-term report of the SEDWAY
and BG4YE projects¹

1. The Sustainable Enterprise Development for Women and Youth (SEDWAY) and the Business Growth for Young Entrepreneurs (BG4YE) are African Development Bank (AfDB) funded projects.

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Introduction

Empowering youth and women in Zimbabwe's agricultural and small-scale mining sectors, the ILO and AfDB projects (2022-2026) are building sustainable enterprises, fostering value addition, and creating decent jobs, strengthening entrepreneurship ecosystems and driving economic growth.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) are rolling out projects that are building sustainable enterprises, fostering value addition, and creating decent jobs, strengthening entrepreneurship ecosystems and driving economic growth, empowering youth and women in Zimbabwe's agricultural and small-scale mining sectors.

The ILO is providing technical assistance to the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) in implementing the two complementary projects: the Sustainable Enterprise Development for Women and Youth (SEDWAY) (ZWE/21/01/BAD) and the Business Growth for Young Entrepreneurs (BG4YE) (ZWE/22/01/BAD), both funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and running from 2022 to 2026.

These projects are building on the achievements of the first AfDB funded project: the Youth and Women Empowerment Project (YWEP), implemented from 2017 to 2022.

The SEDWAY seeks to harness the potential of youth and women by addressing their capacity gaps and creating an enabling environment to stimulate value addition and beneficiation along the targeted value chains to improve decent job creation for the skilled and semi-skilled youth and women. The project has three components, namely: (i) strengthening the entrepreneurship ecosystem infrastructure; business development in the horticulture, dairy and small-scale mining value chains; (ii) institutional support and enabling frameworks; and (iii) project coordination and management.

To complement the above, the BG4YE project is reaching out to additional young and growth-oriented entrepreneurs and their workers. This is aimed at strengthening their capacities in pursuing

profitable economic opportunities in a) the value chains of the anchor enterprises established under the SEDWAY projects and b) in off-farm sub-sectors, such as the light manufacturing of goods and agro-processing value addition; in order to create employment opportunities for additional young men and women in the already established SEDWAY locations. The project aims to a) enhance on-the-job skills and employment opportunities for youth (50% female); b) facilitate youth led enterprises formalization, growth and job creation, and c) enhance the capacities of business development services (BDS) providers, mentors and coaches to provide improved BDS to the young entrepreneurs. Both projects combined, provide an opportunity for the GoZ, the AfDB and the ILO to expand enterprise development, value addition, entrepreneurship and business development to accelerate the development of sustainable enterprises and the delivery of jobs for youth in Zimbabwe.

The projects

Driving economic transformation SEDWAY and BG4YE aim to strengthen value chains, create jobs, and support youth and women entrepreneurs with training, market access, and sustainable business development.

The Sustainable Enterprise Development for Women and Youth Project (SEDWAY)

The Sustainable Enterprise Development for Women and Youth (SEDWAY) Project, 2022-2026, funded by the African Development Bank, is a four-year initiative implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training (MYEDVT); the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and Small and Medium Enterprise Development (MWACSMED); the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development (MMMD); the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion (MFEDIP); the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MPSLSW), and Employers (EO), Workers (WO), and informal economy organizations.

The project developmental objective is to improve incomes and create decent jobs for women and youth in the horticulture, dairy and small-scale mining value chains through capacity development and access to markets. The specific project objectives are to:

- (a) improve women and youth entrepreneurs' access to quality business development services and markets in the fruit, vegetable, dairy and artisanal and small-scale mining value chains;
- (b) enhance access to demand driven technical and vocational skills to increase employability amongst youth (50% women) in the selected value chains; and
- (c) improve regulation and beneficiation of the artisanal and small-scale mining sector.

The project's objectives are being achieved through building the capacity of women and youth producers and creating an enabling environment to stimulate value addition and beneficiation along

the targeted value chains; and strengthening their entrepreneurship ecosystem, infrastructure, technical training and business development services. The project is active in six districts of Mutasa, Mutoko, Masvingo, Bulawayo, Hurungwe, and Umguza.

Key project components include upgrading and establishing horticulture anchor enterprises, creating safe markets, setting up a dairy anchor enterprise, promoting sustainable mining practices, and providing technical skills training for youth. It aims to tackle market dysfunction, creating economic opportunities for primary producers, agribusinesses, and workers in rural communities.

In addition, the project supports government efforts in gemstone beneficiation through promoting occupational safety and health, technical capacity development for artisanal miners, and policy development. Other activities include supporting the government in developing gender mainstreaming guidelines, a broad-based women economic empowerment framework, and capacity development of cross-border traders. The main beneficiaries are 3,000 youth and women who are gaining employment in food processing and gemstone value addition, 3,000 youth entrepreneurs receiving business management training, 500 cross-border traders, 500 farmers, and 200 small-scale miners.

Approximately 100,000 people, half of them women, will indirectly benefit from the project's value chain interventions in horticulture, dairy, and gemstones. The ILO is applying its Inclusive Markets and Value Chains Development Approach and Producer-Owned Anchor Enterprise Model to enhance the participation of women and youth entrepreneurs.

