

A close-up photograph of a woman and a young girl. The woman, in the background, has a serious expression and is wearing a brown knitted beanie and a bright green t-shirt. The young girl, in the foreground, is also looking off-camera with a serious expression. The background is blurred, showing an outdoor setting with some structures.

TRANSFORMING A NATION THROUGH GENDER EQUALITY

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International Labour Organisation

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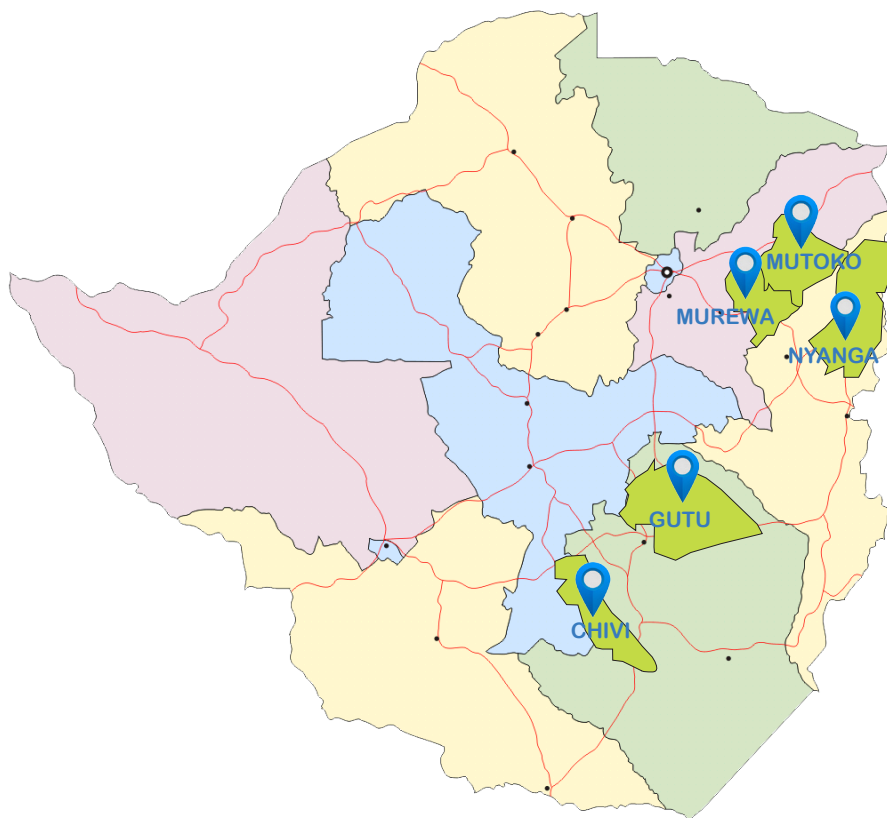
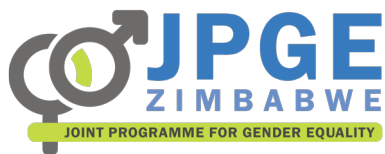
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Harare, Zimbabwe



FOREWORD

As the world is working towards ‘ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls’ and the commitment to ‘leave no one behind’ under the Sustainable Development Goals, there is still a lot to be done for women at the grassroots, where issues of human rights continue to be secondary to day-to-day survival in poverty stricken environments. The UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality (JPGE) presented an opportunity to work with such women in a two-pronged approach focusing on Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) and promoting Women Workers Rights (WWR).

Under the WEE component, five groups averaging 60 women in selected districts in Zimbabwe were mobilized, to engage in economic empowerment projects informed by the ILO’s Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) methodology. This enabled women to access skills in intensive agriculture production, business development services, value-addition and diversification in production, and linkages

established to micro-finance services and markets, amongst others. The projects also mainstreamed training on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), HIV and AIDS, labour standards and sustainable agro-activities.

The impact of this JPGE component ranges from direct economic benefits, where crops were produced at a profit; enhanced self-confidence and personal mastery; improved nutrition for families and experienced a reduction in gender-based violence through orientation in gender equality of male members of the communities.

The women and surrounding communities also benefitted from infrastructure and value-addition equipment investments on each of the project sites.

The TREE methodology requires working with local traditional leadership, and government structures at provincial, district and ward levels. This approach has



facilitated for wider reach of capacity development initiatives and sustainability of programmes beyond the project time frame.

The JPGE also promoted WWRs through advocacy towards lawmakers, government, and decision-makers for the ratification and application of the ILO's Gender Equality conventions. The key areas included promotion of the non-discrimination in employment, equal pay, maternity protection and workers with family responsibilities. In addition, the collaboration with the law society built a platform for promoting WWR in law and practice and addressing a major cause of disempowerment of working women.

Several studies were conducted which presented evidence on the situation of women workers' rights for those in both the formal and informal sectors in Zimbabwe. Manuals and information guides were also developed under this programme to raise awareness and strengthen collective bargaining efforts for gender equality in the workplace, including for domestic and migrant domestic workers.

The ILO acknowledges and appreciates the partnership with the Governments of Zimbabwe and Sweden, mainly through the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development and Sida respectively; and the participating UN Agencies –UNDP and UNWOMEN.

The ILO has gained immensely by being part of the JPGE. Valuable lessons learnt from implementing this programme will enhance future work on women economic empowerment and women workers rights, for example, strengthening the monitoring systems to also include other pathways of change, which are not monetary.

Looking into the future, the ILO will continue to advocate for decent work for all, including women and youths, as well as holistic programmes that focus on both social and economic empowerment that results in full and productive employment.

Hoplang Phororo
Director
ILO CO Zimbabwe and Namibia



Gender Transformation¹

Taking over new responsibilities



Gender transformation training activities were conducted at all levels to facilitate a conducive environment for women to have an opportunity to operate freely, whilst exercising their rights. The objective was to help them gain knowledge and understanding to influence positive change beyond their households and inspire them to grow and take up positions of leadership in the community. The training targeted both men and women. On the part of men, the focus was on dealing with issues of masculinity, reducing gender based violence, improving domestic relations and re distributing domestic chores to allow men and women to share unpaid work, so that women have greater flexibility to be economically active. As a result of the training, influential men such as traditional leaders, including Sabhukus (village heads) and local government officials, who benefited from the training now actively advocate for equality in the community.

