

18 March – 22 March 2024

WILD Launches the Women Leaders Sounding Board

Lorraine Phiri



On International Women's Day, the Women's Institute for Leadership Development (WILD) #investedInHer by launching the Women Leaders' Sounding Board (WLSB) at Bulawayo's Holiday Inn. The WLSB, comprising 80 women from Bulawayo, Plumtree, Gwanda, and Lupane, aims to empower women to actively develop their communities by acting as a vital bridge between women and residents in their communities and local authorities. They will advocate for improved and gender-responsive service delivery ensuring that the needs of women and girls are truly addressed.

Speaking during the launch of the WLSB, WILD Board Member Prisca Dube congratulated the women for successfully being selected to be part of the board, highlighting WILD's commitment to their development.

“We congratulate all of you for being selected to be part of WLSB. WILD is investing in you to enhance your capacities and empower you to be women that contribute towards development in your communities,” she stated.

Ms Dube underscored the importance of women’s involvement in local governance and highlighted the disproportionate impact poor service delivery has on women.

“Women’s participation in local governance processes is important in fostering gender-responsive policies and service delivery that truly addresses their needs-women often bear the brunt of poor service delivery. The WLSB will empower women to represent their communities, advocate for improved service delivery, and hold local authorities accountable

The Acting City of Bulawayo Senior Committees Officer, Mr Thando Sithole presented on the roles of Urban and Rural local authorities committees and the significant impact women's participation can have. He acknowledged the historically low numbers of women involvement in local government, resulting in their voices being overlooked. Highlighting the immense impact that WLSB would contribute towards ensuring that service delivery by local authorities is responsive to women and girls’ needs.

The WLSB wasted no time in demonstrating their commitment. They immediately joined the International Women's Day (IWD) commemorations, to advocate for the removal of barriers that hinder women's progress and advancement. Their focus centered on removing the barriers and limitations that hinder women's success.

Florence Magagula, emphasized, "It's essential to recognize and address the barriers that impede gender equality. Only then can we create a more inclusive and equitable society that benefits everyone."

Sukulohle Mhlanga, championed the inclusion of women with disabilities. "When we include the voices of women and girls with disabilities in decision-making processes," she said, "we make our communities stronger, more resilient, and more inclusive."

Patience Ngwenya, highlighted the broader societal impact of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). "GBV isn't just a personal issue," she stated. "It's a social issue that

affects us all. It's rooted in power structures and inequalities that need to be addressed. Let's work together to create a more equitable society where everyone is safe and respected."

The launch of the Women Leaders' Sounding Board signifies a promising step towards more inclusive and responsive service delivery in Bulawayo, Matabeleland South and North.

Mpilo Hospital Struggles with Food Shortages

Jacqueline Ndlovu



Mpilo Central Hospital, a critical referral center in Zimbabwe, serving Matabeleland North, South and Midlands provinces, is allegedly facing a crisis of acute food shortages. Patients are receiving meager portions further jeopardizing their recovery and straining their health struggles. This situation is particularly dire for patients from rural areas without relatives in Bulawayo to supplement the hospital rations.

As a referral hospital, Mpilo usually receives cases that may already be advanced and complex and all interventions would have failed at District Hospitals. Medical professionals warn that insufficient and unbalanced meals can hinder recovery. Malnutrition weakens a patient's immune system, making them more susceptible to infections and rendering treatment less effective.

For women like Lindiwe Ndlovu, a young mother from Gokwe, the hospital's food

shortage adds another layer of hardship. "I had my baby just a few months ago, and I'm already so weak," says Lindiwe Ndlovu, a young mother from Gokwe. "They tell me to eat well to make milk for him, but there is no food," she says, highlighting the impact on breastfeeding and overall health.

Siphesihle Dube, another patient from rural Matabeleland, echoes this concern. "Back home, I feed my family," she says. "Here, with an empty stomach, I can't help but think of their hunger too." This burden extends beyond physical needs, creating immense psychological stress for these women who are already facing illness.

Asked to comment on the issue, Mpilo hospital Chief Medical Officer, Dr Narcisius Dzvanga acknowledged the allegations but further noted that the food shortage challenges had been resolved. Attributing the shortage to logistical errors and not administrative inefficiencies.

"It's partly true. It was just a logistical error. We have the resources, it was just poor communication in the delivery system," he told CITE.

The 2024 national budget allocation of 10.8% for healthcare falls far short of the 15% recommended by the Abuja Declaration. This shortfall likely contributes to critical shortages like those seen at Mpilo Central Hospital, where patients are struggling with inadequate meals. It is important that the government prioritize healthcare funding and ensure essential services like hospital nutrition programs are adequately supported. The health and well-being of our communities depend on it.