The Sustainable Enterprise Development for Women and Youth – Business Growth for Young Entrepreneurs (BG4YE) project

The Sustainable Enterprise Development for Women and Youth – Business Growth for Young Entrepreneurs (BG4YE) Project (2022–2025) complements the SEDWAY project by supporting additional young male and female entrepreneurs and their workers in the same districts. It aims to strengthen their capacities to pursue profitable opportunities in the anchor enterprise value chains and off-farm sectors such as light manufacturing and agro-processing, ultimately creating more employment for youth.

The project will enhance the capabilities of Business Development Services (BDS) providers to offer tailored entrepreneurship and business management training, along with workplace support, to assist young entrepreneurs grow their businesses. Mentors and coaches will support these entrepreneurs in developing and exploring new ventures, nurturing innovative business ideas, and validating them into the market.

The BG4YE project targets 70 youth startups and aims to build the capacity of 1,000 young entrepreneurs (50% women) by accessing BDS and networking opportunities. It also aims to create at least 1,000 jobs.

Like the SEDWAY project, BG4YE is also applying the ILO's Inclusive Markets and Value Chains Development Approach and Producer-Owned Anchor Enterprise Model to tackle identified market deficiencies. The project is also making use of other tools like the Sustainable and Resilient Enterprises (SURE), Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB), and Financial Education to develop capacities of the young entrepreneurs in their quest to grow their businesses.

Partnerships driving the success of BG4YE and SEDWAY projects

The SEDWAY project is driven by strong and dynamic partnerships that are central to its successful roll-out. It works closely with key Government Ministries—including Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training; Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development; Mines and Mining Development; and Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion—to jointly address sector-specific challenges and maximise economic impact.

The project also fosters collaboration with local authorities such as the City of Masvingo and the City of Bulawayo, as well as with civil society organizations, including the Msasa Project – which offers shelter to victims of gender-based violence, and the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA), among others. In the field of skills development, the project partners with Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions such as Masvingo Teachers College, Mushagashe VTC, Magunje VTC, Esigodini VTC, Kadoma VTC, Umguza VTC, Mudzi VTC, Nyanyadzi VTC, Sizinda VTC and Kukwanisa VTC.

Importantly, the private sector plays a vital role as both a partner and a driver of innovation and sustainability. Through these collaborative efforts, SEDWAY strengthens ecosystems that foster job creation, promote inclusive value chain development, and improve access to markets, ensuring sustainable economic opportunities for women and youth across Zimbabwe.

The Business Growth for Young Entrepreneurs (BG4YE) project thrives on additional strong partnerships that enhance entrepreneurial capacity and drive business growth, through a pool of a diverse range of Business Development Service (BDS) providers and partners. These include VIRL Financial Services, Women and Development Savings Credit Union, and Champions Insurance Company, which provide critical financial and insurance solutions to support emerging enterprises.

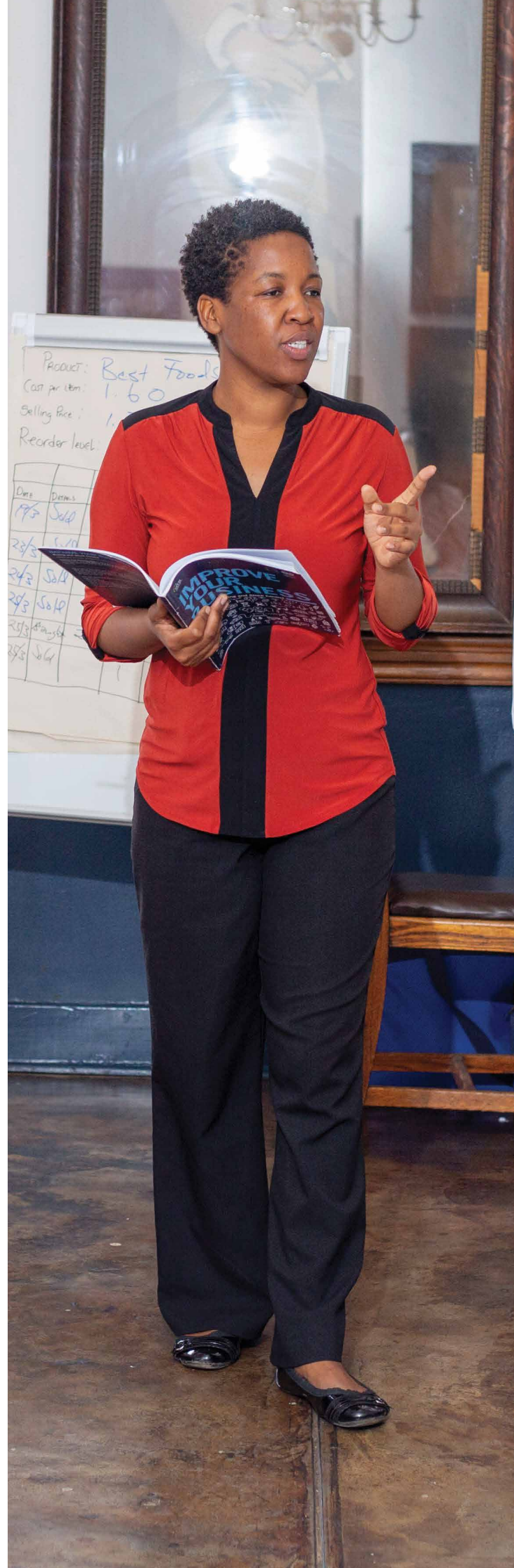
Collaboration with the Standards Association of Zimbabwe, financial institutions, and insurance companies helps strengthen business compliance, quality standards, and risk protection. Partnerships with ZIMRA and the Registrar of Companies play a vital role in facilitating business formalization and streamlining taxation processes, ensuring enterprises have the necessary foundation for sustainability.

