



**WOMEN ADVOCACY PROJECT TRUST  
ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT  
FOR THE PERIOD  
JANUARY 2019 – DECEMBER 2022**



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## **LETTER FROM WAP LEADERSHIP**

Dear Beloved Friends and Partners

WAP is delighted to share this four years Annual narrative report with you– stretching back from 2019 to 2022. We welcome you to take this report as WAP’s invitation for you as an individual, your organization and friends to join us in our efforts and commitment to helping the disadvantaged, discriminated, poor and marginalized women and girls in Zimbabwe through education and economic empowerment so that they can contribute meaningfully towards the achievement of long-term sustainable livelihoods. Should WAP be given more necessary support, this effort will certainly continue to contribute substantively to human security, peace and development in Zimbabwe.

The period covering 2019 to 2022 was ambitious for both WAP and for the women and girls we serve. Despite the many efforts being made towards bettering the economic situation in Zimbabwe, the country continue to experience grave socio-economic challenges, with High Levels of Unemployment, Hyperinflation, International isolation (sanctions), Weak or no economic growth as measured by GD, De-industrialization/closure of companies, Limited Utilization of factory capacity, Collapse of infrastructure, collapsing health system with Shortage or unavailability of essential drugs, Shortage of machines to carry out basic procedures, Skills Migration (Doctors and Nurses), poor remuneration for Doctor and Nurses, high levels of poverty, political instability with long-term economic stagnation, food insecurity, HIV and Aids pandemic, limited access to basic commodities, lack of access to education for many young girls from low income in poor families, continued power outages, lack of clean water, and violence among other issues. Women and children continue to be the most affected by these circumstances.

Human rights situation continued to decline in recent years, with many cases of abduction, torture and abuses being reported.

Unemployment is estimated to have remained high as the country recovers from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic that had caused unrest and collapse of all sectors across the country. Agriculture, which was the back-bone of the country’s economy before the 2000 Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) was not spared by the pandemic. The high rate of unemployment was also exacerbated by the closure of major foreign private companies, the relocation of some of those companies within the region, and brain drain. The impact of such a volatile macroeconomic environment severely affected many women and girls, who constitute 52% of the population and continue to live in abject poverty, rendering them vulnerable to food insecurity, income insecurity and health issues. In addition, many children continue to drop out of school due to parents’ failure to afford school fee. According to UNICEF, about 11 per cent of children aged between 15 and 17 have not completed primary education, and that nearly half the country's youth are not in school due to poverty exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This situation is leading many parents and guardians from poor families to either directly or indirectly pressure their young girls to be married before the age of 18, a situation that continues to fuel early child marriages.

As an organisation WAP is proud to say that the advocacy work of many non governmental organizations has brought about lasting change by creating lasting impacts. On May 27, 2022, the President of Zimbabwe his excellency President Emmason Dambudzo Munangagwa signed into law the Marriages Act, legally prohibiting the marriage of individuals younger than 18. This means that child marriage is now a criminal offense in Zimbabwe. The milestone is expected to bring change and hope to the fight against child marriage in Zimbabwe. However, the implementation and enforcement of law will play a critical role in ensuring the change.

Many young girls in Zimbabwe who indulge in early sexual encounters are usually found to be HIV positive and about 32% of those who marry young end up in divorce cases due to poor economic, financial, social, and reproductive health decision-making. These decisions result in serious consequences for the divorced girl who might experience stigmatization from family members, religious figures and from the community as a whole (UNICEF). Girls from the poorest households were more than 4 times likely to be married or be in a union before age 18. Young girls who end up in such predicament might turn to prostitution, drug abuse and unstable future marriages of convenience which will then have an impact on the future of their children in terms of the economic and social well-being. Such children born out of wedlock are often victims of stigmatization themselves and are often labeled and name-called by society thereby creating a vicious cycle of poverty and stigmatization. Such a situation results in low self-esteem for girls who might be very vulnerable to sexual and emotional abuse by society.

In addition, lack of education for girls has also been described as another main factor of forced early child marriage in Zimbabwe. Less or limited education in the Zimbabwean context is strongly associated with early child marriages, which transcends into economic, social, political, emotional abuse, domestic and intimate partner violence. On the contrary, attaining higher education levels usually protects girls from the possibility of early marriage and any abuses because they make informed decisions. Yet, in many poor, underdeveloped and remote rural communities in Zimbabwe, educating a girl child is given less priority than educating a boy child due to religious and cultural norms and values. Culturally, Zimbabweans believe that a woman's most important role is that of a wife, child bearer, mother, a source of wealth and a homemaker. The provision of education to girls and preparing them for employment is given very little attention. The myth surrounding many male-led families in Zimbabwe is that it is safer and more economically beneficial to spend resources on educating sons rather than daughters, which leads many families to view early marriage as the only viable option for girls.

On the other hand, religion is seen as being a driver of child marriage in Zimbabwe. For example, in the

apostolic sect, girls are often coerced or forced to marry much older men at a very young age. Though such practices have been outlawed by the State and other religious and cultural circles, and now been enshrined into the country's law, child marriage continue to negatively impact on the lives of young women and girls in homes, families and communities, not only in Zimbabwe, but also Africa and the world as a whole. Our hope and trust is that the Government will stick to their promises as was signed by the president and be able to hold perpetrators countable by implementing the law, as well be able to create and increase educational opportunities for poor vulnerable and marginalized girls living in abject poverty so that they are able to attend school through the provision of scholarships and bursaries. In addition to applying stronger penalties and sentencing of violators, creating opportunities for disadvantaged and marginalized young girls and women through socioeconomic empowerment programmes may be the only solution for future sustainable development so that they realize their full potential.

In conclusion, WAP wishes to expresses its thoughtful gratitude to all of our Development Partners in the country and beyond, including Rock Flower -USA, Action for World Solidarity- Berlin, The Fund for Development and Partnership in Africa -FEPA Switzerland, The Advocacy Project- USA, Together Women Rise- USA, Alert Fund for Youth- Netherlands, the Pollination Project- USA and Lush Charity Pot- UK. Without your financial assistance, WAP's 2019 to 2022 achievements would not have been possible. In addition, WAP would want say a million thanks to the Embassy of Switzerland in Zimbabwe for their special donation of a new vehicle to WAP. We also wish to thank our staff for providing leadership, coordination and management of all the programs implemented by WAP during the reporting period and the currently ongoing activities. Our sincere appreciation also goes to parents, guardians, and stakeholders within the communities we work and girls beneficiaries for their support in making our project activities a success. We at the same time want to sincerely thank leaders and communities in Harare, the Zimbabwe Republic Police, students from various schools and young women victims of forced early child marriage for cooperating with, and supporting WAP's initiatives. WAP therefore submits this report to you all for your use and reference in your invaluable work. We hope it will light your way as you search for lasting measures in addressing issues which are keeping many of our girls and fellow citizens vulnerable.

Please consider partnering with us through your donations and support to help us continue helping and empowering affected, vulnerable, disadvantaged women and girls in Zimbabwe.