On the part of women, the training focused on personal mastery, self awareness, confidence building and leadership. The aim was to help them build confidence and become more assertive, as they launched their income generating projects, as well as encourage them to take up leadership positions in the community. They also received training on Women Workers Rights to enable them to provide decent working conditions, as employers and employees in their newly ventured economic activities.

Photo : Pilot Gonese
and his wife Maria
Mabika at the Westerly
Horticultural project in
Gutu district



Men helping women in physically intensive labour chores.

In many rural communities in Zimbabwe, women remain economically disadvantaged and marginalised, as a result of social and cultural norms that perceive them as incapable of engaging in meaningful economic activities. In such communities, the prevailing attitude and behaviour has been to exclude women from having access to resources and from exploiting economic opportunities that could potentially empower them. In some instances, this situation is exacerbated by the fact that women are not assertive, lack confidence and

self-belief, as well as knowledge of their rights, as they have not had the opportunity to go to school because of a “cultural” preference to educate boys over girls. This lack of knowledge and confidence by the women themselves has generally been interpreted as an “inability”. It has played a key role in reinforcing the thinking that women have no capacity to become key economic players and to contribute meaningfully to the development of their communities, alongside their male counterparts.



Photo : A couple working in a field in Nyanga district

The Joint Programme For Gender Equality offered Gender Transformation training, which was a significant game changer in this programme. The training sessions helped, not only to expose these negative perceptions but went further to equip the participants, both men and women, with an understanding of gender equality. It was this understanding and appreciation of gender equality that triggered a mindset change paving a way for the successful generation of incomes, projects in poultry,

Photo : Joshua Mazvaradaka and his wife Viola Hodzi looking at their vegetable garden at Nyamukovera Project site in Murewa



Gender transformation training registers many success stories

horticulture as well as value addition in the different districts.

“I used to think that a woman was below me and could never be equal to me as a man. If my wife tried to behave as if she was equal to me I used to beat her up” said Pilot Gonese who is now very supportive of his wife’s economic empowerment at the gardens in Gutu district.

As a spouse who has become a male champion, Gonese regularly offers his services to do any work that is labour intensive and visits the gardens regularly to help his wife with any other work that may be required.

He also takes time to speak to other men in the community about the knowledge he has acquired on gender equality and the need to recognise women as equal partners who have the same rights as man and deserve to be given opportunities for empowerment.

“Right now when my wife tells me that she is going to work I don’t question her or deny her from going because I know that at the end of the day she is going to produce good results as she is the one providing for the family. Previously, I used to think that my wife did not have the capacity to think constructively or act decisively without my input”, said Sedze.

Kuziva Sedze in Nyanga district was brought up to believe that only men have the ability to provide for their families. However, he has been enlightened through the gardening project and now appreciates that when given access to economic empowerment, women can perform just as well as men and are able to equally provide for their families.

The gender transformation training helped Joshua Mazvaradaka in Murewa district to appreciate that both men and women have the capacity to do any kind of work. This was contrary to his previous

A photograph of a man and a woman working together to move bricks at a construction site. The man, wearing a striped shirt, is handing a brick to the woman, who is wearing a pink shirt and a pink hat. They are surrounded by large stacks of red bricks. The background shows a hilly landscape under a clear sky.

Photo : A couple moving bricks which were used to construct a toilet and a store room for the Nyamukovera Project site in Murewa.

belief that women were “designed” to do domestic chores, and that the economic sphere was a preserve of men.

“Previously when my wife asked me to fetch water from the borehole I could turn back and shout, you must be joking I don’t have to do that, that’s being crazy!” said Joshua.

“However, now, after going through the gender equality course, I can fetch water, do the laundry, give the children a bath or even cook, so that when my wife gets back from the gardens, there is some food ready for her to eat”.

On the part of the women, the training they received and the financial freedom they acquired from being able to generate an income for their families has given them such a confidence boost, that many of them have been appointed to leadership positions within their communities.

These range from being secretaries and chairpersons of different clubs and committees, including school development committees within their communities. Joshua’s wife, Viola Hodzi is now secretary to Village Head Gatsi in Ward 1 Murewa district.

As male champions traditional leaders have become the custodians of Gender Equality

Traditional leaders play an important role in African communities. In addition to governing their communities, they have the power to allocate land, are responsible for settling disputes and ensuring that cultural norms and values, which were handed down by their forefathers, are preserved. They inevitably become custodians of culture.

Madamombe is a Headman and a traditional leader in Ward 1, Murewa district. According to his knowledge of African tradition, women have always been at a lower level and are culturally expected to be subservient to men. As an African man, Madamombe has always held the view that whatever he says, a woman must obey without questioning, as the African culture left no room for her to make any contributions let alone decisions.

Similarly, Mugariwa Gonese, a traditional leader in Gutu district did not believe that a woman was capable of anything. He believed that men were the only human species endowed with the capacity to work. According to his understanding, women were not supposed to go out on their own, as they would be tempted to fall in love with other men. When both Madamombe and Gonese were initially told about the Joint Programme for Gender Equality, their first reaction was that it would be a waste of time and resources, as women were not capable of performing any economic activities. A further invitation to attend the gender transformation training as a prelude to the economic empower-



Mugariwa Gonese, one of the traditional leaders who facilitated the allocation of land for the Western Horticultural Project in Gutu District.

ment programme seemed like an insult.

“I found the training very difficult, at first because it sounded as if they were trying to reduce me to the same level as a woman” said Madamombe.

However, as the training progressed, he realized that the objective was completely different. “I began to see that the training was there to help me understand that whatever it is that I can do, a woman is also capable of doing it”

It was from that time that Madamombe began to reflect on the contribution that a woman makes at a household level alone.

“I realized that most of the times men are either hanging out doing nothing or at the township having fun with their friends, whilst women were either working at home, gone out to look for firewood or searching for work to do on farms in exchange for food to feed the family,” he added.