Bulawayo's Water Crisis: Girls and Students with Disabilities Disproportionately Affected

Princess Tshuma

Water scarcity in Bulawayo is adversely affecting learners, leading to disruptions in class schedules, increased absenteeism, a decline in hygiene standards, and compromised well-being among students, disproportionately impacting girls and learners with disabilities, a study by the Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association (BPRA) has revealed.

The study titled "*A Synopsis of the Persistent Water Challenges and Coping Strategies Implemented to Avert Crisis: A Case Study of Selected Schools in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe*"

examines the various ways the current water crisis in Bulawayo impacts learners, including its effects on their physical health, school attendance rates, academic performance, and psychological well-being.

A total of eleven schools were purposely selected based on location, grading, and operator, whether council, government, or private, for comparative analysis, to come up with a generalized outcome.



Dr. Keith Phiri, a lecturer at Lupane State University (LSU) and the lead researcher, presented the findings during a Water Indaba hosted by BPRA on Thursday, highlighting a worrisome decline in hygiene standards.

“The overall hygiene standards in schools have decreased, with inadequate ablution facilities and instances where learners are embarrassed by having to be sent home for clean-up after accidents. Some schools have resorted to locking or restricting access to certain toilets” he stated.

The water crisis disproportionately impacts girls and learners with disabilities, with girls experiencing a double burden.

“The situation is worse for female learners as their sanitation and hygiene standards are further compromised since the school does not have washing facilities. When learners spoil or mess themselves up, they are sent home to be cleaned up, which is embarrassing for them.”

“Most schools do not have disability-friendly wash infrastructure. Learners with disabilities have to rely on assistance from fellow learners and staff. As a result, the challenges for learners with disabilities are much heavier, as they cannot even use the ablution facilities with dignity and privacy as they require assistance,” notes the report.

The water scarcity also results in disruptions to school schedules.

“Lessons are disturbed because learners will be late for class searching or queuing for water, and the school sometimes dismisses earlier than normal because of the shortage of water. Learners are experiencing a decline in confidence levels as they have had to compromise on their hygiene, even at home. This is evident from the lack of cleanliness amongst learners, as more are coming with unwashed uniforms,” says the report.

Furthermore, dehydration is a growing concern. 84% of schools are observing an increase in the number of cases of headaches due to the dislike of borehole water, limiting water intake among learners. The report also found fatigue and diminished concentration, especially among learners from child-headed households, who often bear the burden of fetching water for their families.

The findings emphasize the urgent need to address water scarcity in Bulawayo to ensure a conducive learning environment and well-being for all learners.

#EnoughIsEnough: Zimbabwe Needs a Collective Fight to End GBV

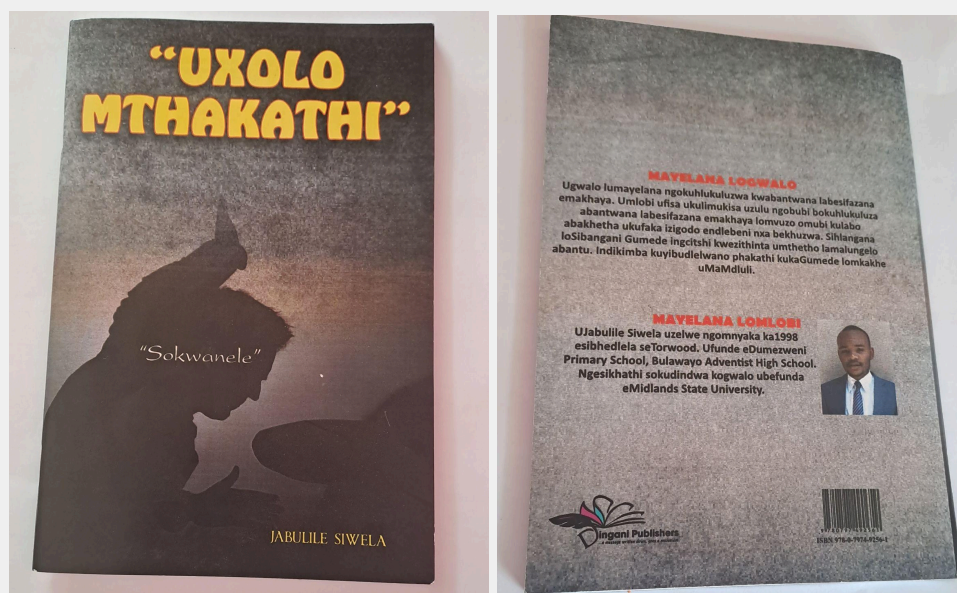
Jabulile Siwela

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a horrifying reality for countless women and girls in Zimbabwe. Shocking statistics paint a grim picture: in 2023, Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) recorded 16 444 cases of Gender Based Violence and 31 tragic deaths, a sharp rise from 26 recorded the previous year—a figure that includes my former classmate, whose graduation ceremony became a posthumous celebration.