Together, these collaborative efforts provide holistic support to youth and women entrepreneurs, creating an enabling environment for long-term business success and inclusive economic growth.

■ ■ In my government role, I engage with entrepreneurs daily. This partnership has enhanced these interactions, offering valuable opportunities to expand support and positively impact a larger number of entrepreneurs.

Kim Bikwa
Business, Cooperative & Development
Officer, Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small
and Medium Enterprises Development

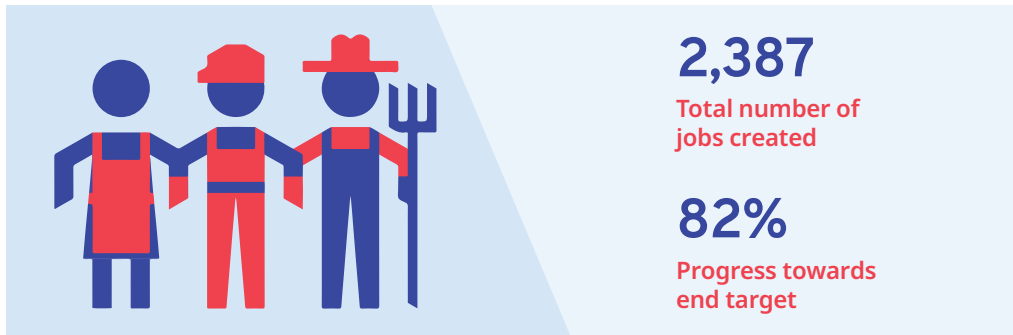
*(pictured on the right while conducting a training
session in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 2024)*



Key results - SEDWAY

The SEDWAY project is making significant progress towards its goals of creating sustainable jobs, improving infrastructure, and enhancing the incomes of women and youth in the key value chains. By August 2024, it had achieved 82% of its job creation target, with 2,387 jobs created against a goal of 3,000, and had exceeded income improvement goals through higher horticulture product prices. Average monthly income from sales of horticultural produce in Mutoko district increased from a baseline of USD90 in 2020 to USD200 by

August 2024 and the average price of banana increased from USD0.18/kg to USD0.32/kg during the same period. Key infrastructure developments, such as anchor enterprises and safe marketplaces, are on track. Training initiatives have surpassed targets, empowering farmers, traders, and miners. The establishment of policies in minerals development and beneficiation, gender inclusion, and women economic empowerment are also advancing steadily.



Improved infrastructure and incomes for horticultural, dairy and small-scale mining enterprises

Improved infrastructure and incomes

Anchor enterprises and markets: Progress on anchor enterprises construction in Hauna is at 65%, while a safe marketplace for women in Masvingo has been completed. Both outputs are on track to meet end targets.

Income from value chains: Income from sales of primary and value-added products in Mutoko rose by 111% increasing from USD 90 in 2020 to USD 200, and banana prices in Mutasa district increased from USD 0.18/kg to USD 0.32/kg, with average monthly sales of 6 tonnes, reflecting strong performance.

Market access: The number of smallholder farmers selling to big companies is at 36%, against a project target of 1000 as most farmers are still selling to informal markets where they are able to

access USD cash, while the Anchor Enterprises are still being established. Artisanal gemstone miners selling their gemstones through the Mineral Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe and their licenced buyers exceeded the target of 200 by 8%.

Youth participation in dairy production is on track.

Capacity development

Business and technical services: Capacity development initiatives under the project have delivered transformative impact, equipping thousands of youth, women, and smallholder farmers with skills that drive business growth, resilience, and improved livelihoods. Business training for youth and women-led enterprises reached 2,920 entrepreneurs (1,338 women and 1,212 men)—292% of the target—resulting in stronger enterprise management, enhanced market readiness, and greater ability to withstand economic shocks.

Through the **Community Skills Outreach Programme**, 2,256 young people (1,198 women and 1,058 men) completed technical and vocational training at TVET institutions, achieving 75% of the target. This has directly improved employability, with many securing jobs or launching their own micro-enterprises. Smallholder farmers accessing extension support and training totalled 2,306 (1,148 women and 1,158 men), an impressive 461% of the target, leading to widespread adoption of improved agricultural practices across communities. This has enhanced product quality, increased yields, and enabled farmers to command better prices.