Thank you



Constance Mugari  
**Executive**

**Detector**

## **I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE WOMEN ADVOCACY PROJECT**

### **I.1. Who we are**

The Women Advocacy Project (WAP) is a registered non-governmental, not for profit trust for women's empowerment. The organization was created in 2012 by a group of women from different communities in Harare. WAP was established after the realization of inadequate attention given to the issues that are affecting women and girls. The organization is committed to promoting and protecting the rights of vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized women and girls in communities through advocacy campaigns and lobbying for the rights of the voiceless women and girls. WAP also seeks to promote women's socioeconomic rights through the implementation of socioeconomic empowerment projects.

#### **Our vision:**

WAP's vision is a society where women and girls realize, enhance, and maximize their social, cultural, economic, and political potential as citizens of Zimbabwe. Our main goal is a world free of child marriage, a world where girls and boys enjoy equal rights, where girls have access to education and are given the same value as boys.

#### **Our mission:**

WAP's mission is to abolish child marriage, promote the rights of women and girls, and work towards women's economic empowerment.

#### ***Our organizational objectives***

- Providing training and leadership capacity-building workshops.
- Facilitating economic empowerment for disadvantaged and marginalized women and girls in Zimbabwe.
- Promoting human rights, gender awareness and reproductive health awareness through advocacy campaigns, training and exchange.
- Coordinating and networking with other organizations with similar objectives in and outside Zimbabwe.
- Contributing to development research and publications on women and children in Zimbabwe.

#### ***Our main focus areas include:***

- Human rights, gender, leadership and HIV/AIDs awareness
- Capacity building, education, lobbying and advocacy
- Commemorations and networking
- Women's economic empowerment

#### ***Our Core Values:***

*The Women Advocacy Project is committed to acting with integrity in our work and our relationships. We seek to uphold our values in all that we do and ask our community to do the same.*

WAP is “still a small, but growing” feminist organization with the following core values:

*I. Independence:*

WAP works independently from any political party, government, or religious institution.

*II. Equality, Financial Indecency and Non-Discrimination:*

WAP works toward the full equality and Financial independence of women and girls, the eradication of any and all forms of discrimination based on gender. We employ and promotes feminist values toward the full equality of all people.

WAP exercises due caution in its work to respect the human rights of all people and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girl children, particularly the practice of early, child and or forced marriages and girls being excluded from accessing education.

*III. Inclusion:*

As an organisation, we know that the empowerment of women and girls means recognizing the interconnectedness of the individuals and communities with whom we work. Only once all voices are heard and all individuals are respected we will feel true liberation. WAP strongly believe that through an awareness of reciprocity, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us.

*IV. Transparency:*

In our commitment to empowering women and girls, WAP will strive to hold itself with integrity to its values, honor transparency, and remain true to its mission as an organisation.

*V. Participation:*

WAP strives to ensure participation and embraces participatory decision-making mechanisms at all levels of its work. It is open to new and innovative practices related to gender equality and democratic conduct.

*VI. Collaboration:*

WAP embraces diverse perspectives and disciplines, joining with partners at all levels towards a common vision and the realization of transformational change.

***WAP's administrative structure:***

At the current moment, Woman Advocacy Project is composed of 26 members and its Administrative structure is as follows:



- General Assembly,
  - Council of Administration or Board of Management (BOM) Composed of 7 members namely Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Director and two advisors,
  - Coordination or Executive Committee.
- 

## **II. SUMMARY OF THE ACHIEVED PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES**

*From January 2019 to December 2022, WAP has managed to implements the following projects and Activities:*

- ◆ Using Soap to Empower women and Girls in Zimbabwe project, known as Clean Girl soap making project.
- ◆ Basic training in Chemical formulary
- ◆ Stand up Speak out training program
- ◆ Child marriage abolition Campaign (CMAC- march)
- ◆ “Give us Books, Not Husbands” Girls Clubs
- ◆ Covid – 19 Emergency Plan
- ◆ Be Brave and Get vaccinated -Covid-19 Vaccine Campaign
- ◆ Story-telling through Embroidery
- ◆ New Soap Making Facility
- ◆ Achieving Fully green energy operated facility
- ◆ The acquisition of a new donated vehicle1
- ◆ Peace Fellowship
- ◆ International outreach.

## II.1. CLEAN GIRL SOAP MAKING PROJECT

WAP's main goal is to fight and reduce poverty, which is the major push factor of child marriage in Zimbabwe. WAP has a vision of a society without child marriage in which girls and women have the same status as boys and men and can develop their full potential in all areas of their lives. A society in which women and girls recognize, improve and maximize their social, cultural, economic and political potential as Zimbabweans. WAP centers its efforts on improving the status of young women and girls in the communities. As unemployment remains high in Zimbabwe, poverty has taken momentum to the level where daughters are sometimes reduced to a level of economic means. Many girls are married off by their families to reduce their perceived economic burden, with the bride price (lobola) used as a means of survival. Many parents have lost value in their daughter's education. WAP therefore centers its efforts at giving women and girls the freedom and ability to become self-sufficient, acquire knowledge and skills, earn an income, and have the freedom to study, and work, and ending the inequalities between women and men, girls and boys that are produced and reproduced in the family, the community, the market, and the state. WAP believes that achieving gender justice is key to achieving the UN Millennium Development goals.

The *Clean Girl Soap Making* project – generously funded by Action for World Solidarity, Together Women Rise – formerly known as Dining for Women, Rockflower, the Fund for Development and Partnership in Africa (FEPA), and the Advocacy Project – aims at empowering and contributing towards the improvement of livelihoods for young women and girls victims of child marriage who were married young and are now often single mothers, as well those exposed to the risk of getting into one if not supported. It does this by training them to produce and sell all-purpose soap, named *Clean Girl* as a way to prevent poverty and help them resist early marriage.

We began this work in September 2019 with the Action for World Solidarity and the Advocacy Project support which was later extended to three more years from 2020 to 2022 in joint efforts with Rockflower, Together Women Rise, and later the Fund for Development and Partnership in Africa- FEPA. The support we received throughout these three years has enabled us to improve our work even more by keeping our first groups of young women and adolescent girls that we started with in Chitungwiza and Epworth and later extended the project to three more impoverished communities which included Waterfalls, Mbare, and Eyre Court. However, due to lack of committed group leader and participants, WAP dropped the Mbare group later in December 2021.



### ***II.1.a. Soap Production and Earnings:***

Since its inception in September 2019 to date, the project has produced around 82,041 bottles of soap - (750ml). 5,100 bottles and 1,200 bottles were first produced in 2019 by Chitungwiza and Epworth groups. From September to December 2020 Epworth and Chitungwiza groups produced and sold 6,330 bottles again. In 2021, four groups including Epworth, Chitungwiza, Mbare, and Waterfalls produced and sold 16,902 bottles of soap (750ml). In 2022, four groups that included Epworth, Chitungwiza, Waterfalls, Eyrecourt and WAP staff produced and sold 52, 509 bottles of soap (750ml).

