BRICK BY BRICK TOWARDS GENDER PARITY BY 2030

The year started on a heavy note as Zimbabwe was hit by twin natural disasters of drought and Cyclone Idai. This happened as the country contended to turn around the economy which has been on down spiral in recent years.

The combined effect is affecting 5.3 million people, while Cyclone Idai has caused widespread destruction of infrastructure and loss of life in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe, particularly in districts of Chimanimani, Chipinge, Buhera, Makoni, Mutare Rural, Mutasa and Nyanga.

Having visited Chimanimani, the epicentre of Cyclone Idai, I have seen first-hand the flattened farmlands, destroyed houses, schools, roads and bridges, and heard heart-breaking stories from people who lost their loved ones, some who still do not know whether they are dead or alive. For many, these have been their darkest of times – a time when all hope for restoration seems illusive.

Yet, in the midst of this tragedy, we have seen the spirit of the Zimbabwean people shine. Despite the difficult economic environment, people have shown boundless support, offering their money, clothing and grocery items from their own homes to assist those who were left vulnerable in the aftermath of Cyclone Idai, while the private sector, schools, churches and civil servants come together to mobilise much needed relief to their fellow countrymen and women.

It has also been extremely heart-warming to see strong partnerships where the Government of Zimbabwe, UN agencies, civil society organizations and development partners have pooled their resources together to attend to the needs of those affected by Cyclone Idai, plan towards recovery and help communities bounce back to long-term sustainable development.

Although the Humanitarian Flash Appeal was launched on 28 February 2019 by UN Under-Secretary-General, Mark Lowcock requesting for USD 234 million, it has been revised to USD 294 million to cover needs for the Cyclone-affected population. The Flash Appeal aims to provide food assistance, health and WASH services, education and social protection to 2.47 million people in most vulnerable districts, complementing Government efforts.

On the development programmes, I am pleased to note that thanks to the generous support of the development partners, UN programme delivery stands at USD 1.2 billion in the past three years, which is great progress as we enter the fourth year of ZUNDAF implementation of
various development projects in areas of food security, social services, poverty reduction, HIV and AIDS, gender equality, and public administration and governance.

I am also very pleased to note that requisite preparations have been made to launch the joint UN-EU Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls. The UN is focusing in advancing gender equality as one of its top priorities of support to national development. As such, all programmes carried out by the UN System will continue to focus full attention on promoting gender equality.

As the country moves to the path of economic recovery and reform, continued international support and partnership will be crucial to meet various development and humanitarian challenges the country is facing.

March 2019 was international Women’s Month, and 2019 being the first year of implementation of the Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls, the focus of this 17th Edition of the UN in Zimbabwe Newsletter is to highlight the successes and challenges of promoting gender equality in Zimbabwe as the country works towards realizing the SDGs.

This newsletter also showcases gender mainstreaming of UN programme support in the ZUNDAF key result areas.

Wishing you a lovely read.

Bishow Parajuli

USD 22 million EU-UN Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women & girls to be launched, while implementation of similar initiative worth USD 4.7 million supported by Sweden & Ireland is ongoing

Continued overleaf...
Gender inequality has been a lingering issue in Zimbabwe where a historically patriarchal system has continued to prevail under the belief that men and women should not be viewed as equals. It continues to rear its ugly head in a plethora of ways, including through gender-based violence where about 1 in 3 women aged 15 to 49 have experienced physical violence and 1 in 4 women have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15. The perpetuation of child marriage has also proved to be a serious issue in the country as 32% of girls in Zimbabwe are married before the age of 18 and 4% are married before their 15th birthday.

In addition, HIV incidence rates in Zimbabwe show that women and girls continue to be disproportionately at risk of contracting HIV as compared to their male counterparts due to low negotiating power of condom use or poverty which gives rise to transactional sex. Gender inequality is also evident in the exclusion of women and girls from education and leadership, and their lack of access to basic socio-economic and political freedoms.

These disparities among women and men in Zimbabwe, fuel the drive for gender mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations System in Zimbabwe.

Gender mainstreaming can be broadly defined as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action and making their individual needs and experiences an integral determinant of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any given programme such that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.

The Government of Zimbabwe has solidified its commitment to addressing gender inequality in the country through the 2018-2020 Transitional Stabilisation Programme. The United Nations, through the 2016-2020 Zimbabwe UN Development Framework (ZUNDAF), which is fully aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals and the national development priority applies gender mainstreaming as one of the programming principles in planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of any given programme such that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.

