



INSTITUTE *for*
YOUNG WOMEN'S
DEVELOPMENT



HerStory

July 2025 Edition

News etter

July's Highlights

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Welcome to "HerStory"



This newsletter is a window into the heart of the young women's movement. Each month, we bring you powerful stories of courage, resilience, and transformation directly from the young women we work with. In this issue, we also share the experiences of the Alliance for Community Based Organizations, a network convened by IYWD, that is leading change in their communities. It is a space to share their successes, amplify their voices, and provide updates on the collective impact we are making together across Zimbabwe.



EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the July 2025 edition of “**HerStory**” Newsletter. This issue arrives at a time when young women across Zimbabwe are boldly stepping into spaces that once excluded them, leading advocacy, shaping governance, and driving community transformation. From Bindura’s strides in gender-responsive social services to young women in Kariba organizing against human-wildlife conflict, these stories remind us that progress is possible when voices once silenced are amplified.

At the **Institute for Young Women’s Development (IYWD)**, we believe every story of change matters. These journeys show the power of resilience, solidarity, and feminist leadership in action.

In this issue, you will also find inspiring stories of impact from the **Alliance for Community Based Organisations (ACBOs)**, across Zimbabwe, showcasing how grassroots leadership is transforming lives.

This newsletter not only celebrates these milestones but also honors the memory of an ally who championed inclusive leadership, and highlights ongoing collaborations with local authorities and communities in building more equitable futures

To our long-time supporters, thank you for your unwavering belief in our mission. Your solidarity fuels this vital work. And to our new readers, we are so glad to have you with us on this journey. We hope these stories inspire you as much as they inspire us every day.

In solidarity,

Sharing journeys of resilience, solidarity,
and feminist leadership in action.

Bindura Municipality makes strides towards young women's inclusion to promote gender responsive services.

In a landmark celebration of gender-responsive leadership, Bindura Municipality was crowned the winner of the Institute for Young Women's Development (IYWD) Awards for Fostering Young Women's Participation towards Gender-Responsive Social Services Delivery (GRSSD). The prestigious award was presented to His Worship Mayor Gwature and women from Bindura during the Local Government Learning and Exchange Lab (LGLEX) in Harare. This victory is more than just recognition; it reflects the impact of young women's advocacy and engagement with the municipality. Through collective efforts, these young women raised their voices, mobilized their communities, and worked closely with municipal leaders to push for social services that truly meet the needs of women and girls. Their dedication demonstrates how collaboration and active participation can drive meaningful, lasting change.

Before 2017, Bindura Municipality had little female representation in leadership, with only one female councilor, and its streets told a story of neglect and insecurity. However, with IYWD's intervention and its focus on transformative leadership and movement building, Bindura has undergone a remarkable shift. The municipality is now a shining example of how gender-sensitive governance can deliver real, tangible results for the community.

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Mr Cosmas Chiringa (Permanent Secretary for Provincial Affairs and Devolution for Harare Metropolitan Province), Farisaji Moyo (Bindura Councillor) and Shumiral Muchabeta (IYWD Bard Chairperson) at the LGLEX Awards.



Young Women and Bindura Local Government Representatives receiving the Award.



"We were few, and our voices were often unheard. But IYWD's training and support empowered us to demand more representation and push for policies that benefit women and girls. Today, we have more women in top positions, and our municipality is a model for others."

Councilor Chipso Musonza, one of the female leaders who benefited from IYWD's training

Bindura Young Women Drive Inclusion to Strengthen Gender-Responsive Health Services

Young women in Bindura are transforming healthcare governance through bold advocacy and hands-on engagement with leaders. They started by mobilizing peers and raising awareness about gaps in local health services, then held open dialogues with councillors, clinic staff, and municipal authorities to tackle challenges such as underfunding, poor service delivery, and the absence of gender-sensitive budgets. By requesting access to health budgets, and tracking resource use, they established new accountability mechanisms. Participating in community forums and workshops boosted their knowledge and confidence, enabling them to engage decision-makers effectively. This combined approach has led to real changes in clinics and municipal planning, showing how persistent, collective action can make healthcare more inclusive, fair, and responsive to the needs of women and girls.

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Panashe Gains Confidence and Leadership Skills, Inspiring Change in Her Community

In many communities across Zimbabwe, young women's voices are often silenced by cultural norms, social expectations, and systemic exclusion. But through the strategic work of the Institute for Young Women's Development (IYWD), these voices are beginning to rise, boldly, confidently, and with purpose. One such voice belongs to Panashe B. Tazviwana, a 24-year-old from Rimuka, Kadoma, whose transformation from silent observer to confident leader captures the essence of IYWD's strategic outcomes on strengthened representation, participation and feminist leadership.

When the IYWD team first met Panashe, she didn't want to be seen.

"She actually went into hiding just to avoid joining the training," recalls Gean Kasukuwere, a young woman from Sanyati who witnessed Panashe's incredible journey. When the IYWD team first visited Rimuka for a Community Level Training on June 20, 2025, Panashe was not even one of the mobilized participants. In fact, she tried to hide to avoid taking part. But when someone from IYWD asked for water, Panashe's mother-in-law called her over and that one moment changed everything.

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Panashe confidently participating and contributing during the monitoring and reflection meeting hosted by IYWD

Young Women Take Action Against Human-Wildlife Conflict in Kariba



Young women in Kariba are taking charge of their safety and leading community change. Following a community advocacy action organized by the Institute for Young Women's Development (IYWD) on June 20, 2025 in partnership with Patsaka Trust, they launched a petition demanding urgent action to address human-wildlife conflict. Dividing into teams to collect signatures and engage authorities, they are directly challenging threats that have long prevented women and girls from participating in decision-making spaces. The young women split into two teams: one to collect signatures and talk to community members, and the other to deliver the petition to the right offices. These young women are showing courage and leadership. The young women of Kariba are no longer waiting for transformation but they are leading it.