The above soap sales has raises around US\$ 96, 532 in 4 years. About US \$ 5,000 was raised from soap sales in 2019, US\$ 5,064 was raised between September and December 2020, US\$ 18, 342 was raised in 2021, and US\$ 68, 126 in 2022.

US\$ 53,239.10 has been shared equally among all the participating young women and girls from all the communities. In 2019 US\$ 2,810 was shared among all the girls in Chitungwiza and Epworth, US \$ 2,600 was shared between all the girls From September to December 2020, US\$ 9,171 was shared between all the participating girls from Epworth, Chitungwiza, Mbare, and Waterfalls in 2021, and US\$ 38, 658.10 was shared between all the participating girls from Epworth, Chitungwiza, waterfalls, and Eyrecourt in 2022.



US\$ 43, 293 saving, was used by WAP to contribute to the project expenses that includes upgrading the solar system at the production facility, paying for soap producers monthly salary and transport, paying for soap making facility's electrical system installation labor, paying for WAP vehicle services, paying for monthly soap making water supply, and purchasing raw material for the project. In January 2023, WAP still remained with a brought forward balance of US\$ 21,720.28 raised from soap sales after having spent US\$ 21,573 ON all other expenses that were incurred during the project implementation period from 2019 to 2022. the above balance will be used by WAP as it's contribution to the project form January 2023.

### ***II. 2. b. The Impact and value of the Clean Girl Soap Making Project***

The project has become one of the most important activity within the WAP's intervention plan of action for it's critical role being accomplished in the lives of the young women and girls who are participating and benefiting from its activities. The project is being viewed as a solution to the many challenges that are being faced by many of the poor young women and girls in the communities such as Epworth, Chitungwiza, Waterfalls and Eyrecourt, being described as a positive move towards the economic empowerment and lifesaving for vulnerable and marginalized girls and women, and a contributor to the reduction of unemployment among the youth, through the creation of employment opportunities. In spite of the many challenges such as inflation, quarantines, and curfews, the girls continued to prevail, with many active members, the soap-makers reshaped their life barriers into momentum, opportunity, and solidarity to create a reputable brand among the consumers.

*Clean Girl* Soap has now become an excellent product with good quality soap, excellent in its working, and high market demand. It has successfully helped girls in the program eradicate child marriage and poverty in their lives. Girls who couldn't continue with school because they did not have school fees enrolled back in school to finish their secondary education. We have also seen young mothers being able to pay for their daughter's education. In some families, girls help their parents with their financial responsibilities.

The project has become a source of education support for many young girls and children who are in school and has created an education fund that is supporting girls who had dropped out of school to enroll back and stay in school. Currently, 31 girls are in school using financial support given to them by WAP through the income raised from soap sales and contribution received from the Advocacy Project which was raised from the pen-pal program by a group of Arlington student girls in the United States of America.

## **II.2. BASIC TRAINING IN CHEMICAL FORMULATOR**

This course aims to build the capacity of young school leavers, entrepreneurs and people in the local communities, with the aim of imparting them with basic manufacturing skills and concepts of chemical formulation for basic household and industrial products. It is a building block for success in the making of detergents and solvents for small cleaning businesses. The course also introduced participants to marketing skills, financial management, and book keeping. Several mothers and guardians also benefited from the training program.



From September 2019 to December 2022 WAP was able to train about 320 people in basic chemical formulary. Young women, girls and their mothers/guardians and a few men were directly trained by WAP. 82 were trained in Chitungwiza, 62 from Waterfalls, 40 from Eyre court, 52 from Mbare and 84 from Epworth.

### ***II.2.a. Soap Making Training in Chitungwiza.***

The first basic chemical formulary training began on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 2019 at Dingwiza primary school in Chigowanyika town of Chitungwiza, and went on through a period of two months to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2019. The training was attended by 62 participants, including 37 young women and girls, 3 WAP staff members and 22 parents and guardians. However, most parents were not able to complete the two months training sessions due to family and personal commitments. Only 40 people were able to complete the training program. Among the trained girls, 30 were first selected to benefit from the first one year piloting phase of the project in 2019. as the project kept on going, some of the girls were dropping out



of the project and were replaced by others- those who were trained but were not selected in the early stage of the project and others who were later trained by WAP. In total, Chitungwiza community has had 82 people trained in chemical formulary. In September 2020, we lowered the number of beneficiaries to 20 people only. The reason was because we did not have enough resources to cater for all the group members. In this year 2023, WAP is working with 25 girls who are benefiting from soap making project. WAP is reducing the number of participants to ensure that girls can earn enough income to help sustain their personal and family needs.



### ***II.2. b. Soap Making Training in Epworth***

The second soap making training session was held in Epworth from the 1<sup>st</sup> of October through end December 2019. The training was held at a residential property in Epworth and was attended by the initial 55 people altogether. 32 young women and girls, 21 parents and guardians and 4 staff members from WAP were all trained. WAP selected 15 girls who participated in the first 6 months piloting period. This number was later raised to 20 people from September 2020 at the beginning of the second circle of the project after having received renewed financial support from Action for World Solidarity which enabled the two groups- Epworth and Chitungwiza to continue with their project activities. As has been the case, some girls would leave their clubs as they mature and embrace adulthood responsibilities. This happens often in our girls clubs and WAP replaces them with other trained girls from the group. For this reason, WAP has created a system where new girls who joins the club should attend soap making training and production session. This process has allowed many girls who were not trained in the early stage of the project to acquire the production skills and be able to join the soap making program. Since the beginning of the soap making project in 2019, about 84 people have been trained in Epworth. This year 2023, WAP has raised the number of beneficiaries from 20 to 25. we hope we will be able to include more girls in the future if we manage to raise more funds.



### ***II.2. c. Soap Making Training for Mbare and Waterfalls.***

At the beginning of 2021, WAP received additional financial support from Together Women Rise- formerly known as Dining for Women (USA) which supported WAP with a 2 year grant of US \$ 31,960. The purpose of this grant was to enable WAP to include two more groups of girls- one from Mbare and another from Waterfalls to join the other two groups which already existed- Epworth and Chitungwiza in the project. In January 2021, WAP selected and trained 40 girls- 20 were from Mbare and 20 from Waterfalls. The training was held in Marlborough where WAP staff used to work from. This training session was a bit different from the other sessions that were previously held in Chitungwiza and Epworth. Mbare and Waterfalls groups were trained at a time when Corona virus were spreading at a high rate. Many people were affected and the government had also issued lockdown measures. People were not allowed to gather in a group of ten. This situation brought so many complications to WAP. However, WAP staff managed to submit a letter of application to the police, seeking their authorization to allow WAP to conduct the training with a limited number of participants per each session, while observing all Covid-19 precaution measures as was advised by the World Health Organisation (WHO), other international health institutions, and the Zimbabwe ministry of Health. The permission was granted and WAP was able to carry on with the training program from early February 2021. Only ten people were trained per session. This resulted in the extension of the training period to more than two months. The training period stretched up to April. However, all the 40 girls and additional other twelve members were fully trained.