Headman Madamombe, traditional leader and male champion addressing fellow men in Murewa District on gender equality.

Men championing change

As Headmen in Murewa and Gutu respectively, both Madamombe and Gonese were responsible for issuing out land on which the gardening projects are being implemented. Three years later, they are both astounded at the progress that the women have made and the transformation that is being experienced in the communities.

“I can testify that there has been great change in the community. The women selected for this programme were some of the poorest in our community but today, they have bought livestock, have built houses and toilets and can afford to pay school fees for their children,” said Gonese.

The communities where the women were selected from had some of the highest incidents of GBV. In Murewa district, the traditional leadership had gone to the extent of constructing a police post in Ward 1, to allow the police to be closer and intervene speedily. However, through the training and as a result of the income that the women are now generating from the gardening project, Madamombe has

not had to arbitrate in an issue concerning GBV in a long time. He said that both the women and their spouses seem to be working together to uplift their families.

“Perhaps the greatest transformation has been in my family. As someone who makes decisions for my community and arbitrate in various cases, I now request my wife’s views, which I seriously consider before I come up with a position. My wife now has the right to speak and to make decisions and where she has given me good ideas, I am quick to complement her”, he added.

Madamombe has since introduced a quota system in his committees where 50% of the members are women, to ensure that whatever decisions are made reflect gender sensitivity. In the meetings that he chairs, as a traditional leader, he also allocates time to talk about the importance of gender equality. He sits on the gender steering committee in Murewa district, as a secretary and is working with organisations in the district, as a gender activist.

Strengthening of local Government Structures 2

Sustainable Partnerships



The Joint Programme for Gender Equality was implemented through government structures from ministerial level, provincial, right down to ward level in the different districts. At each level, i.e. the provincial, district and ward level, an implementation committee was put in place to support the implementation of the programme. The District Implementation Committee (DIC) for example met regularly in each district to make decisions, carry out monitoring visits to sites as well as provide technical input and support during the implementation process. The DIC was chaired by the District Administrator and the committee consisted of officials from various ministries who provided technical input as needed.

The Ward Implementation Committee (WIC) provided day to day support to beneficiaries through the “influential women” initiative. This is an initiative in which women of influence were selected from different communities to visit the groups of women on a regular basis providing encouragement, acting as role models, advisors as well as a linkage to the DIC.

This participatory approach helped to build a sense of ownership of the project at each level, reinforced project management skills at the local level, created transparency and has largely contributed to the sustainability of the project operations beyond donor support.



To successfully implement the Joint Programme For Gender Equality, the ILO worked with key partners amongst them the government of Zimbabwe through the Ministries of Women Affairs Gender and Community Development, Agriculture Mechanisation and Irrigation Development as well as the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises. Implementation and monitoring of day to day activities on the ground was coordinated through already existing government structures from provincial right down to ward level. At the centre of the coordination process in each district, was the District Administrator, DA, who chaired a committee known as the District Implementation Committee, (DIC).

Ordinarily, the role of a DA is to coordinate government activities in each district. The DIC, which the DA chairs is a committee comprising a membership of different government ministries each bringing expertise and technical know how. As a committee, the DIC is not as active when resources are not forthcoming to support the implementation of projects in communities. Phyllis Fungai Banhwa, Assistant DA in Murewa said that the JPGE had played an important role in resourcing and activating the DIC.

“The subsequent monthly meetings, which the DIC held after the project launch helped to cement relationships enabling the DIC members to work alongside each other effectively to deliver the required service and technical expertise to beneficiaries timeously.” said Banhwa.

Members of the DIC also received training on gender equality, personal mastery and business entrepreneurship, amongst others which helped to build the capacity of the members. One of these is Simufuse Nyamadzawo who co-ordinates the activities of the beneficiaries as field officer and reported to the DIC in Chivi District.

Photo : Shara from the irrigation department in the Ministry of Agriculture mapping out a path to install irrigation pipes in Murewa district.



Government involvement is the key to successful project implementation in rural projects

“Training on record keeping and Internal Savings and Lending also helped me as I am applying this in my personal life. I was also given a bike and trained how to use it. I never thought I could ride a bike in my life. Many people were surprised to see a woman in the rural areas riding a bicycle”, she said. The programme also helped to strengthen government structures through regular meetings, writing of reports and providing feedback and sharing information between the various government departments.

As a committee, the DIC reported through its normal government structures to a Provincial Implementation Committee, (PIC), which was chaired by a Provincial Administrator, who in turn reported to a National Steering Committee chaired by the Minister of Rural Development and had the Ministry of Women’s Affairs Gender and Community Development, as its secretariat.

Photo : Simufuse Nyamadzawo a Field Officer with the Ministry of Gender , Women’s Affairs and Community Development rides her bike to the Mhiti Project in Chivi District.





Photo : Former District Administrator for Murewa Maxwell Mabhuo chairs a meeting with some members of the DIC.



Skills Transfer

Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (Tree)

3



The Joint Programme for Gender Equality, (JPGE), used a methodology known as TREE, Training for Rural Economic Empowerment, to transfer skills to the beneficiaries. TREE is a methodology for promoting the economic empowerment of the rural poor, a process of building capacities of the beneficiaries equipping them with expertise, so that they can exercise control over their own lives. The approach emphasizes the role of skills and knowledge for creating new employment opportunities for the disadvantaged. TREE is based on matching skills to the identified employment and income-generating opportunities at the local level.

In the JPGE, the focus was on strengthening and building competence and knowledge of effective farming methods for the three hundred and twenty women, (320), who were beneficiaries of this programme. Agricultural Extension (Agritex) and Livestock Officers from the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation development offered training to the women, who were in groups of fifty to sixty, (50 – 60) . Working in groups and on common sites provided the women with practical learning ground on what crops to grow, the seed varieties and fertilisers to use, what chemicals to apply and how to tend for the crops from nursery stage through to harvesting. The women are now using this knowledge to transfer skills to other family members and are also applying it in their individual farming plots at home. Field days are a common practice on the Zimbabwean calendar and are used to show case crops grown under best agricultural practices. They are also used as a platform to share technical and farming skills that give rise to good crops and higher yields.