Additionally, 518 female cross-border traders strengthened their business capacity and resilience, leveraging tools such as the COMESA

Simplified Trade Regime and the 50 Million African Women Speak Platform to expand their market reach and competitiveness.

Enabling environment

Policy and strategy development: The project has supported the government to successfully develop key policies and strategies, i.e. the Minerals Development Policy, the Value Addition and Beneficiation Policy, and the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Miners Policy, and the gender mainstreaming guidelines, with all on track to meet their 2025 adoption targets. Furthermore, the Broad-Based Women Economic Empowerment Framework has been developed and aligned with national and international standards.



Judith Zvenyika is one of 80 stall-holders who now sell their wares at the completed Chesvingo Safe Market.
© Shaun Chitsiga/ILO 2024, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Activities - SEDWAY

Formalization of banana farmers



Banana cooperative members in Hauna attending a training exchange visit. © ILO 2024, Zimbabwe

In Mutasa District, the project has transformed the livelihoods of banana farmers by supporting the formation of 61 cooperatives, now unified under a single cooperative. This initiative has formalized 2,306 farmers (1,148 women and 1,158 men), granting them legal recognition and unlocking access to financial services, training, and new market opportunities.

As a result, farmers now aggregate their produce, negotiate better prices, and secure stable contracts—strengthening their bargaining power and increasing incomes. Workshops on cooperative management and financial literacy have further enhanced farmers' capacities to run sustainable enterprises. This collective formalization has not only boosted economic resilience but also laid the foundation for long-term profitability and inclusive growth in the banana value chain.

Training of horticulture farmers



Horticulture farmers attending a training session in Mutasa District. © ILO 2024, Zimbabwe

Guided by the Market Systems Development (MSD) approach, the project in Mutasa District focused on building the capacity of key value chain support actors. Twenty-five officials from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development were trained on cooperative models and 30 Agritex officials also received training on agronomy and marketing strategies. These officials, in turn, cascaded their knowledge to 2306 (1148 female and 1158 male) across 12 wards, providing training and mentorship on cooperative formation and governance, banana production, and how to access markets.

This approach led to the formal registration of 61 banana farming cooperatives, significantly strengthening the support ecosystem for farmers. As a result, banana producers are now better equipped to improve yields, manage their enterprises effectively, and access markets, enhancing their resilience and securing sustainable growth.

953

Female banana farmers trained: (51%)

903

Male banana farmers trained: (49%)

►► The 'Start Your Business' training taught me how to calculate my costs and understand the profitability of selling my bananas directly to the processing plant.

Liberty Chinaka
Banana farmer, Mutasa District



Community Skills Outreach Programme



Obert Pedzisai was employed by Junior Construction company as a plumber after completing studies at Mushagashe VTC. © ILO 2024, Zimbabwe

The Community Skills Outreach Programme has been a cornerstone of the project's efforts to enhance youth employability, promote entrepreneurship, and support local economic development. Implemented in two phases, the programme successfully trained 2,256 young people (1,198 women and 1,058 men) across various demand-driven trades and skills that respond directly to the needs of local economies and industries.

A key feature of the programme was its focus on applied learning—80% of the training was practical, ensuring that participants acquired hands-on skills that could be immediately applied in real-life work settings. The training covered a wide range of technical and vocational skills in areas such as carpentry, welding, tailoring, motor vehicle mechanics, building, catering, confectionery, plumbing and solar installation.

Upon completion of the face-to-face training, participants were placed in internships or attachments with master crafts-persons in their respective trades. This not only consolidated their technical capabilities but also helped them gain critical workplace experience, business acumen, and exposure to professional networks.

The programme delivered tangible employability outcomes. Many trainees demonstrated strong entrepreneurial capacity, with a significant number going on to establish their own micro-enterprises after completing the attachments. These new businesses are now providing services and creating further job opportunities within the communi-

Vocational Training Centre	Female	Male	Total
Kukwanisa VTC	71	96	167
Sizinda VTC	290	128	418
Nyanyadzi VTC	59	94	153
Mudzi VTC	50	56	106
Magunje VTC	119	182	301
Kadoma VTC	83	67	150
Gokwe VTC	140	36	176
Esigodini VTC	112	63	175
Umguza VTC	55	98	153
Mushagashe VTC	86	64	150
Tabudirira VTC	51	98	149
Total	1116	982	2098

ties. Other graduates were retained as employees by their mentors, demonstrating the relevance of their skills and their value to existing businesses. In addition, several trainees secured employment with other firms or industries, further underscoring the market demand for the competencies developed through the programme.

The programme also contributed to the retooling and revitalization of participating Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions. Through the outreach activities, TVET centres expanded their community engagement, updated training methodologies to include greater emphasis on practical skills and improved their capacity to deliver demand-responsive programmes. This has strengthened the role of TVETs as critical actors in local skills development and economic transformation.

By combining skills training with entrepreneurship promotion and direct links to the job market, the Community Skills Outreach Programme has made significant strides in empowering youth, particularly young women, and fostering inclusive, sustainable economic growth. The programme's integrated approach—linking technical skills, business development, and market access—has contributed to stronger, more resilient communities, and laid the groundwork for ongoing local economic development.