The ZUNDAF, whose key result areas include food and nutrition security, gender equality, HIV & AIDS, poverty reduction and value addition, public administration...
and governance, social services and protection, allows the UN System in Zimbabwe to take an integrated approach to achieving development results in a coherent manner in partnership with the Government.

Gender equality, being one of the six result areas outlined in ZUNDAF, aims to ensure that women and girls are empowered to effectively participate in social, economic and political spheres and to utilise gender-based violence services.

Therefore, it provides an entry point for the Government, the UN, development partners and key stakeholders to address gender inequalities through specific programming on key issues such as violence against women, women’s participation in politics and decision making, and women’s economic empowerment. As a result, there is an opportunity to make gender mainstreaming an underlying component of all UN interventions under all six ZUNDAF result areas.

This is why women’s empowerment has been at the center of recent UN interventions, such as the establishment of a Women’s Bank for the economic empowerment of women, various programmes led and supported to increase women’s participation in industrial and agricultural work and the two-year Spotlight Initiative that commenced implementation in 2019 with the aim being for women and girls to realize their full potential in a violence-free, gender-responsive and inclusive Zimbabwe.

Gender mainstreaming in UN intervention saw the establishment of a Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) Task Team that is now responsible for the promotion of gender equality within ZEC and is currently in the process of developing a Gender Policy.

In the HIV & AIDS result area, the UN is supporting gender mainstreaming by increasing avenues for women to get exposure to information on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), for example through recruitment of 24,335 girls into sista2sista clubs which provide social support to young girls to ensure that they stay in school and remain free of HIV/AIDS.

Under the poverty reduction and value addition result area, the UN supported value-addition and economic empowerment with a focus on women and youth, as a key strategic intervention in strengthening livelihoods and generating incomes for rural poverty reduction. One of the major initiatives are supported under the $2.7million African Development Bank (AfDB) Youth and Women Empowerment Programme which is aimed at creating over 2000 short- and long-term jobs for youth and women.

Humanitarian emergencies caused by drought and Cyclone Idai present major challenges to ensuring that both men’s and women’s needs are equally catered for during UN relief operations. UN agencies have ensured this balance by providing mama kits for pregnant and lactating women and dignity kits containing sanitary products for women and girls to help maintain their dignity as they navigate the effects of this disaster that has upended their lives.

There are many more examples of gender mainstreaming in UN interventions, some of which are included in this newsletter through stories that UN agencies have provided. These stories serve to highlight successes from UN programmes – past and present – demonstrating that indeed Zimbabwe is making progress towards promoting gender equality.

It is only a matter of time until we see women and girls accessing the same opportunities as their male counterparts in all spheres of life.
Sukoluhle Ndlela (32) of Vusisizwe Village knows only too well the power of a mobile phone and its importance in improving water and sanitation for her community.

Ndlela is a registered key informant (KI) for the Mahole water point in Insiza South District, south-east of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Her duties include ensuring that information on water infrastructure under her watch (including the pump functionality of boreholes, water yields and water quality) reaches the area enumerator, Ms. Tecla Dube in real time. She has done this several times from the comfort of her home every month, or when the need arises.

Tecla Dube is the Ward 2 extension worker/enumerator equipped with RWIMS FieldForce application on her tablet. As an enumerator, she analyses, reviews, approves and effects updates from key informants like Ndlela, allowing such changes to be viewed in RWIMS. She also solicits responses from the village pump mechanics and the environmental health technician.

Dube is excited by the positive changes she has noticed since RWIMS.SNR was introduced. She says she now receives reports on time, whilst broken-down pumps and boreholes are repaired quickly.

Insiza Rural District Council focal person for WASH and RWIMS, Messie Msindo- Mpofu says RWIMS.SNR recognizes the strategic role that communities play in the management of their WASH services. She says because of success stories of RWIMS.SNR, there has been a buy-in by local community leadership.

Insiza has a population of 100,333 people, 967 communal water points, 199 schools, 17 health institutions and 304 villages. “There is enhanced response servicing with gross reduction in down-time of water points,” Msindo- Mpofu explains. “RWIMS. SNR has strengthened the enabling environment for private public partnerships (PPPs) with the system able to link WASH facilities to service providers for enhanced response servicing.

“The system also comes with a dashboard for monitoring enumerator performance and enumerator requirements for data bundles at any given time (value for money),” she adds.

Every day, Ndlela and Dube ensure that their cellphone and tablet batteries are always fully charged. They do not want to miss out on making any important WASH updates through RWIMS.SNR.