A photograph of a man and a woman standing in a field. The man is on the left, wearing a dark jacket, and the woman is on the right, wearing a light-colored jacket. They are both looking towards the camera. The background shows a green field with some trees and mountains in the distance.

Photo : Pfungwa Sitima Shamu poses for a photo with her husband at her plot

Pfungwa Sitima Shamu is one of the sixty women who is part of the Nyarumvurwe Cooperatiive in Nyanga district. Pfungwa benefitted immensely from the TREE methodology which was used to equip beneficiaries of the Joint Programme for Gender Equality with skills and knowledge on farming.

At a field day held in Nyanga to show case crops grown under the Joint Programme for Gender Equality, the sixty women who make up the Nyarumvurwe Cooperative were each asked to stand along their crops in the garden as a team of five judges (made up of Agritex officers) went around to select the best crops grown from all the beneficiaries. The judges were focusing on presentation and spacing of the crops, pest management, fertilization as well as water management.

Out of a total of 10 winners Pfungwa took the first prize as her crops stood out to have been the best.

“I was so excited when I heard my name being called. I won a rainsuit which I will use when I am in the garden as part of the Occupational Safety and Heath protective wear. What really changed everything for me was the skills transfer from the Agritex officers because it is from there that I learnt best agricultural practices which included knowing the season you are in, the crops to grow, what fertilizer to use, how often to apply chemicals on my crops and so on,” said Pfungwa.

In addition to the rain suit Pfungwa also won a trip to the Harare Agricultural show where she learnt a lot more on how to farm as a business.

From subsistence farmers to farming as a business 4

Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) and Internal Savings and Lending, (ISAL)



In addition to receiving skills on farming, the beneficiaries also received training in farming as a business using the “Start and Improve Your Business” tool. The training covered record keeping, marketing, business management and business proposal writing. The beneficiaries also received further training on financial literacy, including the development of bankable business proposals, as well as access to credit and credit management.

Extensive consultations were done by the International Labour Organization, (ILO) to identify potential micro-finance service providers and link them to the beneficiaries. Facilitating access to microfinance by the DIC was aimed at protecting the beneficiaries from being exploited.

In the area of financial literacy, the women were also trained to understand Internal Savings and Lending, (ISAL) and formed cooperatives, which are used to save money collectively for procurement of inputs and household goods. They form sub groups of about 5 members and collectively save money and lend to each other.



SIYB transforming and empowering rural women

For many years Fiona Fati had known no other life except that of staying at home to do household chores, such as fetching firewood and water from the river, cleaning, cooking, as well as raising her children. With no education and without any means to support her family, providing food for her children was always a very difficult and painful task.

“I was one of the poorest from my community, who was selected to benefit from the Joint Programme for Gender Equality. I learnt so many things from the training, for example that I needed to keep records, if I was to sell anything. Previously, I would just be happy that I had sold something. I also didn’t know how to calculate profits and losses,” she added.

When the ILO gave the women’s group in Nyanga their inputs, they planted onions as a first crop. Fiona sold her crop and made a profit of \$500 which she had never earned in all her life. Referring to notes from the training, she budgeted this amount carefully and was able to use some of it to buy livestock, household utensils, pay off school fees and debts and buy school uniforms. The Joint Programme For Gender Equality completely changed her life.

“When I realised that women’s economic empowerment had given me financial freedom, I noticed that at our local shopping centre, there was only one person cooking and selling sadza for lunch and so, as we had been taught, I did some research”

As a widow with school going children, Fiona decided that she was not going to rely only on horticulture, as the main source of income but was going to start another business. She applied the lessons she had learned from the Start and Improve Your Business training (SIYB) including the need to understand whether it was feasible to start a business at the place and attract customers and secondly to assess the possibility of making a profit. When she was convinced that the business would do well, she went ahead and bought cooking utensils and equipment and launched a catering business in 2016.

“A lot of my savings in this business come from the fact that I don’t have to buy most of my ingredients because they come from the garden. For example, vegetables like tomatoes, and onions I grow in the garden. I also started rearing some chickens, so now I no longer buy chickens,” she said.

Fiona makes about \$300 every month from her catering business. Out of this, she invests about \$150 back into the business and takes \$150 as profit. Her clientele includes visitors to a nearby hospital, soldiers who visit the shops regularly from a nearby military camp, as well as customers from a nearby school.



Photo : Magret Zimona and her husband Obert Masunda prepare the drip irrigation equipment to water their vegetable garden at home

How the JPGE Project changed the life of Magret Zimona

Magret Zimona and her husband Obert Masunda had never imagined that their life would change one day. They had nothing as a family and survived from well wishers, who gave them food and clothing. When the situation got worse, Magret went to look for work on farms hoping that she would be able to earn enough food for the family, as payment for a day's work. This had gone on for a long time and when the Joint Programme for Gender Equality was introduced in Gutu, the people in the surrounding community were quick to identify Magret as a woman who desperately needed assistance.

“ We were called to a meeting and they said they were looking for women between the ages of 18 and 45, who were doing nothing and whose husbands were also doing nothing,” she added.

Magret embraced this opportunity with all her heart and worked very hard, alongside 59 other women in her group to cut down trees and clear a forest from the piece of land that had been allocated for

this project. Never in her life had she been presented with an opportunity to acquire skills and when the Agritex officer began to impart skills on how to farm, what chemicals to apply on different crops and how to apply fertilizer, she noted everything down diligently and determined that she was going to maintain the highest standards, when it came to her crops. Magret also attended several training workshops on Gender Equality, SIYB, financial literacy and savings.

Each time, she got home from training, Margaret took time to transfer the skills she had learnt to her husband and soon enough her husband began to implement these standards on their plot of land at home.

“When we realised that we were making quite a bit of money from selling the crops in the garden, my husband and I decided to use some of that money to buy a water pump and drip irrigation kit to use at our plot at home, since it is near a stream,” she said.



After acquiring the equipment, Magret and Obert planted vegetables and tomatoes on a larger piece of land at home and were able to get a very good harvest. From the income generated, they bought household goods, farming utensils and livestock, which included goats and a cow.