Technical training of gemstone artisanal miners

The SEDWAY Project successfully facilitated a comprehensive technical training programme that empowered 216 artisanal gemstone miners (120 women and 96 men) with critical knowledge and practical skills. Delivered in collaboration with the Ministry of Mines, Environmental Management Agency (EMA), and Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe (MMCZ), the training focused on key areas vital for sustainable and responsible mining, including mining geology, gemstone identification and valuation, safe mining practices, grading and marketing of gemstones, and environmental protection.

As a result, participants enhanced their understanding of gemstone geology and improved their ability to identify, grade, and market gemstones effectively, enabling them to secure better prices and access broader markets. The training also strengthened their commitment to mine safety, occupational health, and environmental stewardship—laying the foundation for more sustainable and compliant mining operations.

Importantly, the training generated immediate impact, with 48 artisanal miners receiving targeted support to secure mining claim registration certificates, advancing their formalization and integration into the regulated mining sector. This formalization promotes adherence to national standards and opens doors to new opportunities for financing, partnerships, and legal market participation.

Overall, the initiative has contributed to building a culture of safety, sustainability, and compliance within Zimbabwe's artisanal gemstone mining community, while enhancing the economic prospects and resilience of miners and their families.



Uncut gemstones (left) compared to a finished diamond ring on finger (right) by artisanal miners in Karoi.
© Shaun Chitsiga/ILO 2024, Zimbabwe



■ ■ I am proud of how far I've come. The training didn't just give me skills—it gave me a future.

Siphilisiwe Moyo | a former student at Esigodini VTC, now running a thriving hairdressing and beauty salon.

Capacity building of cross border traders on COMESA and SADC simplified trade regimes

The SEDWAY Project significantly advanced women's economic empowerment by equipping 518 women cross-border traders with the knowledge and skills to effectively make use of the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime (STR) and the 50 Million African Women Speak Platform (50MAWSP). This was achieved through a strategic capacity development initiative that first strengthened the capabilities of Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development officials. These trained officials successfully cascaded the training across all 10 provinces, ensuring broad and inclusive reach.

The training enabled women traders to better navigate formal trade processes, reduce trade-re-

lated costs, and access new markets using the STR. As an addition, participants learned how to leverage digital platforms like the 50MAWSP to connect with networks, access business information, and identify market opportunities.

As a direct outcome, COMESA reported a marked increase in women registering and actively engaging with the 50MAWSP platform, demonstrating the training's tangible impact in enhancing women's participation in formal cross-border trade. The initiative has contributed to fostering greater economic inclusion, resilience, and growth opportunities for women traders, helping them to overcome barriers and thrive in regional markets.

Upgrading of the Mutoko Royal Fruits and Veggies (Pvt) Ltd, Mutoko district

The SEDWAY Project significantly boosted the operational capacity and market competitiveness of the Mutoko Royal Fruits and Veggies Pvt Ltd through strategic infrastructure upgrades and logistical support. The construction of a loading bay, footpath, and three greenhouses transformed the company's production and handling capacities. The greenhouses are already delivering results, enabling the company to harvest high-quality produce that meets market standards.

As a direct result of the impact, Mutoko Royal Fruits and Veggies secured supply agreements with two major supermarket chains: Choppies and TM, opening stable, high-value market channels that enhance income flow and business sustainability. To further strengthen the value chain, the project provided a refrigerated truck and lorry, improving the company's capacity to efficiently collect produce from farmers and ensure timely, quality-assured delivery to markets.

These interventions have not only expanded the company's commercial opportunities but also created stronger, more reliable market linkages for local farmers—contributing to inclusive growth and rural economic development in the district.



Dignitaries touring the coldroom facility at Mutoko Royal Fruits & Veggies. © ILO 2024, Zimbabwe



A worker operating the tomato paste machine at Mutoko Royal Fruits & Veggies. © ILO 2024, Zimbabwe

► Establishment and upgrading of rural factories for value addition and market access

Chesvingo Safe Market in Masvingo

Launched on 11 July 2024, the Chesvingo Safe Market in Masvingo has become a flagship initiative promoting women's economic empowerment, safety, and inclusion. Officially opened by Hon. Monica Mutsvangwa, Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise Development, alongside AfDB Country Manager Ms. Moono Mupotola and the ILO Country Director Ms. Philile Masuku, the market provides 80 traders (65 women, 15 men) with secure, dignified vending spaces that foster decent work and community wellbeing.

The market's infrastructure has been deliberately designed to reduce sexual harassment (SH) and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) risks. Features include improved lighting, secure entry and exit points, and designated safe zones, creating a protective environment that encourages women's full participation in economic activities.

Through strong partnerships with the Zimbabwe Republic Police (Victim Friendly Unit), Msasa Project, and the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association, the market hosts an on-site GBV One-Stop Centre. This centre provides continuous legal assistance, psychosocial counselling, and victim support services, ensuring that women traders can access justice, protection, and redress when needed.

To address childcare burdens that limit women's economic participation, the Chesvingo Safe Market integrated an ECD centre. Operated by Masvingo Teachers College with trained caregivers, and co-financed by project partners, local authorities, and community organizations, the centre offers a safe, nurturing space for children while mothers engage in trade.