170,851 additional people have access to an improved sanitation facility in 45 districts

752,955 people were reached through hygiene education messaging during the cholera and typhoid outbreak

3.6 million people in rural and semi-urban areas provided with water, hygiene and sanitation services
Sinikiwe and Sphiwe (not their real names) lost their mother in 2010. Their father worked in neighbouring South Africa, and as casual work became difficult to come by, he spent most of his earnings on the second family of his polygamous union. As a result, Sinikiwe and Sphiwe were left to fend for themselves.

Tragedy struck again in 2016 when their father passed on, leaving the girls extremely vulnerable. Sphiwe had just completed her fourth form education while Sinikiwe was nearing the end of her primary education.

A well-wisher had once taken up responsibility to pay for their school fees, but after a year, he was unable to continue. Sinikiwe and Sphiwe therefore resorted to menial jobs for sustenance and to further their education.

Sinikiwe and Sphiwe's circumstances are not uncommon. The 2014 Multiple Indicator Survey indicates that 20% of children in rural areas between 0 – 17 years have lost at least one or both biological parents. The survey also finds a school attendance ratio of 0.94 between orphans and non-orphan's, suggesting that orphans are disadvantaged in relation to non-orphans.

It is young girls and women like Sinikiwe and Sphiwe that the Modified Determined Resilient Empowered AIDS-free Mentored and Safe (DREAMS) programme targets to assist.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through the Global Fund to Fights AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) is working with the National AIDS Council and Plan International to implement DREAMS in four of Zimbabwe's districts, namely Chimanimani, Kwekwe, Umguza and Umzingwane.

When Sphiwe and Sinikiwe approached their school head to assist them in searching for employment, she forwarded the girls' names for consideration in the DREAMS programme as it was just starting in Chimanimani. The girls were unanimously selected to be among the beneficiaries.

“It’s true what they say,” says Sphiwe with a smile, now in form six. “You never know what tomorrow holds,” she adds as she recalls a time when she was constantly worried about putting herself and her sister through school.
How one farmer in Zimbabwe went from requiring food assistance, to helping WFP provide food to her fellow citizens.

In 2018, the World Food Programme procured over 65 metric tonnes of sorghum from 192 local smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe’s driest areas: Buhera, Chivi and Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe.

Nyengeretai Taruvinga, one such smallholder farmer in Buhera, sold 1.6 metric tonnes of her grain to WFP for USD 550 in mobile money.

Last year Taruvinga was a recipient of WFP food assistance; but with support from WFP and partners, she was able to produce enough sorghum to meet her own family’s needs, and a surplus for the market.

Taruvinga’s story is part of WFP’s broader strategy to encourage smallholder farmers to produce drought-resistant crops like sorghum, in light of recurrent prolonged dry spells within agricultural season. On average, 60 percent of the smallholder farmers whom WFP and its partners train, support, and purchase surplus from, are female.

Through this project and its focus on female farmers, WFP and its partners are empowering women to have increased opportunities to make money and a greater capability to sell without interference from men in their households.

“As soon as I was paid, I first set aside money to pay school fees of my daughter,” Taruvinga said, “Whoever thought that yesterday’s recipients of food assistance like me would be today’s food suppliers?”

Poverty made Ednah feel isolated and embarrassed about her grass-thatched huts. In her marriage, she had no voice in key household decisions.

Things changed from May 2015, when Ednah received training through the Livelihood and Food Security Programme (LFSP), a Department for International Development (DFID)-funded programme managed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Topics covered during the training included Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS), Internal Savings and Lending (ISALs), Farming as a Business, Leadership, Crops production and Post-harvest Management.

Following the training, Ednah adopted diversified crops like cowpeas, soya-beans, sugar-beans and groundnuts. She is now

USD157,405,389 cumulative disbursement towards food and nutrition security (2016-2018)

Over 2.2 million people assisted with targeted with food assistance through cash transfer

USD 77 million resilience building projects rolled out targeting 830,000 people in 18 rural districts
a proud owner of a brick and zinc thatched house.

“GALS training made me a different woman. Before this training, we did not invest in high-value assets and were just content buying clothes and kitchen utensils with income from farming. Now, I invested the proceeds from cowpeas into a broiler project. Although widowed in 2018, I enjoyed peace in my family and there was no more fighting over money and unplanned expenditures. Surprisingly with only Form 2 education, I am now a GALS Peer Educator, ISAL champion, part-time School Bursar and District Farmers Association Treasurer. I discharge my leadership duties with confidence,” Ednah said.

