



ZIMCODD



Green Skills Entrepreneurship Bootcamp Bulletin



Our work in Climate Justice

Under ZIMCODD's Trade, Climate and Gender Justice work, our climate justice initiatives focus on equipping communities with resilience and adaptation strategies to ensure that they cope better to climatic shocks such as the El-Nino induced drought which has decimated and shifted livelihoods, leaving already vulnerable communities susceptible to food insecurity and vicious cycles of inter-generational poverty. ZIMCODD's work anchors on supporting rural women and youth in creating sustainable and resilient rural livelihoods. Given the fact that Zimbabwe's economy is largely agrarian, most rural women rely on subsistence and small holder farming to sustain their livelihoods. ZIMCODD works closely with rural communities to develop climate-smart initiatives and create opportunities for income generation and strengthen women's role in economic governance processes. Through such initiatives, women expand beyond subsistence and small holder farming and enter green enterprises, allowing them not only to sustain their livelihoods but also improve their economic prospects and promote individual environmental stewardship.

'Green Skills and Entrepreneurship Boot camp': The Idea

The initiative's main objective focuses on empowering communities with fundamental green skills that enhance their capacity to adapt to climate change and conserve their livelihoods. Climate change impacts are more visible on the rights of the most marginalised communities and magnifies gender inequalities for women and girls. Girls are at risk of dropping out of school to help with the extra domestic chores and lessen the financial burden households face due to climate related shocks and stress (Plan International, 2017). ZIMCODD is currently implementing a Sustainable and Resilient Rural Livelihoods project which underscores the rights of young women and adolescent girls, including the right to quality education before, during and after climate events and their aftermath.

The Green Skills Entrepreneurship Boot Camp provided a unique platform for participants to learn about sustainable agricultural practices, waste management, renewable energy and conversation strategies. The boot camp brought together women and youth from Checheche, Goromonzi, Matobo, Kwekwe and Chiwundura. Through focusing on practical applications of green skills, the boot camp aimed to equip individuals with the knowledge and tools necessary to mitigate the impacts of climate change on their livelihoods, promote sustainability and foster eco-friendly practices.



Linda from Chiundura speaks on her process and wares).

The boot camp thus imparted climate smart livelihoods and entrepreneurial skills to young women and girls to make them more resilient in the face of a changing climate.

The Method

The Green Skills Entrepreneurship Boot camp was held in a highly lively environment that was punctuated by songs, dance and exchange of ideas. The major delivery approach constituted of Modular presentations by Climate Justice Experts and an Agricultural Economist whose service delivered real-time, practical and sustainable green project knowledge to participants. This was attained through experience sharing and documentation, interactive capacity building and modelling, activism, role-playing, songs and motivational 'urges'. Participants were taken through the conceptualisation of enterprises, their management and ultimately making them sustainable and climate smart. Finally, women and youth were also presented with an opportunity to showcase their climate smart initiatives through gallery displays which include yoghurt making, dried vegetables, small grains, garment making among others.

The Modules

The boot camp covered the following modules;

- Introduction to sustainability.
- A feminist perspective on Climate Justice.
- Green off farm, non-farm and on farm livelihood Intervention.
- Green Entrepreneurship in Livelihood Development.
- Business Risk and Feasibility Management.
- Overcoming Market Competition.
- Greening the Business.
- The carbon Market and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Young people.
- Business Formalisation and Protecting Business Ideas.



Evans Dube, (Checheche reports back after group work).

Key Emerging Highlights

The following are key highlights which came out from the sessions.

- Sustainability focuses on meeting the needs of the present without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs. It often incorporates three pillars: environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Climate justice links environmental sustainability to human rights and social justice, highlighting how marginalized communities face unprecedented impacts of climate change.
- A feminist perspective on climate justice brings an essential lens to the intersection of gender equality and climate action, focusing on addressing the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and other marginalized groups. They continue to have limited access to resources, opportunities for economic independence, and influence in decision-making processes. A feminist climate justice approach is essential in supporting women's economic empowerment while ensuring that their voices are central to policy development of gender-responsive climate policies specifically addressing the needs and priorities of women and marginalized genders.