The success of the Chesvingo Safe Market is rooted in a multi-stakeholder, co-financing approach, bringing together:

- **Government Ministries:** The Ministry of Women Affairs leads policy coordination; the City of Masvingo manages market operations and ensures compliance with by-laws; while the Chamber of SMEs coordinates traders.

- **The AfDB, the ILO, the City of Masvingo, and Masvingo Teachers College:** Co-financed infrastructure, the ECD services, safety upgrades, and training programmes.

- **Local NGOs and law enforcement:** Ensure sustained legal, psychosocial, and safety support, backed by ongoing awareness campaigns and reporting mechanisms.

- **Traders and associations:** Actively participate in the governance of the market which fosters ownership and ensures sustainability.

Key outcomes and impact

- **Increased safety for women entrepreneurs:**

The market provides a secure, gender-sensitive workspace that mitigates SH and SGBV risks, encouraging greater economic engagement.

- **Enhanced economic empowerment:** Women have access to quality infrastructure and services, enabling higher productivity, income growth, and sustainable businesses.

- **Reduced childcare burden:** The ECD centre allows mothers to trade productively assured of their children's wellbeing.

- **Sustainable and inclusive markets:** Strong local governance and trader participation ensure long-term market viability and resilience.

- **Strengthened legal and social support:** Continuous access to justice, protection, and psychosocial support services promotes safety and dignity for women traders.

- **Model for replication:** The Chesvingo Safe Market's success offers a scalable blueprint for other districts, supporting national efforts to create safe, inclusive marketplaces for women and youth across the country and could be adopted in the region.



Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Minister, Monica Mutsvangwa launching Chesvingo Safe Market.
© Shaun Chitsiga/ILO 2024, Zimbabwe



A bus accident while returning from South Africa to restock left Dzatutwa disabled, yet he persevered.
© ILO 2024, Zimbabwe

► Case Study

Dzatutwa Mudonhi, a 48-year-old vendor from Masvingo, has shown resilience in overcoming challenges posed by street vending and disability. For years, vending in undesignated areas meant frequent fines and instability, threatening his livelihood. However, the construction of a safe market under the SEDWAY project transformed his life. With no fear of fines, Dzatutwa now retains his earnings, sustains his family, and confidently plans for the future. Training workshops also enhanced his business skills, ensuring sustainability. His story reflects the positive impact of supportive infrastructure on vendors' livelihoods and family well-being.

Our enrolment has reached 53 children, surpassing our capacity, including six children from families of vendors at the Safe Market.

Martha Ruraba

Teacher, Masvingo Safe Market ECD Centre



Lesson in session at the ECD center (above), and a view of the ECD centre from inside the market (below). © ILO 2024, Zimbabwe

Statistics of reported cases presented at one stop GBV centre in 2024. (source: Musasa)

	Rape	Sexual	Physical	Economic	Psychological	Child Marriage	Forced Marriage	Indecent Assault	Total
January	0	6	20	27	21	0	0	0	74
February	3	2	21	29	38	1	0	0	94
March	4	2	25	25	45	2	0	0	103
April	4	3	49	45	51	7	1	0	160
May	5	4	26	41	35	2	0	0	113
June	7	4	27	27	36	1	0	0	102
July	7	0	40	47	34	1	0	0	129
August	7	2	30	25	46	1	2	1	114
September	5	2	29	28	26	1	1	0	92
October	4	1	37	34	31	0	1	0	108
November									
December									

Cases reported at GBV One Stop Centre¹

 **430**
Women

 **2**
Men

 **11**
Children

Fruits and vegetables value addition centre in Hauna, Mutasa District

Significant progress has been made at the Hauna Banana Chips Production Plant in Q3 2024. The factory shell and plumbing were completed, awaiting a completion certificate from Mutasa Rural District Council. The remaining tasks included installing wheelchair ramps, a 200-meter 11kVA power line with a 200KV substation, and water supply infrastructure. Delays at Treasury in disbursing the required funds for a solar-powered borehole hindered the completion of this part of the project. Equipment supplier selection for the 500kg/hr banana chips production line was finalized, with contracting planned for early Q4.



An outside view of the completed Hauna banana processing plant building. © ILO 2024, Zimbabwe

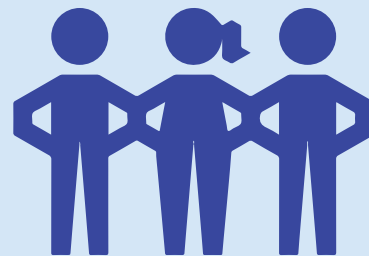


"We are thrilled about the upcoming banana processing plant where our bananas can be stored in cold rooms or value added to prevent rotting." Shadreck Bvute, banana farmer, Honde Valley

► The 'Start Your Business' training will boost banana supply to the processing plant. During training, we showed farmers how delivering their produce to the plant can increase their profit margins.

Tafadzwa Musademba

Business & Cooperative Development Officer, Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development.



