

1 May - 31 May 2024

## Persons with Disabilities welcome PWD Bill, Call for Enforcement upon adoption as Act



Persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Zimbabwe have applauded the government's initiative with the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Bill. However, they have urged for its effective implementation upon adoption as an act to ensure a tangible improvement in their lives.

During a public hearing held in Bulawayo's Lobengula Hall, participants commended the government's commitment to improving the lives of PWDs but stressed the need for action when the Bill becomes an Act.

"While we appreciate the PWD Bill, we hope it goes beyond being a well-written document," said one participant. "When the Bill becomes an Act it must clearly outline the government's responsibilities towards PWDs. Financial constraints should not be an excuse for inaction. We need concrete steps to improve our lives."

Another participant highlighted the lack of disability policies in educational institutions.

"I have attended three tertiary institutions, and two had no disability policies," they said. "The government should mandate these policies to ensure accessibility and inclusivity. The absence of sign language interpreters creates significant barriers for

deaf students.

Deaf children should not be alone at school but deserve to learn alongside every other child. Sign language should be mandatory in schools to foster true inclusivity from a young age.

A representative from Noble Hands, Marvellous Tshuma emphasized the need for clear identification of all disabilities within the bill.

"People with albinism, for instance, deserve recognition and support for their specific challenges, such as vision problems that can disrupt education," they explained. "The government's assistance is crucial to prevent school dropouts."

Accessibility and affordability of assistive devices were also raised as concerns. Additionally, participants advocated for free healthcare for PWDs and their children.

Sibongile Mbayiwa pointed out the bill's silence on caregivers of children with Down syndrome.

"These children have potential, but their education often focuses solely on social skills, neglecting holistic development," Mbayiwa said. "Financial support for caregivers is essential to ensure that they are well taken care of."

The high cost of accessible transportation was another point of contention. Participants argued that "reasonable" accessibility is not enough. PWDs often face extra charges for wheelchairs and sometimes have to pay for their assistants, posing a significant financial burden.

Moreover, recognizing the underrepresentation of women, youth, and caregivers in disability rights discussions, WILD conducted a focused WhatsApp discussion to promote gender responsiveness and inclusion in the Bill. This discussion included women and youth with disabilities, caregivers, and disability rights advocates.

Here is a [link](#) of compiled insights and perspectives from the discussion that were submitted for the Parliament's consideration.

## Lupane Residents Demand Action on Local Service Delivery

The Lupane Women Leaders Sounding Board (WLSB) hosted a meeting on Thursday to address critical issues plaguing the town, including water shortages, a failing sewage system, and poor road conditions. The meeting, facilitated by WLSB members, Siphilisiwe Moyo, Nobuhle Nyathi, Samantha Telma Longwe and Talent Tshuma aimed to empower Lupane residents to hold local authorities accountable for these essential services.

Residents voiced their frustrations over the water crisis characterized by high bills, inconsistent supply, and unequal distribution. With some areas going for weeks without running water, while others with no access at all. This lack of water not only strained wallets but also forced residents to travel long distances for water, creating sanitation issues due to a scarcity of proper facilities. The meeting also exposed the burden placed on residents in wards without water pipes, who were told to shoulder the cost of installation themselves. Adding insult to injury, residents reported inaccurate billing by ZINWA, the water authority, with assistance only available after complaints



The discussion on sanitation revealed a more alarming situation. Lupane lacks a proper sewer system altogether. This has led to overflowing septic tanks contaminating groundwater due to improper sewage management. The unsuitable soil conditions in the area further complicate the problem, as septic tanks require constant maintenance and pose health risks. Despite repeated promises, the local board has failed to take any action.

Residents also highlighted the dangers posed by the town's deteriorating roads.

“Some areas completely lack proper roads, with only pathways available. Existing tarred roads are poorly maintained, often half-covered in dirt. The absence of essential safety features like zebra crossings, signage, and speed bumps further jeopardizes the safety of pedestrians and motorists alike. Uneven surfaces, deep drainage ditches, and a lack of streetlights make nighttime travel particularly hazardous,” said a resident.

The meeting concluded with a call to action. Residents demanded that authorities take immediate steps to improve service delivery. Proposed solutions included installing solar backup systems for boreholes, drilling new boreholes, and halting the allocation of residential stands until proper water services are established. Residents also emphasized the need for ZINWA to be included in community meetings to improve transparency and address billing concerns.