"We used the cow to plough a field on which we grew a tobacco crop that did extremely well. This programme has completely changed my life. When I look at my children today, the food we eat and our standard of living, there is such a huge difference from how things were before. Today I can afford to pay school fees for all my three children, as well as buy them 2 to 3 uniforms each!" said Magret.

Economically empowering Magret has also made it possible for her to make home improvements at her homestead. From taking part in Internal Savings and Lending, (ISAL) she was able to raise enough money to replace her thatched roof with sheet metal roofing.

"Together with my husband we now want to build and expand our home. We are planning to do this next year when we have sold our produce from the garden at the project site, as well as the one at our homestead. We are definitely going to build a lovely home," she added.

Value Addition

Taking business a step further

5



In the area of value addition, discussions and planning processes were undertaken in three districts, namely Gutu, Murewa and Nyanga, which resulted in value addition of produce, instead of diversification into other projects as was the case in Chivi. The International Labour Organization, (ILO) purchased equipment which included solar dryers, vacuum packaging, as well as weighing scales. Upon receipt of the equipment, the beneficiaries were trained on how to use the equipment.

Value addition enabled the beneficiaries to store their agricultural produce for longer periods of time without rotting. Value addition involves using solar dryers to dry the agricultural produce and then vacuum packaging it so that its ready for the market. This is a positive development for the beneficiaries as their businesses were incurring losses from some of the agricultural produce which was going bad. As a result of value addition, beneficiaries also have the advantage of transporting their produce to different markets, which are further away from their homes.



Value addition is the key to increased profitability in rural horticulture projects

The Joint Programme for Gender Equality trained beneficiaries in all the five districts to grow a variety of crops, which included tomatoes, onions, potatoes, vegetables, butternuts, green pepper and maize, amongst others. In addition to providing good nutrition to families, the crops were also selected because of their short life cycle. The short cycle provides a good turnaround time for cash inflows. In most cases, the women were able to harvest a good crop and generate income which helped to improve their standard of living.

However the growing of horticultural produce targeted for sale at markets was not without its challenges.

“There were times when we took tomatoes to the market for example and found the market flooded with tomatoes. This situation would force us to drop the price of our tomatoes to much lower than we had anticipated in a bid to avoid making a

total loss.” said Siphwe Madziva from Westerly Horticulture project in Gutu District.

This still translated into losses for their business and each time this happened, the women were not able to take any income home. Similarly, members of the Nyarumvurwe women’s cooperative in Nyanga, most of whom grow onions, were experiencing losses as a result of failure to preserve some of their crops for a much longer time.

“Before the onion crop begins to dry, we usually remove vegetables from nearby gardens to prevent them from being exposed to diseases associated with the drying process. Previously, we would cut the vegetables into pieces and dry them in the sun as a way to preserve the crop. Last year, we had a challenge because most of our vegetables were blown away by the wind,” said Phillipa Sanyatwe.



Photo : The ILO Director Ms Hopolang Phororo and Tsitsi Midzi from the Swedish Embassy commission a Solar Dryer donated through the JPGE programme as Councillor Munyoro (in a blue T-shirt and cap) of Ward 1 Murewa looks on.

Expanding market opportunities through Value Addition

Such challenges necessitated the co-operatives to engage the ILO and request for the acquisition of value addition equipment. In 2017, the ILO bought value addition equipment in the form of solar dryers, vacuum packaging equipment, sealers and scales. These were bought for beneficiaries in Nyanga, Murewa and Gutu. Sipiwe Madziva is confident that the solar dryers will help to uplift the Westerly Horticulture Project in Gutu.

“We are happy now because we will no longer be losing money by throwing away rotten produce. After drying our crops, we package and seal them off nicely, put our label on the product so that our produce is presented well at our local market or even further afield, where prices are competitive,” said Sipiwe

Phillipa Sanyatwe sees the value addition equipment providing their cooperative with an opportunity to sell their products to big supermarkets.

“We can now sell to big supermarkets and not just to our local community. When we conducted our research, there was a lot of interest in buying our dried vegetables. The advantage with selling to big supermarkets is that you receive a lump sum payment unlike when selling to individuals, where it takes much longer to get all your money,” she added.



Diversification

Expanding sources of income

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Beneficiaries of the Joint Programme for Gender Equality (JPGE) have begun to utilise the training they received on personal mastery and business management to identify and act on new business opportunities.

In Chivi district, a group of 50 women began their economic activities with a poultry egg production project. The beneficiaries purchased the first batch of 791 pullets. The pullets produced eggs at a rate of 26 crates per day, at the peak of production. There seemed to be a ready market for eggs, and customers made bookings in advance.

However, the cooperative closed the egg production project and diversified into production of broiler chickens, where the beneficiaries are managing cycles of over 500 birds at a time at four different stages. Their output is 120 birds per week, which they sell locally. They have plans to scale up their output to 150 birds and more per week. This however requires them to find new markets, as the local market is not able to consume larger quantities.

The Chivi group has also diversified into horticultural production. The project received infrastructural support from the International Labour Organisation, (ILO), in the form of fencing for the 2.2 hectare plot, as well as a solar-powered borehole irrigation system. The beneficiaries also received a full set of tools, such as wheelbarrows, hose pipes and knapsacks, as well as initial inputs including seed, fertilizers and chemicals for their first crops.

Diversification in Chivi pays off

The group of 50 women under the Joint Programme for Gender Equality in Chivi formed a cooperative, known as Mhiti Chivi Project which is located in Ward 11. Over the last three years, this group has diversified into a number of projects, a sheer demonstration of their ingenuity and quick mindedness when it comes to taking their business forward.

Their initial project was an egg production project involving 1500 birds, which were donated by the ILO. The women used the knowledge they gained from training to find a market for their eggs within the local community and surrounding areas.

As a district, Chivi falls under agricultural region 4 and 5, which is a drought prone area, and receives low average rainfall of less than 450mm, with relatively high average temperatures at around 26 degrees celcius. High temperatures affect layers chickens negatively by increasing stress which in turn reduces productivity. When it's too hot or too cold, the chickens do not lay eggs.