65

Total number of cooperatives that form the Management Union at the processing plant

1,500

Total number of women cooperative members under the Union

700

Total number of men & youth cooperative members under the Union

Through joining fees, monthly subscriptions, and share capital the Union has managed to raise **US\$2,890** as of November 2024. They expect to have raised a total of US\$250,000 by Q1 2025.

Vehicles to support government activities



Minister of Mines and Mining Development, Winston Chitando receives a vehicle on behalf of the Ministry presented by ILO Country Director, Philile Masuku
© ILO 2024, Zimbabwe



Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training, Solomon Mhlanga receives vehicle on behalf of the Ministry presented by ILO Country Director, Philile Masuku
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Click here to watch event video:



The ILO handed over two vehicles to enhance the operational capacity of the Ministry of Youth Empowerment Development and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development. The Ministry of Youth truck is supporting the fruits and vegetables hub at Tabudirira to improve sourcing from local farmers and ensure efficient delivery to markets. This vehicle is expected to boost livelihoods for youth and women entrepreneurs in the Mutoko area by strengthening access

to markets and contributing to the sustainability of their enterprises. The vehicle to the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development is to assist with, increasing surveillance and monitoring artisanal mining activities. This vehicle is essential for promoting occupational safety and health (OSH) and supporting sustainable mining practices, which aligns with the Ministry's goal of formalizing artisanal mining.

Key results - BG4YE



The Business Growth for Young Entrepreneurs (BG4YE) project is making notable strides in empowering youth and women by enhancing entrepreneurial and employment opportunities. By leveraging partnerships with 17 Business Development Services (BDS) providers and key government ministries, 714 entrepreneurs (473 women and 241 men) have been trained, employing 1,411 people. Participants have improved skills in marketing, costing, and record-keeping, fostering resilience and business expansion.

The presence of prominent figures in Bulawayo such as Judith Ncube, Minister of State for Bulawayo Metropolitan and Bulawayo Mayor David Coltart, who presided over some of the

training sessions increased visibility of the project. Furthermore, coverage from The Chronicle, The Sunday News, CITE News, ZBC, and independent journalists amplified the project's visibility.

In addition, the programme has strengthened collaboration among public and private stakeholders, creating opportunities for entrepreneurs to engage with formal economy organizations, value chain actors, and public institutions.

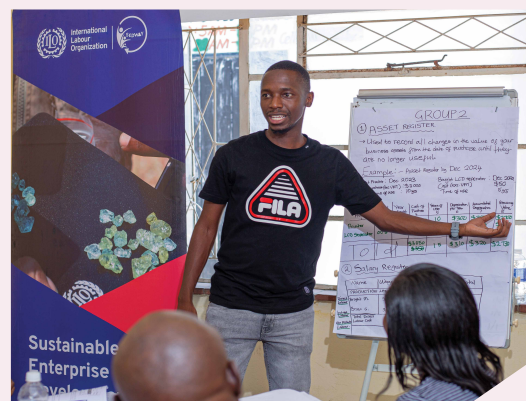
Provincial heads from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development officiated at training sessions in Hauna, Karoi, Mutare, and Mutoko, further bolstering and widening the networks.

Rationale for trainers conducting SIYB training of entrepreneurs for certification

The sustainability of the BG4YE initiative is ensured through the strategic training of Business Development Services (BDS) providers. These entities, such as the Tariro Youth Development Trust in Masvingo, play a pivotal role in scaling-up and replicating the programme across other districts. Tariro Trust, focused on youth empowerment through creative entrepreneurship and innovation, has gained approval from the ILO to make use of SIYB tools to extend this training model.

The certified SIYB trainers enhance SMEs' sustainability by equipping them with skills to create actionable business plans, conduct market research, and implement post-training activities. Structured follow-ups ensure these plans are realized, fostering business viability and growth. This approach enables SMEs to strengthen their operational and financial management while receiving expert coaching.

The focus on training certified trainers builds a scalable system, creating a nationwide pool of SIYB trainers. These professionals ensure continuous support for entrepreneurs, promoting entrepreneurship as a catalyst for economic development. This method therefore guarantees programme longevity and widespread impact, empowering local enterprises to thrive in diverse sectors.



Bright Munamba, a Youth Development Officer from Tariro Youth Development Trust conducting an SIYB training session in Masvingo. © ILO 2024, Zimbabwe

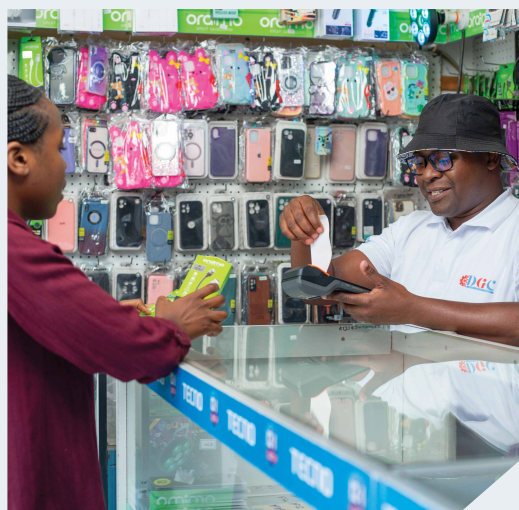


Youth entrepreneurs in a SIYB training session in Masvingo. © ILO 2024, Zimbabwe

► Case study

We started as street vendors, selling phones and accessories, but lacked formal structures for 15 years. The BG4YE programme and SURE training helped us formalize by registering with the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe, and Mutare City Council. This boosted our credibility and shifted our mindset from vendors to entrepreneurs with increased potential for growth.