The implementation of the project in Mashonaland Central province is carried out by a consortium of partners lead by World Vision.

To enhance climate adaptation & economic gains farmers supported to shift to small livestock

Over 1,000mt sorghum was sold through WFP

481,802 severely food insecure people were assisted with food on a monthly basis under the 2017-2018 Lean Season Assistance (LSA)

Kindling internal savings, lending towards zero hunger

Established in 2014, Bambelani is a 17-member Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL) group that has grown from humble beginnings to a successful goat rearing enterprise.

Through the Internal Savings and Lending Scheme, a small group of people agreed to contribute a certain amount of money regularly into a group fund, with the hope of seeing the fund grow. Using the capital, the group then engages in an income generating activity of their choice.

Bambelani’s turning point was through the European Union-funded “Making a Living from Livestock” project. This was implemented by FAO in Lupane in partnership with LEAD Trust and in Nkayi with Help from Germany from 2013 to 2018.

The group was assisted with training in animal husbandry and veterinary services for their goats, as well as financial management skills that have proved crucial in helping them sustain their successful business for the past three years.

Small livestock have numerous advantages as they are less costly to maintain, have a fast reproduction rate and are more resilient to shocks such as drought. In most societies, however, small ruminants such as goats and chickens are not considered as viable businesses and are often reserved for women.

In this group, things are different. The men in the community joined the group after seeing the profits in small livestock production. The group has also been able to empower most of the women who previously did not own any livestock or properties.

“This group has empowered us economically. Some of us are widows who did not have a source of livelihood until we started the goat project. Now, some of us have even built houses,” said Thembilile Moyo, the group’s secretary.

The group, which consists of nine women and eight men, also has diversified members’ income through sharing good practices like conservation agriculture. They also take turns to purchase good quality, certified seeds for each other using profits acquired from selling their goats.
Zimbabwe’s Electoral Management Body (EMB) has moved a notch towards the development of a Gender and Inclusion Policy after holding a two-day seminar to strengthen the capacity of its staff, management and commissioners to identify gender gaps in the administration of elections.

Supported by UN Women Zimbabwe, the seminar also sought to assess and track the advancement of gender equality and women’s rights in elections and the electoral cycle. The training was attended by 55 participants inclusive of ZEC senior managers and commissioners.

In her opening remarks, UN Women’s Representative Delphine Serumaga noted that ZEC’s development of a Gender and Inclusion Policy promotes Sustainable Development Goal 5 --Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Furthermore, it ensures equal access and opportunity for women and men, and other marginalized groups, in Zimbabwe’s electoral processes in accordance with the gender equality and women’s rights provisions in the Constitution.

“The development of the Gender and Inclusion policy is a welcome step in the right direction,” Serumaga said. She encouraged ZEC to also learn from other countries that have gone through similar processes of gender mainstreaming and gender policy formulation.

During the two-day policy development seminar, ZEC’s senior managers and commissioners took stock of how well gender equality and women’s empowerment has been integrated into the EMB’s structures, policies, procedures and programmes. In addition, they outlined the preliminary tenets of the Gender and Inclusion Policy while the ZEC participants prioritized the modalities for implementing a Gender and Inclusion Policy.

Towards engendering the electoral process

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Peace committees inspire women to expand their horizons

When Sibongile Manzumba became a member of a community-based women’s peace committee in Ward 10, Masvingo Province, she could not read nor write. Her colleagues on the Gejo Rerunyararo Peace Committee, Margret Mnikwa and Mbuya JJ also stopped their education at an early age.

Through their participation in a community-based peace committee supported by UN Women through its Gender, Peace and Security Programme, all three women realized that to contribute more to the committee and to their families and communities, they needed to go back to school.

“We couldn’t understand all the information being given to us as members of the peace committee and we were scared to take up positions because we could not read or write,” Manzumba said.

The women subsequently enrolled in an adult education programme and have become more involved in the peace committee and its community activities. Mbuya JJ, for example, said that having reading and writing skills led to her selection to help teach children how to act in dramas.

The three women are part of the 86-member Women’s Peace Committee in their community, which has been supported by UN Women’s implementing partner, Peace-building and Capacity Development Foundation (Pacdef).

The Gejo Rerunyararo Peace Committee has participated in the building of a school closer to the ward so that girls in the community no longer travel long distances to school. In addition, the peace committee’s saving clubs have enabled women to meet their families’ most basic needs.