- These policies involve gender analysis, addressing gaps in access to resources, and ensure that adaptation and mitigation efforts are equitable.
- Women and youth are often on the front lines of climate resilience and adaptation efforts in their respective communities. Their unique knowledge and experiences in managing natural resources, community organizing, and fostering sustainable practices make them critical players in building climate resilience.
- Green off-farm, non-farm, and on-farm livelihood interventions aim to build sustainable, environmentally friendly livelihood opportunities. ZIMCODD has been deliberate in supporting interventions that contribute to environmental conservation, climate resilience, and economic empowerment for women and young girls.
- The need to make the environment green was emphasised. Green entrepreneurship in livelihood development is the practice of creating environmentally sustainable businesses that promote economic empowerment while addressing the underlying environmental and social challenges. These ventures provide communities with livelihood opportunities that support ecosystem health, climate resilience, and responsible resource use, aligning with the principles of a green economy, reduce carbon footprints and conserve natural resources.
- "Greening the business" requires a holistic approach which young entrepreneurs need to adopt sustainable practices to minimize their environmental footprint. It integrates various types of assets including Financial, Human capital, Natural as well as Social assets.
- The 3 R's in greening the enterprise which are Reduce, Reuse and Recycle were emphasized. These principles aim to minimize waste, conserve resources, and create sustainable practices in business operations.
- Duty-bearers' perspectives and attitudes towards rural and peri-urban communities have clearly changed because of ZIMCODD's interventions. Duty bearers at local level have become more responsive to citizens' requests. This mindset shift, placing citizens in key economic governance processes, is commendable. ZIMCODD empowerment hubs in Goromonzi and Kwekwe have been participating in their respective local authorities' master plans and successfully engaged local authorities on environmental concerns like minimizing land degradation. Furthermore, in Matobo women successfully engaged local councillors on school children who had dropped out of school and were enrolled back. This shows that women and youth are building good working relationships with duty bearers particularly at local level.
- The politicization of agricultural inputs from areas such as Matobo and Goromonzi has made it difficult especially for women and girls to adapt to the impacts of changing climate.
- The value extracted from the natural resource sector must be ring-fenced towards supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts for marginalised groups and areas.
- Discourse has shifted from equality to equity to address the specific needs of vulnerable groups including PWDs.
- According to World Food Programme, an estimated percentage of 6 million people are expected to be 'food insecure between 2024-2025. The President of Zimbabwe, earlier in April 2024 also declared a state of emergency owing to the El Nino induced drought.

- Preliminary assessments have shown that the country requires more than USD\$2 billion towards various interventions of national response to the crisis. Considering this, participants underscored the need for the national budget to prioritize food security and social protection mechanisms to cushion the most vulnerable groups out of hunger
- On marketing, young entrepreneurs were encouraged to do market research to identify gaps and opportunities within a business. Innovation, cost pricing and branding of any enterprise are equally important.
- Women's Access to Finance is crucial for women's economic empowerment. Budgetary support to ensure women's access to microfinance, credit, and financial services, especially in rural areas is critical. This includes funding for programs that help women start businesses, particularly in sectors like agriculture and the informal economy. Women and young girls were also encouraged to self-organise themselves and apply for financial loans as groups. Formalisation of businesses and record keeping are essential when accessing loans from financial institutions.
- Through climate education, tree planting has been encouraged in Checheche. The participants cited copious levels of deforestation due to firewood dependency for many homesteads in Checheche. Checheche women and youth have taken up the task to encourage tree planting especially indigenous trees across all schools in Chipinge South District.
- Zimbabwe's public debt has weighed down government capacity to invest in social spending and reduced the impact of climate change on the most vulnerable as resources are committed towards debt repayment. The impact of public debt on ordinary citizens and how it impedes the advancement of climate-smart livelihoods needs to be addressed.
- Participants from Chiundura have successfully done study circles where they come together to discuss and learn about specific climate related topics providing a participatory platform where women and youth can collectively explore complex issues, share knowledge, and generate community led solutions.