The petition read "We the undersigned young women and women of Kariba , are writing to express our outrage and deep concern over the escalating Human Wildlife Conflicts in our community . The frequent attacks by wild animals , including hyenas ,elephants , have resulted in loss of lives and livelihoods , leaving us in a state of fear and insecurity. We call upon ZimParks , MOK and the DDC's office to take urgent action to address the human -wildlife conflict crisis in Kariba . We will not tolerate further loss of life , livelihoods due to the inaction of Zimparks." [Read More](#)

Local Government Learning & Exchange Lab 2025: A Movement for Gender-Responsive Governance.

Young women across Zimbabwe are leading transformative change in their communities, moving from passive observers to active decision-makers shaping policies and local development. Through community-level training programs, young women and women have gained the confidence, skills, and knowledge to influence governance and demand [Gender-Responsive Social Services Delivery \(GRSSD\)](#).

The impact was celebrated at the Local Government Learning and Exchange Lab (LGLEX), hosted by IYWD in Harare on July 18, 2025. Councilor Kasere of Mazowe Rural District Council (RDC) credited the programs with empowering young women to lead and advocate effectively. "Young women boosted confidence bit by bit until today we are celebrating the fruits," he remarked. .

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Blessing Mupandare a young woman from Bindura who has been pushing for GRSSD

FEMINIST SPOTLIGHT

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Shamiso's Leadership Sparks Rights and Opportunities for Rural Women

In a world where leadership roles are still largely male dominated, Shamiso Gotami has broken through deeply rooted gender norms to become a symbol of feminist leadership in Gurube District as a village head. Her journey is not just one of personal achievement, it's a testament to the power of empowerment, feminist consciousness, and the impact of grassroots organizing.

Shamiso's rise to leadership came despite cultural expectations that favored her brothers for the role. Yet, her dedication to community service and the confidence she gained through transformative leadership training from the IYWD made her the natural choice to lead. **"I would not be who I am today without the teachings imparted to me by IYWD,"** she says, acknowledging the role that feminist mentorship and political consciousness played in shaping her journey.



Shamiso Gotami a young woman traditional leader who secured land rights for women.

Chosen by her community as village head, Shamiso now serves as a trailblazer in a society where leadership is traditionally viewed as a man's birthright. But she hasn't stopped at symbolic victory, her leadership has ushered in real, structural change. She has fought for and secured land ownership rights for women in her village, a transformative step toward economic empowerment and independence for rural women.

As a survivor of gender-based violence (GBV) and a fierce advocate, Shamiso uses her leadership role to champion the rights of other survivors. She has created safe spaces for women to speak out, challenged harmful cultural norms, and demanded accountability in abuse cases. Her unwavering commitment to justice has made her a beacon of hope for women who previously felt voiceless and powerless.

Shamiso's story is a powerful example of how IYWD's feminist leadership model is producing changemakers who are rewriting what leadership looks like at the local level. She is not just a village head, she is a feminist leader transforming systems from the ground up. Her story is proof that when women are supported, resourced, and believed in, they don't just rise—they lead, they uplift, and they create futures rooted in justice, dignity, and equality.



Honoring the Legacy of Assistant District Development Coordinator (DDC)- Knowledge Mururi



The late Assistant DDC giving remarks at an IYWD male engagement meeting held in Makonde held in April 2025



We were deeply saddened by the passing of Assistant District Development Coordinator (DDC) Knowledge Mururi from Makonde District, Mashonaland West. A committed Male Ally under the S(HE) Matters Initiative, he worked with us in championing young women's political and economic participation, inspiring village heads to open leadership spaces for women and valuing their ideas at every step. His guiding principle, "Inclusive community brings quality results," was more than a motto—it was a way of life that transformed communities.

Mr Mururi's passion, dedication, and visionary leadership left a lasting mark, and his legacy continues to inspire all who worked alongside him.



ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS (ACBOS)

Showcasing how grassroots leadership is transforming lives.

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Knowledge is power. Climate action starts with you. Don't miss it. #MidlandsClimateConversations



Digital Access Transforms Learning and Entrepreneurship for Young Women and Youth in Seke Rural

In Savanhu Village, Ward 7 of Seke Rural, a groundbreaking development is transforming how young people access information and prepare for the future. The **Girls and Women Empowerment Network (GWEN)**, in a bold move to address the digital divide in rural Zimbabwe, has built a fully functional computer lab and library, a first for this remote community.

Before this initiative, young people in Seke Rural had very limited access to computers or the internet. Students struggled to complete assignments and were often left behind in an increasingly digital academic world. Young entrepreneurs operated without real-time market information or the ability to network beyond their immediate environment. With the new facility, this has changed dramatically.

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Young people from the community using the new computer lab

Green Institute Empowers Women in Chipinge, Boosting Income, Food Security, and Community Resilience

In the heart of Muwango Village, Chipinge, a quiet revolution is growing, one rooted in the soil, watered with community collaboration, and nurtured by the tireless efforts of the **Green Institute**. With support from IM Swedish Development Partner Southern Africa and partners like FEPA, the Green Institute has brought tangible change to the lives of people, particularly women, through sustainable agriculture and climate-resilient livelihoods. Among the most transformative milestones is the construction of a 2x 500m² community greenhouse in Ward 19, now supporting the livelihoods of 85 members, 85% of whom are women. This initiative is not just about farming; it is about building futures.

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Women harvest vegetables from the community garden, turning their produce into income.



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263 772481273



info@iywd.org



www.iywd.org

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