### *II.2.d. Soap Making Training in Eyrecourt*

In September 2021, WAP received another financial support of US \$ 5,640 from the Fund for Development and Partnership in Africa (FEPA) which enabled WAP to support a new group in Eyrecourt community. On 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021, WAP initiated a soap making training program for 15 young women and girls and 5 parents and guardians in Eyrecourt. The training was held at a residential home in Eyrecourt and 20 participants were trained in the first two months. Another 20 young women and girls joined the WAP “Give us Books, not Husbands” club in Eyrecourt and were later included in the soap making training program in the course of the year 2022. They all were trained and some were selected to benefit from Clean Girl soap making activity in this year 2023. At the moment WAP is working with 25 young women and girls who are benefiting from soap making project in Eyrecourt.





## ***II. 2. e. Training Curriculum***

The training curriculum being used by WAP is a practical hand book on the raw materials, their manipulation, analysis and control in the modern soap plant by Dr. E. G. Thomas. It introduces participants to a number of topics that are relevant and applicable to the process of manufacturing soap, and the types of raw material used in soap making industry, including Defining soap, oils and fats used in soap making, defining saponification, fullers' Earth process for bleaching, Tall ow Method for further improvement of color in tall ow vegetable oils. Palm oils, rancidity of oils and fats, prevention of rancidity, Naphthenic acids, Alkalis caustic, soda caustic, soda ash, etc...

Participants are also informed about the classification of soap making methods which includes full boiled soap or cold process, or carbonate saponification. They are introduced to safety measure and risky types of chemicals used in soap making process, and the classification of soaps- including laundry soap, semi boiled laundry soap, and settled rosin soap. The curriculum is a user friendly book, easy to adapt and produces good results.

## **II.3. STAND UP, SPEAK OUT TRAINING SEMINAR**

Child marriage remains widespread in Zimbabwe. One woman out of three was married before the age of 18. Traditionally, women's rights have always been of low priority in Zimbabwe. Women have been subordinated under the auspices of deep-rooted African customs and cultural practices, compromising their fundamental rights. Practices such as child and early marriages; virginity testing; child betrothal; the appeasement of avenging spirits; and dowry price payments, often inherited from ancestors, continue to be perpetuated by generations. Child marriage tends to affect girls more than boys. Since 2008 an estimated 8 000 girls have been forced into early marriages or were held as sex slaves in Zimbabwe. Child marriage has a devastating impact on the lives of girls. It disrupts childhood and deprives girls of their right to be a child. It often leads to school drop-out, disallowing girls to develop their full potential and to early pregnancies, when a girl is not mentally and physically ready to birth or take care of a young child. Child marriage deprives girls of their rights to acquire appropriate skills to enter the labor force as adults pushing them further into poverty. Child marriage also increases the risk of domestic violence, psychological and physical violence, including sexual violence, and HIV- infections. About 34% of girls in Zimbabwe are married before the age of 18 and 5% are married before their 15th birthday.

Child marriage not only impacts on the individual development of many girls in Zimbabwe. It also has a negative impact on the development of the country. Girls married before completing their education have limited opportunities for employment and their contribution to the economic development of the country is reduced.

In response to this situation, in 2018, WAP in partnership with Girls Not Brides (UK) successfully launched its first ever pilot training seminar on “Stand up, Speak out” a youth activism training programme – meant to empower young women and girls with knowledge that enables them to stand and fight against the unjust acts of child marriage being propagated by many within families, communities and societies both in Zimbabwe and the world over.

On 23-25 October 2019, WAP implemented its second “Stand up, Speak out” training using financial support received from Stichting Alert fund for youth in the Netherlands. The program was held at Shingirirai conference center in Ardbennie, Mbare area of Harare and was attended by 30 participants who were invited from different high schools in Harare. The program aimed at providing participants with essential mentorship on women’s human rights and sexual reproductive health education to help them strengthen their capacities and ability to resist child, early and forced marriages and children abuse. The goal was to further raise awareness among young activists on the issue of child, early, and forced marriages and unions that keeps occurring in many families and



communities of Zimbabwe.

### ***II.3.a. Profile of participants in the training programme***

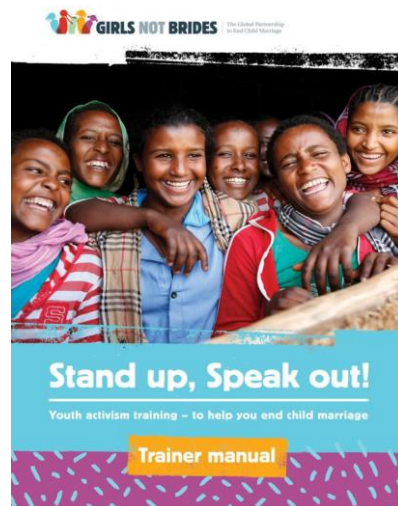
The training was attended by 30 participants including 25 girls between the ages of 16 to 25 years old, 3 teachers, and 2 WAP staff members. Most of the girls were still attending their secondary education and were drawn from form two, three and form fours in public and private secondary schools.

### ***II.3.b. The training manual***

The training covered a number of topics that were relevant, useful and practical for girls and young women in capacity building and in the elimination of child marriage. The training started with opening remarks given by the Women Advocacy Project’s Director Mrs. Constance Mugari.



This was WAP’s second time to use the “Stand up, Speak out” youth activism training manual in a training seminar set up. Although WAP’s ambassadors have been using the manual on several occasions in their local community clubs. The most fascinating aspect of the training manual is that it allows participants to work and learn together as a group and enabled them to understand in deeply about the meaning of child marriage, its consequences, causes, and how it can be prevented. The training also provided basic and advanced leadership guidance for mentoring and coaching young women and girls to actively participate in the decision-making processes that affects their lives. It provided strategies for raising awareness about gender and women’s rights, advocacy and education.



Participants also conceptualized possible solutions and actions to reduce the prevalence of child marriage and promote good leadership by acting as change agents in their respective communities. It was agreed that girls ambassadors should improve their efforts to encouraging more girls to join the “Give us book, Not Husbands” Clubs in their respective community. Make use of the training manual often to help girls understand realities that are involved in child marriage and ways to fight them. Participants also recommended that girls should be able to volunteer their time and get involved with others in their

community to help each other prevent from abuses and challenges girls face. They should be able to discipline themselves thoughtfully and stay away from anything that may end them up in danger of abuse. Each should be able to examine her behavior. Try to educate each other about moral conduct. Have knowledge about children rights, and buses, and attend and support prevention program.

#### II.4. “GIVE US BOOKS, NOT HUSBANDS” CHILD MARRIAGE ABOLITION CAMPAIGN “COMMEMORATING THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD”

On 19 October 2019 WAP, in partnership with representatives from the Government of Zimbabwe’s Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, and Small and Medium Enterprise Development, Victim Friendly Unity of the Zimbabwe Republic police, Evangelical fellowship of Zimbabwe, Department of Social Services- Government of Zimbabwe, and other stakeholders joined the rest of the world in commemorating the international day of the girl child by successfully holding its fourth “Give Us Books, Not Husbands” Child Marriage Abolition Campaign in the Harare’s Central Business District.