Regarding sanitation, the community called for expedited repairs to the sewer system, prioritizing areas with available materials. Temporary solutions like paid services for emptying septic tanks were also proposed. Inclusivity was a key theme, with residents demanding to be part of discussions on sewer system solutions. Recognizing the need for additional resources, the meeting highlighted the importance of seeking partnerships with organizations to secure funding for improved sanitation infrastructure. Finally, promoting proper waste disposal practices was seen as a crucial step towards a healthier community.

The poor state of roads demanded a multi-pronged approach. Residents called for the installation of streetlights, road signs, and speed bumps to enhance safety. The construction of new roads and bridges where necessary, along with the rehabilitation and maintenance of existing roads, were also seen as essential measures.

The Lupane WLSB meeting underscored the importance of citizen engagement in ensuring access to basic necessities. By raising awareness and demanding accountability from local authorities, the community can work towards a Lupane

with reliable water, a functioning sewer system, and safe roads. The meeting also emphasized the need for policy changes that prioritize the needs of the people, promote transparency, and hold service providers accountable.

## **Bulawayo Women Leaders Sounding Board Convenes to Address Community Issues**

Princess Tshuma

The Women Leaders Sounding Board (WLSB) brought together 35 women from Bulawayo for a critical discussion on clean water access, reproductive health, and women's empowerment. This one-day meeting aimed to create a platform for experience sharing, raising awareness, and fostering collaboration on solutions impacting the community.

Speaking at the meeting, Ntandoyenkosi Dube shed light on Bulawayo's water woes. Classified as a "Region 4," the city experiences low rainfall, leading to uneven water distribution. This disproportionately affects vulnerable groups like women with disabilities, mothers, and the elderly, and menstruating individuals.



Prudence Mloyi highlighted the burden of inaccessible boreholes, forcing residents to purchase water at exorbitant prices (30-40 USD per 1,000 liters). The WLSB pointed out the erratic water supply schedule and the need for improved communication from the Bulawayo City Council. They proposed designated contact persons in key areas for timely updates on water supply changes, allowing for better water storage.

The discussion further addressed issues like inconsistent water pressure, water quality concerns, and extended outages. Solutions included deploying water trucks to elevated areas and offering compensation on water bills during prolonged

shortages. The WLSB also urged the council to monitor for bursting pipes to prevent contamination and address conflicts arising from water scarcity, emphasizing collaboration over blame games.

As a long-term solution, the WLSB called for the council to lobby the government for projects like the Gwayi-Shangani initiative to bolster the city's water resources.

The workshop segment on women's empowerment, led by Langelihle Gwebu, revealed challenges women face in accessing loans from women's banks. Fear, lack of understanding, and societal barriers rooted in patriarchy were cited as key obstacles. To address these issues, the panel recommended providing financial literacy training, the need for women to set clear visions, and ensuring access to resources and support to empower women for success.

Angela Sibanda led a discussion on the challenges within Zimbabwe's healthcare system, particularly regarding women's reproductive health. Issues like caregivers' attitudes impacting the quality of hospital care were highlighted, leading some women to riskier home births.

The WLSB proposed solutions like free hormonal blood tests, improved clinic facilities for testing, sensitivity training for nurses, and reinstating experienced nurses to mentor newcomers. Sukoluhle Mhlanga emphasized the need for disability-friendly maternity clinics, as current setups create difficulties for disabled individuals. Additionally, the discussion addressed the issue of burst sewage pipes and urged the City Council to prioritize repairs to prevent diseases like cholera.

The WLSB meeting served as a catalyst for addressing Bulawayo's challenges. The shared experiences and proposed solutions emphasize the importance of collaboration between residents, local authorities, and government.

Moving forward, stakeholders must work together on long-term solutions. This includes improving water infrastructure, enhancing healthcare services, and providing comprehensive support for women's empowerment initiatives. By implementing these solutions, Bulawayo can strive towards a more equitable, healthy, and empowered future for all.

# Rural Women in Matabeleland Weave Empowerment and Sustainability Through Handmade Crafts

Princess Tshuma



In the heart of Nkayi, Lupane, and Bubi, a remarkable group of women is transforming their rural communities through the power of creativity and tradition. These resilient and resourceful women are turning locally-sourced materials into beautiful handmade products, not only preserving their cultural heritage but also carving a path towards a more sustainable and empowered future.

From intricate baskets and vibrant garments to skillfully carved wooden artifacts, these women's craftsmanship is on display in every unique piece they create. Utilizing natural fibers, clay, wood, and plant-based dyes readily available in their surroundings, they produce eco-friendly products that are as beautiful as they are sustainable.