“When our hut collapsed during the heavy rains, my family was left with nowhere to stay and my husband was bed-ridden and could not provide any support,” said Tendai Chikwira, a member of the peace committee. “I turned to the saving club to borrow money and managed to build a two-roomed house for my family.”

The spin-offs and benefits of being members of Women’s Peace Committees have been noted by other committees too. In Gwanda, Ruth Mpofu, said being a member of a Women’s Peace Committees had afforded women with a collective and safe space to share their problems and to find solutions together on how to build peace in their homes.

Bridget Labani, a young woman who is a member of the 35-member Women’s Peace Committee in Mutoko (wards 19 and 20), says she decided to change her area of study at Midlands State University from Political Science to Peace Studies because of her involvement with the committee. “I realized that when there is no peace, there is no development,” said Labani who has worked with Pacdef. Labani plans to use her degree in Peace Studies to raise awareness in her home area of ward 19 in Mutoko on the importance of peace as a pathway to development.
Alice Banda gave birth to her son, Pride, 12 years ago. Pride was born with disabilities on his legs and arms.

Living in the border town of Beitbridge, Alice has had to take the brunt of stigmatisation from her community and most sadly, her close family, for giving birth to a child with disabilities.

“My husband left me after I gave birth to Pride. He said, ‘izvi hazvisi zvekwedu’ insinuating that the disabilities were not from his genes but mine,” explained Alice.

She said some community members accused her of not being faithful saying that is why she gave birth to a child with disabilities. Others accused her of offering her son in moneymaking rituals, commonly known as “kuchekeresa”.

Such statements hurt her. She said she failed to understand why people would make such comments, considering that she works for herself and lives a very modest life.

Alice’s story reflects the many sad experiences of women with disabilities or of women who have given birth to children with disabilities. They are blamed for the disabilities and stigmatised by many people. As a result, some women hide their children depriving them of basic human rights like access to education. It then needs strong women like Alice.

“I will not hide my son, he is human, and he should be seen,” quipped Alice.

UNESCO in partnership with UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women, under the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD), is implementing a project to amplify the voices of women like Alice, address negative cultural norms around disabilities and advocate for improved response and prevention of gender-based violence.

The project complements the Government of Zimbabwe’s efforts in advancing the rights of women and girls with disabilities as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Persons with disabilities constitute about seven percent of Zimbabwe’s population. There is recognition of the plethora of challenges they face which include, failure to access health care, judicial services and information, amongst others.

The joint UN initiative is being implemented in 20 districts across Zimbabwe targeting at 500,000 women.
For more than 3 years Hazvinei Chanachimwe (47) suffered domestic violence. Each time she reported the matter to the police no action would be taken. The police officers had gotten used to seeing her and each time she reported, they would call her husband to come and pick her up.

“We would go back home; the abuse would continue,” recounted Hazvinei.

One day while making a report a police woman reached out to her and Hazvinei narrated her story. The police officer directed Hazvinei to Musasa, an organisation whose mission is to end gender-based violence by focusing on women and girls and changing retrogressive beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, laws and policies.

“We would go back home, and the abuse would continue,” recounted Hazvinei.

“Before I came to Musasa I used to live a tearful life which made my life very painful,” says Hazvinei. “When I got there, I felt I was in safe hands because I met hearty counsellors who offered me counselling. I also received medication and basic treatment as I was sick due to torture from my husband. They took me to the shelter and I stayed there for three and a half months.”

While at the shelter, Hazvinei acquired various skills such as sewing, cutting and designing, soap making, jam making and self-care. Today she is a qualified tailor and takes care of her 3 children.

“I can make any kind of clothes, school wear, work suits, hospital garments and protective wear and bags. I am happy…I was on the verge of suicide before I got help from Musasa”.

The Zimbabwe Demographic Health Survey for 2015 confirms that violence against women and girls remains a huge problem with at least 1 in every 3 women having experienced physical violence since the age of 15.

With support from development partners such as Irish Aid, Sweden and UK Department for International Development, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has been working with various implementing partners to provide services to survivors of gender-based violence around the country such as medical treatment, psycho-social support and legal services.

“Thanks to Sweden and Irish Aid, UNFPA together with Government and Implementing Partners has been able to reach many women and girls with critical services. We hope to expand our services to reach more women and girls as the implementation of the joint EU and UN Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls,” said UNFPA Representative Dr Esther Muia.
Addressing gender inequality in HIV response

Women and girls experience heightened vulnerability to HIV in both conflict and non-conflict humanitarian emergencies mainly due to the increase in sexual violence and rape.

