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Zubo Trust is a registered, women led, non-profit making organisation which aims at promoting the advancement of women in the Zambezi Valley of Zimbabwe. It was established by Zambezi Valley women, beginning of 2009 after realizing lack of adequate attention being given to issues that affect women and children. Zubo believes that the process of empowering women needs women themselves to take a leading role in finding solutions to the problems that affect them. Zubo Trust therefore endeavours to facilitate a process whereby the rural women realize their socio, economic, cultural and political potential through discussion forums, seminars, meetings; as well as advocating and lobbying human rights and gender issues.

For many decades, women of the Zambezi Valley have been excluded in the development realm as compared to their male counterparts. As a result most women suffer from inferiority complex, which continues to make them invisible in the public sphere and subjugated to their male counterparts. This has excelled the unequal access and distribution of resources, domination of women in private domain, created a limited political representation of women and a tolerance for male violence against women. Only a handful of women have attained high education with the majority being illiterate. In a way, this has negatively contributed to the gender gap in the district, alienating women in most developmental initiatives.

**Vision**

A society where women and children realize, enhance and maximize their social, cultural, economic and political potential as citizens of Zimbabwe.

**Mission**

To promote and support the empowerment of women and children in the Zambezi Valley through inter alia, women discussion forums, seminars; access to natural resources, sensitising the communities and policy makers on the rights of women and children; research, documentation and information dissemination.

**Overall objectives**

* To enhance women’s economic empowerment through increased access to and conservation of natural resources in the Zambezi Valley and to seek markets for their products and produce.
* To promote human rights and gender awareness through advocacy, training and exchange visits.
* To establish a women’s village/drop in centre that will enhance women’s therapeutic services as well as fund raising for women’s economic projects in the district
* To contribute to development research and publications on women and children in the Zambezi Valley
* To coordinate and network with other organisations involved in women and children issues in Zimbabwe.

**Programmes**

Zubo works on three main thematic programmes as identified by the Zambezi valley communities through a participatory process and these programs are as follows:

Livelihoods and economic strengthening - the goal of the program is improved food and nutrition security and economic development in the Zambezi valley that contributes to sustained household economic well-being leading to sustainable women and children's wellbeing.

Education - this is a new thematic area, previously implemented under the women and children's rights program. Over the past 5 years, the focus has been on improving school attendance of girl children at risk (to overcome social and economic barriers to their education) and analysing gender disparities in education in terms of access.

Gender, advocacy and other cross cutting issues – In addition to the main program themes, Zubo places emphasis on mainstreaming gender, health, HIV and AIDS, advocacy, disability, child participation and protection and disaster risk reduction for a holistic transformation of the lives and status of women and children in the Zambezi valley.

Women and Children's Rights – the goal of the program is to contribute to a transformation in the status and lives of women and children in the Zambezi valley so that they can realise their rights and full potential, and become equal and respected members of families, communities and society and to represent their own agendas. Interventions include activities to tackle the culture of impunity at family, school and community level that results in women and children becoming vulnerable to incidences and impact of abuse, violence and harmful traditional practices.

**Notable achievements:**

In 2010, Zubo implemented a Women Empowerment Project in Binga District through UNIFEM (Gender Support Program) funding. Despite the limited funds and time span of this project, Zubo yielded significant results which resulted in receiving more funds in 2011 from UNIFEM. Some of the achievements under the GSP were as follows:

**Creation of spaces of dialogue:** Zubo has managed to create spaces of dialogue for women to freely interact, build confidence, attain collective power and share sensitive gender information. In 2010, vibrant Women's Forums were formed that meet and deliberate their issues of concern in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Each forum has a lead committee responsible for smooth operation and coordination of activities in the ward. This strategy enabled women to take a leading role in tackling problems which affect them. They are now confident and vocal on women and children issues. Most women and girls in the forums now have positive attitude towards themselves as agents of change. In all the community-based structures women are fewer than men. Zubo encouraged the participation of women in community-based structures. As a result, women have begun to take up leading roles in demanding and asserting collective rights in accessing and benefiting from natural resources including fisheries resources. In Binga District today, nine fishing cooperatives now have a woman member in each committee while Bbindawuko an “all-woman” fishing co-operative, was established by Zubo under the UN Women Gender Support Programme (2010-2012)

**Women’s village/Drop in centre:** Zubo is constructing a women’s village/drop in centre is a place for ‘healing’, where women will walk in freely to share their problems, meditate and seek free confidential counselling as well as accessing simplified and user friendly translated legal material. The completion of Women Empowerment Centre in Binga will provide therapeutic services and information dissemination for women and children in Binga district among other benefits. The village/drop in centre will also act as a source of women’s fund raising activities to support their various income generating activities.

In 2011, the organisation promoted women’s economic empowerment through increased exploitation of fish (gill and *kapenta*) in Siachilaba Ward of Binga district. The project broke new grounds by enabling rural women penetrate the male dominated fish industry in Zimbabwe. Since then, the project has brought about tangible economic benefits to the fisherwomen in the district.