These numbers are just the tip of the iceberg. Shame, fear, and dependence on abusers keep many cases hidden. Reports from workplaces, schools, and even families reveal a chilling reality: countless women endure harassment, abuse, and sexual violence in silence. The COVID-19 lockdowns further exacerbated the problem, trapping victims with their abusers.

The World Bank estimates 1 in 3 women experience GBV globally. In Zimbabwe, the Demographic Health Survey reveals a horrifying reality: 40% of women aged 14-49 have faced violence from partners or strangers.

But the true numbers are likely much higher. Many cases go unreported. Victims are silenced by fear of losing jobs, family pressure, or societal stigma. Reports from tertiary institutions indicate that a large chunk of female students are sexually harassed in exchange of marks by lecturers and lastly, there are cases of individuals who are harassed and violated by their intimate partners. Witnessing a surge in GBV during COVID-19 lockdowns in 2021, I wrote an isiNdebele novel "Uxolo Mthakathi." It explores the shocking reality of a respected human rights lawyer abusing his own niece. This story highlights the insidious nature of GBV, where perpetrators can be those closest to us. In most cases individuals who are respected in our society, who are expected to love and protect yet they become vultures who are thirsty for blood. Wolves in sheep's clothing. This alone made me realize that we can also collectively raise awareness and address the scourge through literature.



Often, fear and societal norms prevent both communities and victims from speaking up. By collectively challenging these norms and amplifying the voices of the voiceless, we can dismantle the culture of abuse. Individual actions are important, but a unified approach is critical. We can't settle for annual awareness campaigns. Relegating the fight against GBV to a calendar event is a hollow gesture. We need a year-round commitment to dismantle the structures that perpetuate this violence.

Here's where we can all play a role:

- **Speak Up:** Break the silence. Support victims and challenge societal norms that enable abuse.
- **Invest in Protection:** Advocate for resources and support systems that empower women and hold perpetrators accountable.
- **Shift the Narrative:** Use various means, including literature, to raise awareness and challenge the "wolves in sheep's clothing" who exploit their positions of trust.

This International Women's Month, let's pledge to act. Let's prioritize the safety of women and girls, every day, everywhere. Together, we can create a future free from GBV.

Revised PVO Bill gazetted: Implications on CSOs

Mosupatsila Nare



Picture Credit: Xinhua News

On 1 March 2024, The Government of Zimbabwe published the Private Voluntary

Organisations (PVO) Amendment Bill in the Government Gazette. The Bill was then introduced in Parliament for its first reading on 7 March 2024 and was subsequently referred to the Parliamentary Legal Committee [PLC] for consideration of consistency with the Constitution.

What is the PVO Bill?

The PVO Amendment Bill is a Bill that was initially gazetted in 2021 to amend the Private Voluntary Organisations Act [17:05], Zimbabwe's principal Act governing PVOs. The Memorandum to the PVO Bill highlights that the rationale for the amendment of the PVO Act is to ensure that PVOs in Zimbabwe are not used as conduits for money laundering and funding of terrorist activities while bringing about efficiency in the registration and regulation of the same.

Key provisions and implications

Extension of the scope of PVOs

The Bill highlights that Clause 2 will amend Section 2 of the existing PVO Act by broadening the scope of organizations that will be regulated under the PVO Act, to include NGO trusts and common law universitas organizations. The Bill also provides that any legal person, legal arrangement, body or association of persons, or institution designated as being at high risk or vulnerable to terrorism abuse may also be required by the Minister to register as a PVO. To be noted is that a declaration by the Minister for such an organization to register as a PVO will extend the Act to cover institutions that are not currently within its ambit, imposing additional control that are not currently laid down in the principal Act.

Registration of PVOs

Clause 6 of the Bill repeals the existing section of the principal Act requiring the registration of PVOs and replaces it with a comprehensive provision that brings within the scope of registration certain entities previously excluded from registration. Clause 6 provides that in so far as the Bill requires non-testamentary trusts to register as PVOs, those non-testamentary trusts which are registered with the Registrar of Deeds will be afforded a reasonable period to comply with the Act as now amended. To be noted is that due to the already excessive challenges, sanctions and onerous registration procedures in the PVO Act, most NGOs have resorted to self-registering as trusts. The proposed removal of these exemptions will therefore likely be disruptive to the work of these organizations resulting from cumbersome

registration processes.

Suspension of executive committees and appointment of provisional trustees

Clause 9 of the Bill provides for the suspension of executive committee members of PVO by the Minister. The Bill empowers the Minister to appoint provisional trustees to run the affairs of the organization for up to 60 days, pending the election of members of a new executive committee, on the basis of “*information provided to him*” that (a) the organization is not operating in furtherance of the objects of its constitution; (b) maladministration of the organization; (c) involvement in any illegal activities; or (d) it is “*in the public interest*” to do so. This clause gives an open warrant to the Minister to unilaterally replace an NGO’s governance body with state-appointed trustees and assume control of the organization, on any flimsy information.