The implementation of this successfully held campaign was made possible through the financial support received from Lush Charity pot (UK) and Rockflower (USA). The aim of the awareness campaign was to educate participants and community members around Zimbabwe about the dangers of child marriage and the need to fight it, as well increase public awareness on the laws pertaining to child marriages and child abuses, and to call on the government of Zimbabwe and stakeholders to consider investing in girl children education. Child marriage is internationally recognized in law as a form of gender-based violence. Both are human rights violations. Child marriage puts girls and women at increased risk of sexual, physical, and psychological violence and related outcomes throughout their lives. The campaign was a call for the Government of Zimbabwe to uphold the rights of children from a national level by condemning early child marriage practices, regardless of religion, political affiliation, age, sex, race, ethnicity, color or doctrine and increase support to enable girl children access to education. Every child- be it a girl or a boy, all have the equal right to education.



WAP is very proud to announce that these campaigns have produced tremendous positive outcomes within the nation of Zimbabwe as a whole. WAP's advocacy work has created lasting impacts. On May 27, 2022, the President of Zimbabwe signed into law the Marriages Act, legally prohibiting the marriage of individuals younger than 18. This means that child marriage is now a criminal offense. The piece of legislation brings hope to the fight against child marriage, however, implementation and enforcement will play a critical role in actioning change. <https://www.unicef.org/zimbabwe/press-releases/end-child-marriage-we-need-empower-women#:~:text=%E2%80%9CI'm%20happy%20that%20on,right%20to%20be%20a%20child.>

#### ***II.4.a. Overview of event activities***

The event activities included:

- A two and half kilometer march
- Distribution of informational fliers
- Dramatic performances
- Poems and Speeches

The awareness campaign began with a two and half kilometer street walk which covered the distance between 4th Street and Union Avenue Street at the event venue through Janson Moyo and Julius Nyerere Roads. The march was attended by participants including representatives from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, and Small and Medium Enterprise Development, Victim Friendly Unity of the Zimbabwe Republic Police, Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, the Department of Social Services-Government of Zimbabwe, teachers, Students and young mothers and victims of early child marriage from Harare's suburbs, Epworth, Chitungwiza, Mbare and Waterfalls.

*Guests of honor at the 19 October 2029 "Give Us Books, Not Husbands" event included:*

- Honorable Mr. Earnest Chimborazo, Provincial Development Director from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, and Small and Medium Enterprise Development
- Mrs. Pricilla Dozva, Finance and Administration Officer from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, and Small and Medium Enterprise Development.
- Mrs. Florence Madzimira, Development Coordinator from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, and Small and Medium Enterprise Development.
- Rev Daylight Korombi, the Deputy Chair for the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe.
- Rumbidzo Chitsiku, delegate from the Department of Social Services- Government of Zimbabwe
- Mr. Mabika Bakiri, delegate from Victim Friendly Unity of the Zimbabwe Republic Police
- Mrs. Constance Mugari, Executive Director, Women Advocacy Project.

#### ***II.4.b. Summary of speeches***

*Constance Mugari, WAP's Executive Director, opened the event with a speech by thanking WAP's staffs members on launching a successful campaign. She acknowledged the presence of the campaign's participants, including the guests of honor, delegates and representatives from the ministry of Women Affairs, Community, and Small and Medium Enterprise Development. The Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe Deputy Chairperson, delegates and representatives from the Social service department of the Government of Zimbabwe, delegates and representatives from the Victim and Friendly Unity of the Zimbabwe Republic Police, teachers and students from various public and private schools and churches, members of the media from both public and private, as well as young people who joined the event.*



*Mrs. Mugari called on all stakeholder including the government of Zimbabwe, the UN, NGO sector, and the church to consider accelerating their investments to allow and better girls' access to education, skills, and job prospects in Zimbabwe. She stressed that many girls face considerable barriers to education in Zimbabwe. The majority are discriminated against, forced into child marriage or child labor, or fall prey to sexual exploitation or trafficking.*

*Many girl children aged between 15 and 17 have not completed their primary education level in Zimbabwe. Every child has the right to a safe, formal, quality education and access to lifelong learning she said.*

*She further added that, there was need for creating opportunities and safe spaces for girls' voices to be heard and listened to in decisions that affect their lives. This will be more important, the girl children's voices matter and are important because often times their views, opinions, and ideas are brushed off or deemed insignificant just because they are girls, living in this male dominated society. Even though the laws tries to protect women's rights, many people particularly in the African family set up and communities do not respect girls rights. This calls for more open opportunities for girls to be sent to school and acquire knowledge that will enable them to be useful and be able to stand up and defend their rights.*

*Mrs. Mugari further said that WAP as an organisation believes that promoting girls' access to education, primary health care and basic human needs is critical for their empowerment and for the achievement of gender equity and equality. Promoting girls access to education is vital because it may facilitate the achievement of a happy life and enjoyment of good things the world has to offer.*

*A great job, a good mother and good social reputation are few of the many benefits of being an educated girl. Education is a precondition for a promising and secure future and a stable life for both girls and boys. It is also the key to poverty alleviation and may contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals 1, 4 and 5.*

*There is need to give more attention to girls' education to providing job-relevant skills and training to enable them to participate in the workforce and to move from dreaming to achieving a better future.*

*She concluded by citing that research evidence have proved that "Poverty is a key driver of child marriage, and girls from poor families are more likely to become child brides than those from wealthier households. If we really want to tackle poverty and end child marriage we must give all girls the tools they need to invest in themselves. That means providing them with the quality education and training they need to earn an income and create a better future for themselves and their families is key.*

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### ***Honorable Mr. E Chimbodza***

*The Honorable Mr. Earnest Chimbodza is the Provincial Development Director from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, and Small and Medium Enterprise Development. In his opening remarks, he thanked WAP for initiating and successfully implement the campaign. He also thanked the participants who attended the event.*

*In his speech, Honorable Chimbodza went on to state that early marriage, defined as marriage below the age of 18, remains one of the major challenges facing young girls in Zimbabwe, Africa and the world, with over 42 percent of young girls between the ages of 15 to 19 years being married in Africa. He said, Child marriage is a human rights abuse. It constitutes a grave threat to young girls' lives, health and future prospects. Marriage for girls can lead to complications related to pregnancy and childbirth, and in developing countries, mainly in Africa and Zimbabwe in Particular these are the main causes of death among 15–19 year-old girls. Girls who are married are also exposed to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. For a girl, marriage can mean the end of her education, can set aside her chances of a vocation or career, and can steal from her foundational life choices.*

*He further added that, child marriage remains a growing threat to the basic human rights and protection of children in Zimbabwe. He thanked WAP efforts for its advocacy strategy and awareness raising on the need to abolish child marriage in Zimbabwe, and further called for more appropriate measures to be taken*