"This isn't just about making a living," said Tinotenda. "Through our crafts, as women we are gaining financial independence and contributing to the well-being of our families and communities. By selling these products locally, and in some cases reaching national and international markets, we are able to improve our lives, support our children's education, and ensure our families are well taken care of.

The impact extends far beyond financial gain. By keeping traditional skills passed down through generations alive, these women are ensuring their cultural heritage thrives. Each handmade item serves as a testament to their identity and history, keeping the stories and traditions of their communities vibrant. These artisans are not just creating beautiful objects; they are cultural ambassadors, sharing a unique piece of their world with a wider audience.

"We are using our creativity and skills to craft a brighter future," said Thubelihle Moyo, a local craftswoman. "By recognizing the value of local resources and traditional techniques, we are not only sustaining our rural way of life, but also paving the way for a more inclusive economy that celebrates diversity and individual talent."

The story of these rural women is a powerful testament to the potential of creativity, resourcefulness, and community support. Through their handmade products, they are weaving a narrative of empowerment, sustainability, and cultural pride. As we celebrate and support their endeavors, we are not just investing in their beautiful crafts, but in a more equitable and inclusive future for all.

## **Gwanda Residents Demand Action on Sewage, Water Crises, and Lack of Streetlights**



On May 29th, residents of Gwanda gathered for a meeting organized by the Gwanda Women Leaders Sounding Board to address pressing issues affecting their community. These issues included a persistent sewage crisis, water shortages, and a lack of streetlights.

The WLSB Chairperson Alice Masawi facilitated the discussion starting with the top concern on the sewage crisis in ward 9. The Municipality's recent intervention left a gaping hole, creating a breeding ground for mosquitoes and a health hazard due to residents catching and selling sewage. Residents demanded the Municipality take



immediate action to fill the hole and properly manage sewage disposal.

The water crisis in Gwanda, which had been worsening for weeks, was another major point of discussion. While some areas received water, others went dry for over two weeks. Residents with access to functioning public boreholes were overwhelmed, further straining the community. Frustrated by the lack of progress, residents demanded the Municipality prioritize resolving the water crisis.

The meeting also addressed the lack of streetlights in Gwanda, which residents believe has contributed to a rise in crime. The Municipality's unfulfilled promise to install streetlights has left residents feeling unsafe and demanding action.

Residents also expressed concerns about road grading during the dry season, which has caused excessive dust, and the perceived unfairness and lack of transparency in the Municipality's water billing system.

Following discussions, the group formulated a list of recommendations for the Municipality. These included immediate intervention in the sewage crisis, prioritizing solutions to the water shortage, fulfilling the promise to install streetlights, reviewing the road grading schedule to minimize dust, and revising the water billing system for fairness and transparency.

An action plan was also established, which involves providing progress reports on the implementation of these recommendations and keeping residents informed of any developments.

The meeting concluded with closing remarks from WLSB vice chairperson Lobukhosi Malila, who thanked everyone for their participation and urged continued collaboration to find solutions. He emphasized the importance of holding leaders accountable and working together to build a better future for Gwanda.

## **Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights Secure Birth Certificates for Stateless Minors**

The Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) successfully intervened in a case of prolonged statelessness for two minor girls, finally securing their birth certificates after a ten-year struggle.

The girls, aged 12 and 10, were denied birth certificates by the Registrar-General's (RG) office because their mother was still legally married to an estranged husband who disappeared to the UK two decades ago. Despite having a new relationship with

another man who was the biological father of the two children, the mother was required by the RG to produce an impossible affidavit from the missing ex-spouse disowning the girls. Further for the biological father to furnish the RG's Office with DNA test results confirming the paternity of the children

Adding urgency to the situation, the elder girl faced missing her Grade 7 exams due to the lack of a birth certificate. ZLHR lawyers Jabulani Mhlanga and Prisca Dube took the case to the Bulawayo High Court in August 2023. They argued that the RG's actions violated the girls' constitutional right to identity and access to documentation.

In a landmark judgment on March 21st, Justice Nokuthula Moyo ruled in favor of the girls. She criticized the RG's office for exceeding its authority, imposing unnecessary burdens on parents, and failing to uphold the constitutional right to birth certificates. Justice Moyo emphasized that the RG's role is to facilitate, not hinder, the process of obtaining this critical document.



“Justice Moyo stated that the RG does not have powers to order DNA tests among other requirements to prove paternity and emphasized that it was not the duty of the RG to enquire into and regulate the marital status of the parents applying for birth certificates for their minor children.

The Judge emphasized the importance of the right to a birth certificate & that it is not a right that can just be interfered with and that the RG is mandated to facilitate

the process of assisting one to obtain such a critical document,” said ZLHR on Twitter.