Mucha Midzi leads a reflection session.



Participant Profiles

The inaugural boot camp drew new participants (who hadn't engaged with ZIMCODD before) and others who are in a continued series of learning. Below are a few profiles for those already in the network and already bearing results from our Empowerment & Climate Justice capacitation.

"Claudette Ndlovu is a young entrepreneur from Matobo. I participated in ZIMCODD's training sessions on public finance management and climate justice and have since cascaded the knowledge and skills that I learnt to my community. In 2023, I organised a successful two-day Green Entrepreneurship Workshop which brought together over 100 villagers to discuss strategies to cope with the changing climate. My leadership and commitment to financial accountability was also recognized in 2023 when I was elected to serve on the Chief's Finance Committee. In 2024, my entrepreneurial journey reached new heights. As a group of six entrepreneurs, we successfully applied for and secured a **USD\$3,000** loan from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprise. This funding enabled me to expand my already thriving chicken-rearing project to include banana and goat farming. My recent participation at ZIMCODD's Green Skills Boot camp has further inspired me to embrace organic farming methods. I can declare, I am a shining example of the impact of ZIMCODD's empowerment and capacity-building initiatives. My story demonstrates how knowledge and determination can drive meaningful change and economic empowerment."



"Claudette Ndlovu is presented with her certificate of participation.

"I am **Sasha Ndebele**, a peer educator whose passion for my community has been reignited through my interactions with ZIMCODD. As a young mother fighting to make ends meet for her family, entrepreneurship is my only way of sustenance. I do piggery and goat farming and also produce and sell detergents. In 2024 my community works that span over a decade was recognized nationally through the Social Impact Award given by The List Awards by Identities Media among numerous competitors. Picking up from the Boot camp, I plan to conduct civic education on climate justice particularly on the importance of greening enterprises."

"For nearly three years, I, **Methembe Dube** from Lower Gweru dedicated myself to broiler production, successfully raising 100 broilers at a time and earning a steady profit. However, I aspired for more in terms of growth and sustainability. My breakthrough came when I attended the Ideas Festival organised by ZIMCODD. This transformative platform introduced me to sustainable farming practices and the value of recycling in agriculture. Inspired by these insights, I began to diversify and integrate operations for maximum efficiency. I ventured into Horticulture, expanding into cabbage farming. I leveraged on the manure from my broilers as organic fertilizer, significantly reduced input costs while boosting the quality and profitability of produce.

Recognizing the potential of sustainable systems, I also started rabbit production. I fed my rabbits with cabbage leaves and discovered that rabbit urine served as an excellent fertilizer for cabbage, creating a closed-loop system that maximized resource utilization. This innovative approach to farming has transformed my operations into a model of resource efficiency and environmental stewardship. My integration of broiler production, horticulture, and rabbit farming showcases how recycling and sustainability can enhance productivity and profitability. I dream of scaling my enterprise into a multi-business operation that exemplifies sustainable agriculture. By continuously improving I aim to inspire other farmers to adopt eco-friendly methods, proving that sustainable farming can be both economically rewarding and environmentally responsible.



Group photo showing all participants at the 2024 Boot Camp

Resolution & follow-up actions

“The inaugural Green Skills and Entrepreneurship Boot camp resolved to scale up green skills development and entrepreneurship opportunities ensuring that no one is left behind.”

Key Follow-On actions

- Boot camp participants created a WhatsApp platform for continued updates and conversation on climate justice.
- A publishable ‘Model on Climate Resilience’ is to be generated and cascaded across participant’s communities and the country.

Key takeaways from the bootcamp underscore the urgent need for:

- Capacity-building initiatives for women and youth to effectively engage in the green economy.
- Policy advocacy for inclusive frameworks that promote gender equity and youth participation in climate action and sustainable business ventures.
- Strengthened partnerships between Civil Society and government to support green entrepreneurship.

Gallery: <https://shorturl.at/I0UPR>



In frame, participants at the Boot camp take notes.