*to abolish traditional practices that are detrimental to the health of children with reference to other children's rights that are connected to child marriage, such as the right to freedom of expression and the right to protection from all forms of abuse.*



*Honorable E. Chimbodza told participants that the Zimbabwean constitution and other pacts such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) prohibits child marriage and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) recognizes the right to free and full consent to marriage.*

*He further said that we are aware that, in the case of child or early marriage, at times parents consents on behalf of their children as they are considered to be too young to make their own decision for themselves. And that both boys and girls are involved in child marriage in Zimbabwe; but girls more often face adverse effects on their mental, physical and emotional growth. This must come to an end, allow children to mature, given a chance to study and earn good qualifications for a better future he said. The issue of child marriage is widespread especially in areas where poverty is rampant and families lack access to alternative opportunities such as income-generating and educational programmes. In most cases, girls can be seen as an asset from which families can gain property and livestock from bride wealth exchanges- Honorable Chimbodza said.*

*He concluded by alluding that many other factors that lead to the ongoing practice of child marriage include ingrained gender bias, with a preference for sons; insufficient laws; and observance of traditional/cultural/religious practices and belief such as payment of a bride price. Early marriage has become a strategy for survival for many families across the country, whether it is relieving them of a burden or receiving a form of payment to support them. This practice must come to an end in our country.*



*Honorable Chimbodza ended his speech by encouraging parents and families to value, love and consider their female children like any other child. All children are equal, be it a boy or a girl they are all the same and deserve equal rights and treatments – he said.*

*He said, the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, and Small and Medium Enterprise Development is deeply concerned and committed to ending early marriage and advancing girls and women in social, economic and political spheres for the purpose of economic growth and development. As the Ministry representative, he called for greater investment in educating the girl child and empower them by improving their job prospects in Zimbabwe, thereby reducing incidences of sexual and gender based violence. He emphasized on creating safe spaces for girls voices to be heard and listened to in decision that affects their lives. He ended his remarks by sincerely extending his thoughtful gratitude to WAP for organizing yet another successful and peaceful event.*

You can watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pBxrqa4JoM> to learn more about WAP work and the 2019 held campaign.

You can also watch the following videos: <https://www.facebook.com/100064859253822/videos/527152611198538> to learn about the other speeches that were delivered by Rev. Daylight -the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe Deputy Chairperson and Mr. Mabika – the delegate from the Victim Friendly Unit of the Zimbabwe Republic Police.

## **II.5. “GIVE US BOOKS, NOT HUSBANDS” GIRLS CLUBS**

In 2018, WAP launched a new program- the Ambassador Against Child Marriage. The program aim was to provide essential mentorship and sexual health education to girls in communities of Harare. Under this program, WAP selected and trained five gifted girls to work with us as Ambassadors for reproductive health and against early marriage. Their task were to mentor other more vulnerable girls, answer their questions about sexual and reproductive health, and lead training and counseling sessions in their communities. If a girl is at risk of being forced into marriage by her family, the ambassador will act as a first line of response and notify WAP’s staff who can then intervene with the family. Out of this new innovative approach, WAP managed to establish five new “Give us Books, Not Husbands” girls clubs in five destitute communities that includes Epworth, Chitungwiza, Waterfalls, Hopely and Mbare. The five clubs were initiated by the five girls who were trained by WAP and were able to mobilize around 40 participating young women and girls who attended weekly drop-in session every week in each of the five communities. Participating girls learn about dangers of child marriage, sexual reproductive health and rights and Children’s and women’s human rights. This program was later extended to Eyrecourt community.





## **II. 5.a. The Curriculum**

WAP uses two main training manuals, prepared solely for training young women and adolescent girls.

a. WAP provides all its clubs with both versions of the Stand Up Speak Out Youth Training Manual known as:

- *Youth Leadership to address Child, early and forced marriages and unions (produced for South American Youth, but is adaptable in Africa); and*
- *the Youth Activism Training to help End Child Marriage (Trainer Manual).*

Both the above training manuals aims at:

- ✘ Support the trainers (both youth and adults) to effectively guide and support young people to advocate on issues relating to child marriage in their communities.
- ✘ Provide exciting resources and innovative guidance for young activists on how to work on the issue of child marriage in their countries and communities.
- ✘ Be rooted in the perspectives of young people. The toolkit was created by a range of people, including Girls Not Brides members, youth advocates, external consultants and Girls Not Brides staff. It is important that any resource for young women and men is shaped by them.
- ✘ Inspiring fact! Through sharing case studies of different types of approaches and from different parts of the world, the manual shows the participants examples of how others are addressing child marriage in their communities.
- ✘ Raise awareness among young activists on the issue of child, early and forced marriages and unions.

The second manual that WAP uses to train its participants is the *Essential Packages Manual: A Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Programme for Young People*. The book was authored and published by Choice for Youth and Sexuality- Netherlands in partnership with Amref, Rutgers, Simavi, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Stop Aids Now, and Dance for Life. The book was given to WAP by Choice for Youth and Sexuality as a gift to help WAP in training young people.

## **II.5.b. The program outcomes**

From the launch of the “Give us books, Not Husbands” girls clubs program in 2018 to date, WAP’s ambassadors have been able to directly train around 460 young women and girls in dangers of child

marriage, sexual reproductive health and rights, and women's and children's rights. However, many of the girls keep dropping out of the clubs as they mature, and would be replaced by others who join. Out of this number, about 220 young women and girls have benefited from the Clean Girl soap making project. 110 mothers, guardians and a few men have also benefited from the training in basic chemical formulary.

One major success in this program is that since WAP initiated this new innovative approach in 2018, none of the girls who joined our clubs married as young. WAP has recorded only 8 marriages of girls who participated in the WAP's "Give us Books, Not Husbands" Club activities. All were married above the age of 18 years (the accepted legal marriage age in Zimbabwe)

WAP has also dropped two community clubs- Hopely and Mbare. The reason was because of limited number of staff in the organisation to help manage the club activities and participants' lack of commitment. We are at the moment left with four groups in four impoverished communities- Epworth, Chitungwiza, Eyre court and Waterfalls where the majority of participating girls and young women are involved in soap making activity.

## **II. 6. WAP COVID – 19 EMERGENCY PLAN**

The outbreak of the corona virus in 2019 sparked an international crisis. On February 11, 2020, WHO officially declared COVID-19 a global pandemic making it a public health emergency of international concern and called for strong response as the virus tremendously fast raised in the number of countries with many cases being confirmed. The pandemic inevitably generated panic among various stakeholders.

For Zimbabweans, there was serious anxieties about the country's capability to cope with the disease, even though there were still only a few cases. For many years, Zimbabwe had been experiencing a serious economic meltdown, humanitarian crisis and collapsing health system suffering from very serious shortages of basics such as painkillers, gloves and masks, and a more critical shortage of ventilators and oxygen tanks. Poverty was and still estimated to have remained very high among the populace. The Zimbabwe's health delivery system was in a deplorable state, with serious shortages of drugs and medical supplies. Many poor citizens suffered with hunger as the government of Zimbabwe responded by placing a series of extraordinary measures and Statutory Instruments that included a series of lock-downs and curfews to combat the pandemic.