Photo below : Ratidzo Njari prepares chicken waste and cow dung for the production of biogas



“Our profit margin was threatened by this reduced productivity and so, we started thinking about diversifying into another business. Whilst doing our research, we found out that very few people were selling broilers within our community or supplying to hotels and restaurants in the area. We also found out that most schools in our area have embarked on feeding programmes and so, we identified these as good markets for broiler chickens, ” said Shylet Kubvoruno.

From the fowl runs, the women were collecting a large amount of chicken waste. Instead of throwing this away, they launched a biogas project which is



Photo: A beneficiary at the Mhiti Chivi Project feeds broiler chickens

helping them to generate renewable energy to operate a stove and a freezer. In addition to chicken waste the women take turns to bring cow dung from the community to use as raw material for biogas production. Cow dung is rich in methane and serves as a good raw material for biogas. The stove is used to cook food for women, who are on duty at the project site while the deep freezer is used to refrigerate dressed chickens.

The group has also embarked in horticulture production. The ILO supported this project by sinking a solar powered borehole, providing an irrigation system, as well as inputs, which included seeds, fertilisers and chemicals. The Councillor for Ward 11, Mr Walter Nyambi, and Headman George Sarireni gave the women permission to extend the piece of land, which had originally been used solely for a poultry project to ensure that there was sufficient room for gardening projects. The enlarged piece of land was also fenced by the ILO.

“In horticulture, we are doing very well,” said Shylet. “In the previous season we harvested a good crop of beans and mealies, sold some and took some home for consumption. Because of the abundant water supply from the new borehole, our garden is ever green and we sell vegetables and no longer lack relish in our homes,” she added.

As far as the broiler chickens are concerned, the women sell about 100 birds weekly and intend to increase this number to 150 soon. For every hundred birds sold, each of the women takes home US\$35.00. The Mhiti Chivi project has completely transformed the lives of the 60 women and their families. Most of them could not even provide a meal a day but today can afford to eat highly nutritious foods, a situation which has greatly improved their health. Most of the women have bought personal assets, including livestock and household goods whilst others have been able to build new homes, using brick and metal roofing sheets.

Photo: A beneficiary at the Mhiti Chivi project waters the vegetables.



Social Impact of the Joint Programme for Gender Equality

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Family Lifestyle

The standard of living for most families has improved as the women have invested profits into food and nutrition, education for children, procurement of livestock and household goods. Some of the women have also invested in home improvements.

Social aspects

As a result of the programme, there is evidence of reduced Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the communities. Traditional leaders are witnessing fewer cases of family disputes and GBV.

Women in Leadership

Women are also taking up leadership roles in the communities for example being elected into School Development Committees.

Infrastructure

The programme has resulted in infrastructural development such as the drilling of boreholes supplying water for irrigation and for domestic use in the community.

Women Economic Empowerment reduces GBV cases

The Women's Economic Empowerment programme launched under JPGE has helped to drastically reduce incidents of GBV in all the communities within the 5 districts. Most of the men who received gender transformation training, alongside their wives confessed that before receiving training which gave them an appreciation of gender equality, they had been perpetrators of GBV. Ward 1 in Murewa district is a good example of an area, which had serious cases of GBV. Headman Madamombe from Ward 1 confirmed that the cases were so bad that at one time, they requested for the police to have a post in the Ward, as a way to discourage GBV. However, the economic empowerment of women under JPGE, as well as the training workshops have helped to drastically reduce cases of GBV. Headman Madamombe said that he has not had to arbitrate in a case involving GBV in a long time.

Borehole benefits community in Chivi

Chivi district falls in region 4 and 5, a semi arid region which receives very little or no rainfall and is characterised by very high temperatures. Water is therefore a very scarce commodity and people have to walk long distances to access water. Ward 11 in Chivi district is benefiting from the sinking of a solar powered borehole by the ILO. The borehole was sunk to provide water for irrigating a horticultural project established, as part of the Whiti Chivi Project under the Joint Programme for Gender Equality. At present, the community has access to water within the fenced project site. However, beneficiaries of the project, comprising sixty women are in the process of purchasing water pipes that will reroute the water out of the fenced project site and onto a secure public location, where the community can have ready access to water. The women said that this is their way of giving back to the community.

US \$2000 income for Julia Chidzere

Beneficiaries of JPGE implemented in 5 districts in Zimbabwe have gained financial freedom, which has completely transformed their lives. Most of the women have been able to purchase personal assets, such as livestock, farming and irrigation equipment whilst others have gone further to build new homesteads. Out of the five cooperatives formed in the 5 districts, women in Nyanga have been able to secure the highest income. Julia Chidzere is a member of the Nyamunwe cooperative in Nyanga, who has been able to raise an income above \$2000 from selling her first onion crop from the gardening project. Amongst other things, she has used this money to purchase two cows and is also now able to pay school fees for her children in addition to providing all other educational requirements. She has invested some of her money into buying and selling of clothes which business ensures that she always has money at any given time to take care of family needs.

Viola Hodzi takes acquired a leadership position

The JPGE has helped to raise the economic status of rural women in the districts where it was implemented. The women selected for the programme were some of the poorest in the communities involved. Most of them had a very low self esteem, lacked confidence and never imagined that they had capacity to rise up and become somebody. One of them is Viola Hodzi, married to Joshua Mazvavadzwa who has become a male champion on gender equality and is very supportive of his wife. The training that Viola received on personal mastery and leadership, which was part of the gender transformation training helped to change the way that she perceived herself. Today, three years after the launch of JPGE, she is assertive and has gained so much confidence that she qualified for a job as secretary to Headman Gatsi of Ward 1 Murewa district. Viola travels to attend meetings with the Headman, takes minutes and sometimes has to represent him when he is away. The Joint Programme for Gender Equality helped her to realise her leadership qualities as a rural woman, as well as her ability to make a difference in her community.

Mainstreaming Occupational Safety and Health and HIV/AIDS

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The beneficiaries were trained in Occupational Health and Safety, (OSH), in the agricultural sector. The training included handling and storage of agricultural chemicals, understanding exposure limits and cleaning up in the event of spillage. In addition to the training, district officials received tools for OSH, as well as checklists. As a result of this training, beneficiaries are able to identify potential hazards and rectify them with speed to forestall fatalities.