Zimbabwe is not immune to this, and reports of rape and sexual violence were received in the January 2019 crisis spurred by political tensions in the country.

Although the Ministry of Home Affairs acknowledged receiving only one reported case, one case is too many, as highlighted by local women’s rights groups who came together in a campaign against the human rights violations during the crisis.

Realizing the strong link between HIV and sexual violence, and the adverse impact the current economic and humanitarian crisis is having on people living with HIV (PLHIV), UNAIDS convened a group of PLHIV to discuss possible solutions. During this dialogue, it was noted that fear of reprisals and further violence had an impact on the access to support services including post-exposure prophylaxis to prevent HIV infection. Moreover, some people living with HIV who needed to refill their prescriptions for ARVs were not able to do so due to fear of violence.

This calls for stronger protective policies and measures by government for vulnerable groups, especially women and girls as they are disproportionately impacted by sexual violence and HIV in Zimbabwe.

UNAIDS works across UN Agencies in support of the read National AIDS Council and the Ministry of Health and Child Care, in close collaboration with civil society organisations and networks of PLHIV, to address these challenges.

On-going work with the Parliamentary Committees on Health and HIV aims to facilitate policy and law reforms to ensure better protection of vulnerable groups.

Over one million people living with HIV received sustained treatment, care and support allowing them to lead long and productive life

Zimbabwe is on track to reach the 90:90:90 target of ending AIDS by 2020. To date, over 74% of the population have accessed testing and counselling; 87% of those who know their status are on treatment, and 87% of those on treatment have their viral load suppressed

Over 800,000 provided key messages on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights at the community level
Empowering refugee women

Tongogara Refugee Women Association (TORWA) was established in September 2017 to empower refugee women economically, socially and psychosocially.

With funding from the US Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Julia Taft Fund, UNHCR partner Terre des Hommes-Italia (TDH-It) helped 17 female and 5 male headed households to establish a soap making project.

Robert Tibagwa, UNHCR Representative in Zimbabwe said, “the initiative helped raise income for their households, easing the burden of caring for some of their dependants – mostly unaccompanied & separated children, and persons with disabilities and chronic illnesses.”

Project participants received professional training and started producing 1kg laundry bars and liquid soap in April 2018 using raw materials sourced from Harare.

Training in organizational development and marketing was provided in order to strengthen business skills in navigating turbulent economic conditions. The project was registered with the Zimbabwe Registrar of Cooperative Societies in September 2018. Their products were tested and approved by Standards Association of Zimbabwe (SAZ).

Products are sold to fellow refugees and asylum seekers, retail shops in the camp and retailers from the host community. TORWA members record sales for transparency and equitably share their profits.

Every month, project participants congregate for psycho-social support activities designed to improve communication, increase awareness of personal identity, nurture positive relationships with others at work and in the community, lead purposeful lives and build resilience as forcibly displaced people.

There is currently a total of 19,538 refugees living in Zimbabwe, the majority of whom have fled from conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Mozambique. Just over 9,000 of this population of refugees lives in Tongogara Refugee Camp.

You can follow and support UNHCR’s work with refugees through www.unhcr.org and support refugee inclusion in host communities #WithRefugees.

19,538 refugees living in Zimbabwe majority from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Mozambique

14 households supported through the US Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Julia Taft Fund, UNHCR and Terre des Hommes-Italia (TDH-It) to establish a soap making project
“Fighting Poverty and Gender Inequality” was the topic for discussion at the Model United Nations held by pupils from St Marks school Mhondoro, 130 kilometres south of Harare.

One of the pupils explained that in choosing the Model UN topic, the pupils sought to highlight the interrelated nature of gender inequality and poverty.

In the run up to the Model UN, effort was made by UNIC to ensure that the Model UN teams were gender inclusive. On the day of the Model UN, both boys and girls stood up to demonstrate their knowledge of the topic under debate.

The delegates eloquently represented their country’s views because most of them had an opportunity to interact either with the country ambassadors or with the delegated embassy staff.

This gave them confidence as they articulated their country’s positions.

The event was a culmination of a number of build-up activities which included three Model UN Orientations and an awareness-raising session on the United Nations conducted by UNIC Harare staff.

Addressing the pupils after the event, Mr. Vusumuzi Ntonga, Director of Multilateral Affairs Directorate in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, commended the pupils for the high level of discussion and its representation of a true General Assembly debate.

Tafadzwa Mwale, UNIC Harare’s Information Officer explained that the Model UN is a simulation exercise that enhances young people’s knowledge of global issues and exposes them to diplomacy.