In March 2020, WAP received financial support from Action for World Solidarity, Rockflower, The Advocacy Project, and the Pollination Project. The support enable WAP to reach out to over 100 families in the communities of Epworth and Chitungwiza to avoid the virus by printing and handing out information from the WHO and other leading health institutions. Our ambassadors also distributed small parcels (soap, cooking oil, face masks and Mealie-meal) to the families. The soap that girls distributed was "Clean Girl" soap that WAP team produced before the pandemic. In every visit, the girls remind families of the importance of social distancing, washing of hands, not touching eyes, mouth, and nose to mitigate the spread of the virus. WAP also distributed COVID-19 emergency kits that included hand washing soap, and masks to 4 local health clinics in Chitungwiza and Epworth.

**II.6.**  
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**GET VACCINATED COVID- 19 VACCINE CAMPAIGN**

WAP launched its COVID-19 vaccine campaign in December 2020, targeting all its participating young women, girls and their families in the communities of Epworth, Chitungwiza, Eyrecourt and Waterfalls. The campaign primarily aimed at encouraging the girls and their families to accept vaccines and get protect from the virus. In October 2021, Zimbabwe began to receive thousands of COVID-19 vaccine doses from the global COVAX Facility to complement the national vaccine deployment efforts. On the launch of its vaccination campaign, the government made vaccines available and open to every Zimbabwe citizens, starting with all the health workers and essential services providers. However, many people feared as there were speculation of inaccurate information that made it harder for people to believe in the effectiveness of the vaccines. The majority of the citizens became hesitant and could not consider taking the vaccines.

To this effect, WAP decided to launch a *Be brave and get vaccinated* campaign with financial support received from the Advocacy Project in Washington DC. The campaign made it possible for many people including friends and neighbors of the girls’ families in the local communities to change their minds and accepted to be vaccinated. This was achieved through educating the community members about the accuracy, effectiveness and importance of the vaccines using the WHO published educational material and testimonies from those who received their jabs in the early stage.



**BE BRAVE GET  
VACCINATED**



**Women Advocacy Project, Zimbabwe  
The Advocacy Project, Washington DC**



## **II. 7. STORY TELLING THROUGH EMBROIDERY (QUILTING)**

The Women Advocacy Project in partnership with The Advocacy Project- Washington-DC supports girls in marginalized communities to use embroidery as a tool for therapy, human rights, and advocacy. With financial contribution from the Advocacy Project, WAP has managed to conduct three successful sessions of quilt training with girls in three years, since 2019. The first session was held in 2019 and was attended by 14 vulnerable girls from Epworth and Chitungwiza. The girls produced 14 quilt squares with their own hand made stitches describing stories about incidences of child marriages and child abuses that most young women and girls suffer in local communities. The panels were then sent to the US and were assembled into an advocacy quilt by the Advocacy Project. The quilt was later in November 2019 used by WAP's Director- Constance Mugari to present at the ICPD25 international conference. The link below has more detailed outcomes <https://www.advocacynet.org/zimbabwe-child-marriage-quilt/>

In 2020, WAP held its second session in quilt training. In this session, 12 girls from Epworth, Chitungwiza, Mbare and Waterfalls produced 12 quilt squares with stories describing the many challenges the majority

of people living in Harare and Zimbabwe as a nation faced during Covid-19 lock-downs in 2020. The squares were again sent to the US and were assembled into a wonderful finished quilt by the Advocacy Project. This link here <https://www.advocacynet.org/zimbabwe-girls-covid-quilt/> describes more details about the outcomes.

In July 2022, the Advocacy Project sent a team of professional quilt trainers from the US to Zimbabwe. The trainers included Mrs. Barbara Fitzsimmons – an enthusiastic supporter of the AP's quilt program. Mrs. Barbara is a retired educator who has taught at all levels of education from preschool through graduate schools. She established a graduate program for federal teachers in Europe and was a founding member of a women's crisis center in Germany. She is also an award-winning quilter and fiber arts teacher, having taught quilting and embroidery in North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. She has completed over a dozen quilts for the Advocacy Project and has curated two exhibitions at US museums. Mrs. Barbara is currently the AP's Quilt Program Coordinator.

In her visit to WAP in July 2022, she was accompanied by a student peace fellow Delaney Rogers, who is a graduate of the University of California-San Diego, majoring in Political Science with a concentration in International Relations. The two taught a group of 15 young women and girls who are part of WAP's "Give us books, Not Husbands" clubs in Chitungwiza, Epworth, Waterfalls and Mbare.



The 15 girls produced 30 excellent quilt squares which were collected by the trainers. The squares were sent to an online store – the Southern Stitchers market where the embroideries are being sold to raise money to support girls education in Zimbabwe. You can visit the following link: <https://www.advocacynet.org/advocacynet-390-december-8-2022/> to learn more about the outcome. The store is being managed by the Advocacy Project in Washington DC.

## II.8. NEW SOAP MAKING FACILITY

In January 2022, WAP received financial assistance of US \$ 20, 500 from Rockflower in the US. The fund enabled WAP to build a new soap-making factory in Sandton Park. For many years WAP girls produced soap at a rented residential property in an area called Marlborough in Harare, where working with chemical was not allowed and WAP found it difficult to work. The production space was very small. Girls produced soap from a two doors garage. They could not produce enough soap as was intended.

In December 2021, the Clean Girl Soap making Project found favor at Rockflower and was granted financial support to construct a soap making factory. The building is a temporary solution, but will sustain the project in long run. It has a big production room where girls can produce and package more than 3,500 bottles in one production round.



The structure also has a store room for the material, computer room, one office room and a separate toilet at the end.

### *II.8.a. Achieving Fully green energy operated facility*

With financial contribution received from Action for World Solidarity- Berlin, WAP was able to invest in a complete PV System with 4 solar panels, 4×25AH gel batteries, 5KV inverter, and accessories. WAP later purchased an additional 2 solar panels, one lithium battery and another set of installation accessories using part of the money raised from soap sales. The system has enabled the production facility to run completely on green energy without any disruption. This has relieved WAP from depending on unstable electricity.





## II. 9. ACQUISITION OF A 2ND DONATED DONATED

In June 2022 WAP signed an agreement with the Embassy of Switzerland in Zimbabwe to receive a new vehicle- Toyota Land Cruiser Prado. The process was made possible through recommendation and partnership support from Mr. Marcel Dreier and board members from the Fund for Development and Partnership in Africa (FEPA- Switzerland). The car was then handed over to WAP on 16 January 2023, to help support its endeavor in helping and empowering young women and girls to avoid early, child marriage. This vehicle is the second transport donation that WAP has received since its creation in 2012. In 2017, WAP received it's first donated vehicle – a Nissan Hard Body double cab from MIVA Netherlands. The vehicle has helped WAP with transport logistics for the past five years. The car was acquired as a second hand and the engine is now old.