The OSH training helped the project members to increase productivity, preserve quality of their produce, prevent fatigue and reduce work related accidents. The project members are in turn sensitizing their communities on safety and health. The Joint Programme on Gender Equality also mainstreamed HIV/AIDS awareness and sensitization focusing on prevention education. The interventions targeted the 320 women, who were direct beneficiaries of the project, their partners, their families and the community. The aim of the programme was to contribute to a reduction in HIV infections through enhanced prevention. The focus was on behaviour change among the target group, as well as facilitation of a better quality of life for workers infected and affected by HIV and AIDS through care, support and treatment initiatives. The programme content included:

- Increased awareness of HIV/AIDS and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights, (SRHR), among the project beneficiaries;
- Addressing issues of gender roles, sexual harassment and gender based violence in relation to HIV risks and exposures;
- Demonstrations of proper female and male condom use;
- Facilitation for condoms to be widely available in the workplaces and the community and
- Promotion of uptake of voluntary HIV Testing Services, (HTS).

Photo: Memory Machando showing a chart which she and some of the beneficiaries use to manage chemicals at the Westerly Horticultural Project in Gutu District



The beneficiaries of the Joint Programme for Gender Equality received skills on farming and livestock production, which empowered them economically to improved their standards of living, increase their financial freedom as well as to purchase assets and household goods. The programme offered them an initial allocation of inputs which included fertilisers, chemicals, seedlings, tools and protective safety gear.

As an organization, the ILO places a lot of importance on issues of safety, as much as it does on creating decent work. It subscribes to International Labour Standards on Occupational Safety and Health, which spells out the need for workers to be protected from disease, sickness and injury at the workplace. To this extent, training on Occupational Safety and Health was offered to the beneficiaries of the JPGE to equip them with knowledge on behaviours that could endanger their lives and their health at the project sites.

“For most of us in horticulture production, this was our first time to use fertilizers and chemicals and after applying them, we just used to leave them outside on the ground. It was through training, that we learnt about the

dangers associated with not looking after our chemicals, fertilizers and tools,” said Memory Machando, a beneficiary from the Westerly Horticulture Project in Gutu. Memory, like most beneficiaries in her group learnt that fertilizers left lying around in moist areas could either harden or develop lumps and that chemicals left on the ground were extremely dangerous to children, whose first inclination would be to drink them thereby endangering their health. The women were also taught to wear protective clothing, including face masks, gloves, work suits and gumboots when they are working and applying chemicals in the garden. For the Westerly Horticulture Project, However, the biggest change has been the construction of a storeroom which is used to store all the materials and tools used for gardening.

“The store room provides us with a safe and enclosed space to store all our things away from direct heat. Instructions on most of the chemicals say that there must be stored in a cool place and the storeroom is helping us to achieve that. Our tools are also neatly packed away at the end of a day’s work,” she added.

As a way to better manage usage of these materials, the beneficiaries have a committee responsible for managing the storeroom. The chairperson and secretary are the only people permitted to enter the storeroom to collect tools and materials needed for use by the cooperative. In addition, a chart has been mounted in the store room where items, as well as the quantities taken out of the storeroom are recorded before leaving the storeroom.

Environmental Awareness and Innovation 9

Beyond Empowerment to ingenuity



The Joint Programme for Gender Equality promoted the uptake of projects, which are environmentally friendly. These include a gravitational irrigation system, solar powered irrigation systems, a biogas plant and solar dryers. The beneficiaries also received education on environmental awareness. Some of the beneficiaries have gone a step further to become innovative. In Chivi, the women have established a complementary project of a biogas digester. Biogas energy refers to a mixture of gases produced by the breakdown of any organic matter. It is produced from readily available raw materials such as animal waste, human and recycled waste. It is a renewable source of energy with no carbon footprint. The beneficiaries of the Chivi Project installed a biogas digester at the project site, which is fuelled by waste from the chicken projects and cow dung.

The gas produced is used for cooking meals at the site, powering a deep freezer and lights for the fowl runs. The deep freezer is used to stock low value fast moving consumer goods to the community and gain an extra income, e.g. cool drink sachets and soft drinks. The biogas also generates electricity to provide lights in the fowl runs which facilitates the work of the guards during the night. In addition, as part of their diversification, the beneficiaries use waste from the biogas digester as manure in the field for the horticulture project. In Nyanga, women have come up with an innovative way to store and preserve their produce for longer periods whilst they wait for prices to improve at the market.



Photo: The onions in a storage shed where the beneficiaries apply preservation techniques using smoke to prevent them from rotting.

Nyarumvurwe Horticulture project pioneers onion preservation innovation

Ward 23 lies in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe in a district, dotted with the fearlessly imposing mountains of Nyanga. This area is home to Nyarumvurwe cooperative, which was formed under the Joint Programme for Gender Equality comprising 60 women. Since the launch of the programme, the cooperative has grown a variety of crops including beans, potatoes, onions, maize and vegetables. Out of these, the onion crop has performed extremely well in Nyanga, assuring the beneficiaries of incomes ranging from \$500 to \$2200.

To ensure that the freshness of the onion crop is preserved as much as possible after harvest, the women are employing a technology that is home grown and simple to apply. This technology, which has now been adopted by most of the beneficiaries, is helping to safeguard higher incomes whilst at the same time influencing business growth.

“We hang our onions in the kitchen and use smoke to destroy bacteria and fungi so that our onions do not rot quickly. Our technology is helping us to sell more onions than we did previously, as there are preserved for a much longer time. In the past, the onions didn’t last long after harvest and so you either had to sell

quickly at very low market prices or risk your onions rotting,” said Phillipa Nyakarau. According to Phillipa, this traditional technology was given to them by their Agritex officer. He also encouraged them not to apply too much top fertiliser as it also causes the onion to rot quickly.

South of Nyanga, in Chivi district, Masvingo Province is another group of 60 women formed under the Joint Programme for Gender Equality. Their project is known as Mhiti Chivi project. Just like their counterparts in Nyanga, women in Chivi are evolving into innovative entrepreneurs, who are developing environmentally friendly and organic solutions in their businesses.