In 2012, Zubo promoted women economic empowerment through enabling women access and link with national and regional markets for their products. Products exhibited at such market fairs included crafts, dried fish and dried *kapenta* among others. In addition, a micro finance project was established. The Binga Micro Finance and Gender Based Violence Women Project aimed at promoting intergration of microfinance services and gender based violence. This was achieved through increasing women’s micro finance activities and financial management knowledge and skills; advocating for ending of gender based violence among women and men; capacitating women on confidence building, self esteem and communication; promoting commemoration of 16 days of activism against violence and promoting information dissemination among women and girls. Reduction of gender based violence has been realised in the district through the project.

In the year 2013-14, the organisation through support from UN Women (Fund for Gender Equality) up-scaled all the projects funded under UN Women. There was promotion of women economic empowerment through fish farming (tilapia fish/breams) production, ecotourism (construction of Tonga village lodges) and maximum exploitation of other natural resources laying in abundance in the district. These include *baobab, marula, moringa, jatropha, ilala palm* among others. The goal is to promote total empowerment of the rural women and girl children in the Zambezi Valley.

Through promoting access and sustainable utilzation of natural resources, the project has reached 150 craft weavers in the targeted wards . Also 10 girls have benefited from adding value to the craft products and selling on behalf of the weavers. Income generated from sales is used to meet family's basic needs including paying school fees for children and buying kitchen utensils.

In 2015 through support from Welthaus Bielefeld, the organisation managed to construct a small workshop at the Women Centre site at Binga Centre. The workshop is mainly for jatropha soap production. The workshop bears the potential of producing about 2500 kg of soap per annum. 10.000 kg of Jatropha seeds would be needed to produce 2500 kg of soap.

The natural and health soaps are being processed at the Women Centre by the rural women. The project aims to contribute to the fight against extreme poverty and to strengthen the role of women in Binga District of Zimbabwe (SDGs 1 and 5). It’s meant to benefit all the rural women from the 6 operational wards[[1]](#footnote-1) of Zubo. Jatropha is one of the local plants lying abundantly in the district; and the plants are used as fences in many homesteads.

Capacity building on various aspects of jatropha soap making has been imparted to the beneficiaries through support from Welthaus. Currently, soap production equipment and material is being processed through support from the Germany Embassy. This will enable the product marketed at different forums that include local, regional and international. (see photos attached for more information)

In 2016/17 through support from the UNDP Global Environment Facility - Small Grants Programme (GEF-SGP), the organization facilitated the establishment of the Siamuloba Ecotourism Project in Ward 8 (also called Simatelele Ward). The overall goal of the project is to strengthen and expand the economic empowerment of the rural women and community at large in Ward 8. The focus will be to enable community access, utilize and conserve natural resources laying idly at their disposal. In Ward 8, these include forestry, water, wildlife and land.

**Implementation Approach**

Zubo believes in an approach where people themselves are the primary actors for their own development change. Over the past 5 years, key strategies for driving the process of transformation for Zubo interventions have revolved around beneficiary participation, capacity building and using a rights-based approach to development especially in empowering communities to be masters of their own destiny. Zubo continues to adopt these tried and tested approaches in the implementation of development actions to equip project participants to be masters of their own destiny. For instance, child protection is a rights issue and therefore requires the active involvement of children in planning, implementation and evaluation processes. Throughout the past implementation period, Zubo has been working closely with the local people, government line ministries and community based structures on its women social and economic empowerment projects as a key strategy to enhance community ownership and sustainability of its interventions. Zubo has developed mechanisms for consultation, integrating gender in development processes and participatory planning and monitoring in the communities.

**Areas of operation**

The project is being implemented in 6 out of 25 wards of Binga District; namely Siachilaba, Simatelele, Sikalenge, Manjolo, Kariangwe and Chinonge wards.

**Board and Management**

Board of Trustees: For governance accountability, Zubo is run by an active Board of Trustees (BoT) that regularly meets (on a quarterly basis) to review and guide organizational programs and management procedures. Within the board there are social scientists (development specialists) and a legal practitioner. All the board members are women. The BoT, in consultation with the District Advisory Council (DAC) determine the policies and overall direction of Zubo and its programs. The DAC plays a liaison and advisory role to the BoT and Management. Both the BoT and DAC technically assess progress in implementation and provide strategic advice on programming issues to management on emerging issues as well as connections and technical support, which gives Zubo, a local perspective and district-wide relevance. The DAC meets at least once a year.

Zubo has a team of voluntary staff members with a minimum of a bachelor degree in their fields of expertise, which include international development and management qualifications. Special skills in gender and women’s rights, media, social protection, monitoring and evaluation, accounting and finance and civil affairs also exist among front line program staff.

For details of our operations, please visit our website [www.zubo.org](http://www.zubo.org). And for our contact details – see above on the letterhead.

1. Zubo 6 operational wards in Binga include Manjolo, Sikalenge, Kariangwe, Siachilaba, Simatelele and Chinonge [↑](#footnote-ref-1)