Following the court order, the Bulawayo Provincial Registrar contacted ZLHR inviting the minor’s parents to go to Bulawayo District Registrar’s Office with all their documents and the court order, to facilitate the processing and issuance of the birth certificates of the minors.

On April 22nd, the girls finally received their birth certificates, ending their decade of statelessness.

## **Young Zimbabweans Unaware of Crucial Right to Access Information**

*Jabulile Siwela*

Many young people in Zimbabwe are unaware of their right to access information, a vital foundation for a functioning democracy. This knowledge gap was highlighted at the recent Zimbabwe International Trade Fair, where a survey revealed that over 80% of respondents were unfamiliar with this right and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) that upholds it.

The right to access information is enshrined in Section 62 of the 2013 Constitution. It empowers citizens to request information held by state institutions, public entities, and statutory offices. This transparency is crucial for holding leaders accountable and ensuring good governance.

The Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) is actively raising awareness about this right. However, the Trade Fair survey also showed that only 30% of respondents were aware of the ZMC’s presence at the event.

### **Knowledge is Power: Access to Information for Better Governance**

As the saying goes, "knowledge is power." Lack of information about governance issues can hinder public participation and accountability. The FOIA empowers citizens to request data that can be used to:

- Investigate potential misuse of public funds
- Hold leaders accountable for their actions
- Promote transparency in government and public entities

## The Road Ahead: Raising Awareness and Utilizing the Right

This lack of awareness among young people is a cause for concern. To strengthen Zimbabwe's democracy, it's crucial to bridge this knowledge gap. The ZMC and other stakeholders can play a vital role by:

- Organizing educational campaigns targeting young people
- Utilizing various media platforms to disseminate information about FOIA
- Simplifying the process of requesting information from public institutions

By empowering young people with knowledge of their right to information, Zimbabwe can build a more transparent, accountable, and democratic society.

## Empowering Women Leaders: WILD Social Media Highlights

**WILD**  
Women's Institute for  
Leadership Development

**WOMEN'S  
POLITICAL  
PARTICIPATION  
NUGGETS**

[X](#) [f](#) [v](#) [🎵](#) [🌐](#)

@wildtrustzim/womenforleadership.net

**IMPORTANCE**  
Women's participation is essential for strong democracies, equitable societies, and improved living standards.

**PROGRESS**  
Global representation of women in parliaments has increased, but it's still far below the target 30% for critical mass.

**OBSTACLES**  
Women face individual (confidence, resources), institutional (laws, parties), and social (gender norms) barriers.

**INTERSECTIONALITY**  
Strategies for increasing participation need to consider factors like race, class and age that can further disadvantage some women

**ENGAGING YOUNG WOMEN**  
Political institutions need to address young women's concerns and empower them to participate.

**SOLUTIONS**  
Training, combating violence, quotas, and promoting women-friendly parties can help overcome barriers.

SOURCE: YAL4HER

**WILD**  
Women's Institute for Leadership Development

**Health and Wellbeing**  
When women are empowered, they can make informed choices about their health, family planning, and overall well-being.

**Economic Growth**  
Empowered women contribute significantly to economic development by participating in the workforce and entrepreneurship.

**Gender-Based Violence**  
Empowered women are better equipped to challenge harmful norms and advocate for their rights.

**Social Justice**  
It ensures that women have equal access to resources, education, and decision-making power.

**The importance of Empowering Women in society**

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**Langelihl...ebu** · 2nd ✓ Following

16h · Edited · 🗨️

I am excited to have participated in the AWLNetwork Provincial Women Leadership Forum in partnership with the UnitedNations and WILD. The event focused on entrepreneurship, challenges faced by persons with disabilities in our respective communities and barriers to women's political participation.

The discussions with our local women councilors highlighted issues like lack of support and tribalism, emphasizing confidence building and adopting a reading habit for empowerment and emancipation of our minds from an entitlement of being given things for free.Hence encouraging empowerment that will reduce vulnerability to sexual assaults. Knowledge truly is power!

We also addressed challenges faced by persons with disabilities, stressing the importance of creating disability-friendly spaces at home and using inclusive language. Let's empower each other and strive towards a more inclusive society.

[#WomenEmpowerment2024](#)  
[#WomenEmpoweringWomen](#) [#UNWomen](#)  
[#GenderEquality](#) [#LeadershipForum](#)

**Nobesuthu Trish Ndlovu** · 1st

Human Rights Advocate| Peace & Development Practitioner| LOT 52SGS,...