Creating decent working conditions for women

Working for women workers rights

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Increasing evidence shows that gender inequality is bad economics. It has been shown that businesses benefit from the promotion of women in leadership, as well as a gender balanced staff. Investment in gender equality, women's empowerment and decent work for women is vital for improving economic, social and political conditions. Equality of opportunity and treatment for women and men is at the forefront of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, and is seen as a pillar of sustainable development. Researching and disseminating information on issues concerning gender equality in the world of work is a key activity for the ILO, covering a wide range of themes, including the roles of men and women in the formal and informal economy, women's entrepreneurship, social security, the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS and migration. In addition, the ILO offers advice and guidance on gender equality and gender mainstreaming to constituents to effect positive changes in their policies, legislation, programmes, and institutions.

The Joint Programme for Gender Equality worked with various key stakeholders. Amongst them is the Ministry of Women Affairs and Community Development, which was responsible for implementing the programme. The ministry has been able to integrate women workers' rights as a necessary precondition for the success of women's economic empowerment. The ministry participated in this year's CSW which had the theme 'Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work' and through technical support presented a number of papers relevant to women at work. Other significant partners include the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, (ZCTU), Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions, (ZFTU), and the Zimbabwe Gender Commission. The ILO worked to build capacity and hold dialogues with both institutions with a view to providing them with knowledge on international labour standards, gender equality and the mechanisms to which Zimbabwe is currently reporting on these standards.



Building capacity through training - focusing on promoting the application of International Labour Standards and creating an awareness of Gender Equality Standards

As part of the UN Joint Programme on Gender Equality, the ILO set out to improve the working conditions of women in Zimbabwe by engaging its tripartite constituents, Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare, Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and the Employers Confederation of Zimbabwe (EMCOZ). The engagement centred on capacity building through training which focused on promoting the application of International Labour Standards as well as creating awareness on gender equality.

As far as the ZCTU is concerned, training workshops on Women Workers Rights were conducted at the 2016 ZCTU women's conference and these helped the women to realise their rights. Subsequently, the women's conference came up with recommendations on how to cater for the needs of women at work going into the future.

These were subsequently adopted by the main ZCTU congress at the end of 2016.

"The ZCTU plans to strengthen their

rights at the Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF) to make sure that the labour legislation is enforced to protect these rights, so that workers can enjoy them," said Fiona Gandiwa Magaya.

In addition, ZCTU has formulated a gender policy aimed at ensuring that there are equal opportunities and equal treatment for both men and women in the work place. The gender policy will be shared with both men and women at capacity building workshops as a way to educate them on their rights.

In the area of collective bargaining, members of the ZCTU affiliates who are involved actively in collective bargaining received training and participated in the formulation of a gender sensitive collective bargaining manual produced by the ILO. The manual, which incorporated women specific rights within the collective bargaining agreements will have a positive impact on women especially when negotiating salaries at the National Employment Councils.



Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions - sets up a gender desk

The ILO also worked with the Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions, (ZFTU), a union that represents employees in 20 employment sectors in Zimbabwe. The ILO conducted a five day training workshop in which the participants were made to understand gender equality and inequality as well as how to mainstream gender in collective bargaining agreements.

“After the training, we realized that most of the Collective Bargaining Agreements, (CBAs) did not address gender issues. They simply addressed an employee as a man,” said Mutsa Svosve, Administrator at ZFTU.

As a result of this training, the ZFTU is taking steps to amend the CBAs. However, this process will only take place after training has been conducted in the different sectors to educate people on what gender is so that it is not misunderstood to mean women.

According to Mutsa, the greatest impact of the ILO training on the ZFTU was how it led to the formation of the gender desk, which was not there before.

“Our approach as ZFTU when we dealt with workers was simply fighting for their rights, mostly financial, in instances where they were being underpaid,” said Mutsa. Cases of discrimination in the work place, where women were denied access to work because of their sex were not addressed as will be the case from now going forward. In addition to addressing these issues, the ZFTU will also be looking at vulnerable workers such as domestic maids and educating them on their rights. Mutsa said that the ILO training had had a great impact even within ZFTU as an organization. Most of the male employees within ZFTU viewed gender as addressing issues that affect women only.

The training helped them to become aware of what gender is as well as the need to address gender inequality within ZFTU and beyond. As far as the issue of gender is concerned, the overall objective for the ZFTU is to ensure that the organization creates a conducive and equitable environment where there is no discrimination of employees based on their sex, where women have access to work, are given a voice and have access to maternity provisions.



The Zimbabwe Gender Commission steps up efforts to raise awareness on Women Worker's Rights and achieving Gender Equality in the workplace

The setting up of a Gender Commission in 2015, to address gender issues at the workplace, was a move in the right direction for Zimbabwe, as the world pushes towards achieving Gender Equality and empowering all women and girls through Sustainable Development Goal No 5. In its efforts to achieve gender equality, as well as raise awareness on Women Worker's Rights, (WWR), through the JPGE, the ILO engaged the Gender Commission, amongst other key stakeholders to find out about their mandate within the context of work. The findings indicated that the Gender Commission had a limited appreciation of issues affecting women at the work place.

"The Gender Commission had some appreciation of gender issues in the workplace but it was limited. The ILO invited the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare to the workshop and we actually had an appreciation of what the Act says. We also had an appreciation of the International Labour Standards and learnt that Zimbabwe had ratified some of these

labour standards," said Chairperson of the Gender Commission, Commissioner Margaret Mukahanana Sangarwe.

The engagement with ILO further helped to highlight issues in the International Labour Standards needing attention, such as employment and remuneration, maternity leave, as well as the issue of domestic workers. The Labour Act highlighted the need to deal with such issues, as well as equal pay for equal work and maternity leave.

As an organization that is operating with minimum resources, and yet geared to implementing recommendations from the training workshop, the Commission has begun addressing issues which have received financial support. An example is the need to increase the number of female representation on boards of companies. This issue has received financial support from the private sector in the form of a breakfast meeting to be held soon.



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