Conclusion

From the above highlighted provisions, it can be said that the Bill is retrogressive and violates the right to freedom of association. It significantly extends unduly excessive governmental control over the functions and administration of CSOs. It establishes an unjustifiable nexus between the activities of CSOs and acts of financial terrorism. Further, the Bill presents lack of security for the continued operations of CSOs pending registration and reregistration. It also presents excessive Ministerial power and discretion to interfere in internal affairs of CSOs. The Government should apply reasonable and proportionate measures in terms of a risk-based, targeted approach in consultation with CSOs, to address any risks in the sector, and apply the existing anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism laws and frameworks to the sector.

From Personal Struggle to Community Hero: MOSH Founder Uplifts Mothers of Children with Disabilities

Lydia Banda

This Women's History Month, WILD shines a light on Mothers of Special Heroes (MOSH) and its inspiring founder, Shantell Changare. The story of MOSH begins with a life-altering event for Shantell. When her son fell into a bucket of water, it led to a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy. Through unwavering dedication and physiotherapy, he slowly regained responsiveness. But this experience wasn't just about her son. It ignited a fire in Shantell to start Mosh to support other mothers facing similar challenges, providing them with love, assistance, education, participation, and

inclusion



Over time, Mosh has achieved significant successes. We are proud recipients of the SDG award by the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce Matabeleland region and have garnered nominations for various accolades. Our community project has garnered a strong media presence through national television, newspapers, and social media platforms. We have conducted awareness programs, such as marches, home visits, and educational workshops, alongside establishing initiatives like the MOSH All Abilities Choir and visual arts classes to empower our special heroes and their caregivers.


Despite our achievements, we have faced challenges in garnering support and overcoming stigma and discrimination against people with disabilities. Mosh has relied on personal funds for its operations, highlighting the need for greater awareness and support for special heroes and their caregivers in society.

Looking ahead, my aspirations for Mosh include creating an enabling environment for special heroes, engaging in international partnerships and cultural exchange programs, establishing a state-of-the-art inclusive college, and expanding our reach to other provinces.

For those seeking to follow a similar path, I echo the wisdom of my lecturer Dr. Nkala: education is not just about personal gain, but about uplifting your community. With a heart full of compassion, unwavering dedication, and a burning desire to make a difference, even one person can ignite a difference in the lives of

others.

Public Notices



ZIMBABWE SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTIFICATION OF THE INTERBANK RATE TO BE APPLIED ON 2024 JUNE ORDINARY AND ADVANCED LEVEL EXAMINATION FEES PAID IN ZWL

The Zimbabwe School Examinations Council would like to inform its stakeholders, parents/guardians, and candidates of the Interbank rate which shall apply when making payments for the 2024 June Ordinary and Advanced level Examination Fees in ZWL.

Fees are pegged in USD however they are accepted in the currency which the parents/guardians are comfortable with. Parents who wish to make payments in USD or Rands are able to do so until the registration closing dates. Those who would like to make payments in ZWL will use the rate communicated herein.

ZWL Interbank Rate

JUNE 2024 ORDINARY AND ADVANCED LEVEL

Parents/ Guardians who wish to pay registration fees in Zimbabwe Dollar (ZWL) are able to do so during the window of 13 March to 20 March 2024. The interbank rate of 13 March 2024 will be used during this period to ensure that all candidates pay a uniform registration fee.

The exchange rate to be applied for payments is

ZWL17 558 to 1 USD

Payment period **13 March to 20 March ONLY**

Payments for the examination fees should NOT be paid directly into ZIMSEC accounts by individual parents. Candidates/ Parents should make payments to the school or centre of registration for forward remission to ZIMSEC.

Candidates, parents and guardians are encouraged to contact their respective Centres for registration closing dates to avoid any inconveniences.

For more information or queries contact the ZIMSEC Regional offices or Head Office.

ZIMSEC Head Office| 1 Upper East Road, Mount Pleasant, Harare| 0242-302622/3

Opportunities

Are you ready to embark on an exciting journey towards new opportunities and personal growth? Listed below are interesting opportunities you could apply for. Do not hesitate - Seize the opportunities and apply today!

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1. [WTO Young Professionals Programme 2025](#)
2. [Master of Leadership and Governance](#)

3. [GIZ Advisor- Women, Peace and Security](#)
4. [2024 UN International Law Fellowship Programme\(Fully Funded\)](#)
5. [Amnesty International Youth, Power and Action Training class of 2024](#)
6. [Government of Ireland Fully Funded Scholarships 2024 for Bachelors, Masters, and PhD!](#)
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