## II. 10. PEACE FELLOWSHIP



Since 2018, WAP has hosted graduate students from [the Advocacy Project](#) in the US to spend 10 weeks in Zimbabwe during the summer, working with WAP. In 2018 we hosted our first peace fellow, Alexandra Kotowski- <https://www.advocacynet.org/author/akotowski/> a Master of Public Administration student at Columbia University's School of International & Public Affairs, where she studied Human Rights & Humanitarian Policy with a focus on gender. Alex helped WAP to conduct a research on girls education in Zimbabwe. She produced and posted 10 blogs found on the above link reporting on the work of WAP.

In 2019, WAP hosted its second peace fellows – McLane Harrington <https://www.advocacynet.org/author/mharrington/> who studied at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy pursuing a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy. After working with WAP for 10 full weeks McLane helped WAP to initiate the soap making project by raising the first initial financial means used to train girls and their mothers in Epworth.

In the year 2022, WAP had the pleasure to welcome and work with Dawa Sherpa, a master's student at The Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. Dawa is pursuing an International Affairs degree concentrating in Women, Peace, & Security, and Conflict and Development. Dawa believes that every girl deserves a quality education and the opportunity to lead a life of choice, independence, and freedom.



Her work at WAP this summer has been very fruitful and effected tangible results, despite many challenges faced – weeks without electricity and water, having difficulties with transport after WAP's only vehicle broken down. However, we were able to accomplish most goals that were set for this summer. [Dawa has written ten very good blogs about her work with us which can be read here.](#)

## **II.11. THE INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH.**

With the help of our partner organization, the Advocacy Project (AP) WAP has managed to connect girls from Zimbabwe to high school students in the US through a pen-pal program. The partnership began in 2019 when Women Advocacy Project (WAP) launched a soap training program for girls in two under-served neighborhoods of Harare with funds from Action for World Solidarity in Berlin and The Advocacy Project (AP) in Washington. WAP's goal was to help the girls earn some money and so resist early marriage, which is often driven by poverty. The result exceeded all expectations. Led by two girl "ambassadors," Evelyn Sachiti – in Chitungwiza and Trish Makanhiwa – in Epworth, the girls developed an all-purpose liquid soap with the brand name Clean Girl and sold around 6,000 bottles by year's end.

AP connected Evelyn and Trish with Claire Brophy, head of the Girl Up club at the Wakefield school, and the friendship was flourishing by March 2020 when the pandemic struck. Locked down and frightened, the girls in Zimbabwe and the US decided to describe COVID-19 through embroidery. Their powerful stories have been assembled into three advocacy quilts and widely exhibited. The two groups kept their spirits up by meeting regularly on Zoom to discuss their embroidery designs, music, school and food. One meeting even featured video footage from a winter storm in Washington. It was the first time the Zimbabwe girls had to closely experience snow event on zoom.

As the pandemic waned, the Wakefield team decided to show their solidarity with the WAP girls by making their own soap. They chose the same name, *Clean Girl*, but came up with a very different product. While the Zimbabwe soap is green and gooey, the Arlington soap comes in colorful blocks embedded with rose petals, blood orange and other exotic ingredients.



For all their accomplishment, some of the girls in Zimbabwe have been forced to drop out of school by the financial crisis. As a result, AP and WAP have decided to launch a small education fund for the girls in Zimbabwe. In January 2023, WAP received the first transfer of US \$ 1,000 from the American girls, a contribution to support annual school fees for the first batch of 31 girls who were selected to benefit from

the WAP education support program in the year 2023. WAP is hoping to extend support to the rest of other girls on the waiting list once the organisation manages to raise more financial support.

### **III. CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION PLANS**

#### ***III.1. Challenges***

The biggest challenge that WAP continue to face in achieving its goals and objectives over that years are the limited financial resources. Most of our funding ran out in December 2022. Our goals are ambitious, and we recognize that we we still need external funding to continue our work. As a result, we are focusing on how possible WAP can be able to extend it's partnership with our current funding partners while also looking for new partners who are willing to join us to achieve our goals. Another serious concern is the economic downturn in Zimbabwe. Once again, Zimbabwe is facing economic challenges that impact the cost of raw materials we are buying for the project. Although we managed to produce more than double out our set production goal in 2022 but the rising cost of raw materials in Zimbabwe almost made it impossible.

In addition, WAP is facing a huge challenge of water. We are at the moment relying on buying water from water delivery companies for soap production. We order 5,000 liters of water every two weeks. This has increased spending cost for the project, while the project is struggling to meet the required amount of materials.

Another challenge that WAP is facing is lack of a delivery vehicle. The only vehicle we used to deliver soap- the Nissan Hard body double cab pick up – is broken down. The mechanical engineers who attended to it advised that the engine is too old and might have worked enough. It is currently down. The other vehicle that WAP received from the Swiss Embassy recently – is a closed vehicle with no space to carry soap. WAP is now resorting to hiring a small truck to deliver soap to the girls in the communities.

#### ***III.2. Mitigation Plans***

WAP plan to continue mobilizing funds, follow up on funding possibilities from our current funders including Rock Flower, Action for World Solidarity, The Advocacy Project, Together Women Rise, Fund for Development and Partnership in Africa, and others and will continue to build relationships and engage with potential funders. The organization will raise and allocate funds to cater for its institutional development needs including staff base, office space and purchase of relevant equipment. In addition, WAP also focus on soap production and sales. Diversifying our income generation activities will help WAP meet some of its organizational needs, as well increase chances for short to medium terms financial sustainability.

This may require WAP to invest more in its Clean Girl soap making project, produce and sale as many bottles as possible, open small own sales stores in different local populated communities. In addition, WAP would like to engage in long term projects to enable financial sustainability and autonomy.

## **IV. FUTURE PLANS**

In the next years, WAP plans to focus on the following key areas:

### ***IV.1. Improve and expand the Clean Girl soap making project.***

WAP would love to grow and expand the currently ongoing Clean girl soap making project so that it will benefit more vulnerable women and girls in the poor communities, both in current areas where WAP is working and other new areas. We propose to increase the amount of production and have own selling points.

### ***IV. 2. Strengthening our Organizational Capacity***

WAP aspiration is to build, develop and maintain qualified or high-performing human resources dedicated to promoting women's rights and development so as to strengthen the organization's capacity to effectively and efficiently run its projects and activities towards the achievement of the organization's mandate. We believe that investing in our organization's capacity is a key to its longevity. This will require training, mentoring, coaching and building a shared vision between Board members, staff, volunteers and the organization. It will also require strategic thinking, team learning and personal mastery toward the achievement of organizational leadership development and sustainability. WAP would like to thank the Advocacy Project (USA) for the continued technical support and organizational capacity building through the Peace Fellowship programme. WAP is seeing changes in its project management team as we continue to apply the management skills acquired through the peace fellowship program.