3d · 🗨️

Last week I participated in a very insightful Social Accountability and Gender Responsive Budget training organized by @wildtrustzim.

Key takeaway-: there are 4 main pillars that are required for Social Accountability>

1. Active citizen participation
2. Responsive government or local authority
3. Access to public information
4. Understanding context

Very grateful for the amazing job that @wildtrustzim is doing to empower and equip women with adequate skills to advocate for gender responsive service delivery in their communities and beyond.





# I AM A WOMAN

#YESSHECAN

I AM A  
YOUNG  
WOMAN,  
AND YES, I  
AM A  
COUNCILOR



I DO NOT LET  
LIMITATIONS  
DEFINE MY  
ABILITY TO  
EXCEL AND  
MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE

@wildtrustzim/ womenforleadership



# I AM A WOMAN

#YESSHECAN

I AM A  
WOMAN,  
AND YES, I  
RUN MY  
OWN  
BUSINESS.



MY DREAMS ARE  
MY COMPASS,  
AND MY  
DETERMINATION  
IS MY FUEL.

@wildtrustzim/ womenforleadership

Concept Credit: Sir Aquil



# I AM A WOMAN

#YESSHECAN

I AM A  
WOMAN,  
AND YES, I  
AM A  
LAWYER



JUSTICE KNOWS  
NO GENDER, AND  
NEITHER DOES  
THE FIGHT FOR  
IT

@wildtrustzim/ womenforleadership

Concept Credit: Sir Aquil



# I AM A WOMAN

#YESSHECAN

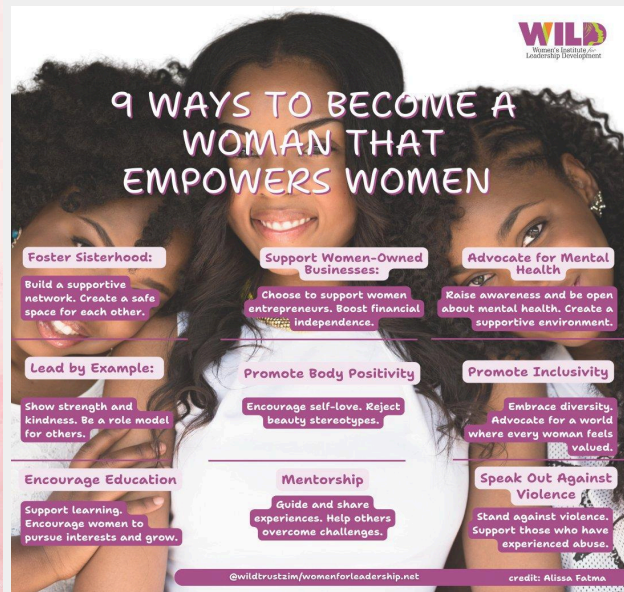
I AM A  
WOMAN,  
AND YES, I  
AM A DATA  
SCIENTIST



MY GOALS FUEL  
INNOVATION  
AND MY  
PASSION  
BREAKS  
BARRIERS.

@wildtrustzim/ womenforleadership

Concept Credit: Sir Aquil



## CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS

Focus: Climate Change and Women

1. Women living in arid areas/ areas that experience frequent and severe droughts are more likely to experience child marriage, adolescent births and hardships associated with collecting water and cooking with unclean fuels.
2. In a worst case climate scenario, by 2050 an estimated 158 million women and girls will be pushed into extreme poverty as a direct result of sustained increases in global temperatures.

To protect our planet, we must:

- Understand gender differences regarding the environment.
- Guarantee rights of everyone including women and girls
- Ensure women's equal access to environmental related decision making

Source: UN Women

[womenforleadership.net/](https://www.womenforleadership.net/) @wildtrustzim

## 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!

Click Opportunity to Apply

1. [Tech Policy Fellowship 2024-25](#)

2. [The 2025 Community Engagement Exchange \(CEE\) Program application is open \(Fully-funded\)](#)
3. [AU 1st Cohort of the Network of African Youth in Conflict Prevention and Mediation \(WiseYouth Network\)](#)
4. [Restless Development State of Youth Civil Society Co Researchers](#)
5. [Ashoka Young African Climate Changemakers Challenge](#)
6. [UN Women Senior consultant on Environmental and Social Standards](#)
7. [FIT4Mentorship Programme: Empowering Women in Technology Across Africa](#)
8. [Government of Mexico Scholarships for International Students 2024 | Fully Funded Bachelors, Masters and PhD](#)

*Follow us for more WILD updates and opportunities on Twitter [@wildtrustzim](#)/ Facebook [@facebook.com/wildtrustzim](#)*