IYB training improved our costing, marketing, and record-keeping, enhancing profits. Formalization opened doors to larger contracts, like supplying schools. With BG4YE mentorship, we are planning to expand into wholesaling and bulk importing to scale our business further.



Joseph Machipisa (right) recording a sale and printing a receipt using a newly implemented inventory management machine. This system, introduced after his IYB training, has revolutionized his record-keeping, enabling accurate tracking of stock movement and improving operational efficiency. © ILO 2024, Mutare, Zimbabwe

► Case study

Welcome to Yoyo's Yummy Cakes and Yoyo's Baking Supplies! We offer every kind of pastry and savouries, as well as baking tools, ingredients, and party supplies. My journey began during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading me to open my first shop in Mutare. After completing the SURE and IYB training, I revamped my branding, by creating a well-branded shop front and uniforms for my staff, which has significantly increased walk-in traffic. The training also inspired me to diversify my products, and I invested in new bakery equipment from China. My business has grown as I have embarked into training would-be bakers. I have trained over 100 bakers in Mutare and I'm expanding to other areas close to Mutare like Rusape and Chimanimani, where I am getting inquiries and bookings to train bakers.



Yolanda Mambeu, founder of Yoyo's Yummy Cakes and Yoyo's Baking Supplies. © ILO 2024, Mutare, Zimbabwe



Juliet Samson repairing a vehicle. © ILO 2024, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

► Case study

I transformed Chics Motor Repairs from basic mechanical services into a full-service business offering vehicle recovery and car-breaking services. Starting as a home-based venture, my husband and I formalized the business after the SURE training, which emphasized diversification. We added towing services with a tow truck and expanded into transportation service with a 24-seater minibus.

The EYB training inspired new services like dismantling vehicles, while IYB training improved our financial management and record-keeping. We are now working towards establishing a one-stop shop for towing, repairs, spares, and car washing.

► Case study

I am Gracious Shonhai, a 29-year-old agro-entrepreneur from Masvingo, leading Graniez Private Limited. My business spans from poultry and goat farming to retail and hospitality, including a restaurant. Starting with college burger sales, I expanded to farming and created direct markets for my produce.

The 'Improve Your Business' training revolutionized my operations, clarifying the importance of VAT compliance and improving stock control and marketing. Graniez now employs 22 young people, mostly women, which addresses youth unemployment. My dream is to grow Graniez into a billion-dollar enterprise, fuelled by skills gained in business management.



Gracious serving customers at her restaurant. © ILO 2024, Masvingo, Zimbabwe

Challenges and lessons learned from the field

Challenges:

Appetite for training: Many youth entrepreneurs identified lack of knowledge as a major growth barrier. Despite the impactful training sessions, several participants expressed the need for longer or more frequent sessions to fully grasp concepts and apply them effectively.

Limited access to capital: Entrepreneurs face significant financial constraints, which hinder their ability to scale businesses, even after acquiring the necessary skills and plans through training.

Market competition: Vendors at Chesvingo Safe Market struggle with competition from illegal vendors operating nearby. This situation threatens profitability and occasionally forces vendors back into informal vending locations to sustain their livelihoods.

Geographical challenges: Some entrepreneurs in remote areas struggle to access training and market linkages, limiting their ability to fully benefit from the project interventions.

Institutional limitations: Partner institutions occasionally face resource or capacity constraints in delivering Business Development Services (BDS) at scale.

Lessons learned:

Tailored training is key: Customizing training to the specific needs of youth and women entrepreneurs increases relevance and impact. Extending the training duration could be useful in further enhancing outcomes.

Financial inclusion is crucial: Stronger partnerships with financial institutions are needed to provide affordable and accessible funding mechanisms for start-ups and small enterprises.

Market regulation enhances sustainability: Addressing unfair competition through local authority enforcement can bolster the success of initiatives like the Safe Market initiative.

Integrated approaches yield results: Combining entrepreneurship training with mentorship, market linkages, and policy advocacy strengthens the overall ecosystem for youth-led businesses.

Monitoring and flexibility are vital: Regular field visits and stakeholder feedback help identify gaps and refine interventions, ensuring the project adapts to emerging challenges and opportunities.



Stakeholders attending a review workshop to update the National Broad-Based Women Economic Empowerment Framework (BBWEEF) in Harare. © ILO 2024, Zimbabwe

This publication captures the impact and progress of the SEDWAY project, highlighting key achievements, success stories, and lessons learned in empowering local communities through sustainable enterprise development. It showcases real stories of resilience and growth, offering a glimpse into future plans aimed at continued economic empowerment, capacity building, and sustainable development.