



WOZA MOYA

WOMEN OF ZIMBABWE ARISE (WOZA) November 2013
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WOZA means 'Come forward'. By women for women and with women, across race, colour, creed, class or political persuasion. Empowering women to be courageous, caring, committed and in communication with their communities.



Women Human Rights Defenders Day is celebrated on 29 November as part of the 16 Days of Activism against gender based violence.

Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) members celebrate the thousands of women human rights defenders that call themselves members of WOZA and celebrate Zimbabweans who fight for their rights daily without calling themselves Human Rights Defenders. As we march this year, we salute the kind and brave people of Zimbabwe. We pray their peaceful nature will one day be rewarded with a Zimbabwe we can all be proud of – a Zimbabwe without violence.

WOZA call on Zimbabweans to beat the drum of peace and development to break the silence on violence

To mark the 16 days of Activism against gender based violence in 2013, WOZA chose to look beyond the sphere of physical violence to consider the position of women in a society which perpetrates systemic violence and socio-economic disadvantage. WOZA conducted a brief survey amongst its members to test their perceptions of women's position in their communities and specifically with regards to their economic status and whether it is improving or deteriorating. Members from Bulawayo and Harare numbering 7180 members answered the questions, of which 6428 were women. Of the 7180 members 31% were below the age of 25.

Responses to the survey required a "True" or "False" answer to the first 2 statements and then the other 5 statements asked members to respond on a scale of five from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". All these questions cover the Government economic blueprint "**Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation**" (ZimASSET) thematic areas of focus - Food security and nutrition; Social services and poverty reduction; Infrastructure and utilities and Value addition and beneficiation.

Statement 1: In Zimbabwe there is respect for women and violence in the home is almost zero. TRUE or FALSE?

Unfortunately only 19% of members felt this was true and 81% answered false. Some members explained that women now know their rights and there are laws to protect them. But the majority said violence against women continues - women and girls continue to suffer sexual harassment and discrimination, especially in view of traditional beliefs. Some complained of police corruption explaining that although we have legislation which protects women, it is not implemented by corrupt law enforcement agents.

Statement 2: The Indigenization campaign is benefiting ordinary Zimbabweans in urban and rural areas. I know some of them who have benefitted. TRUE or FALSE?

When asked to indicate whether the indigenization campaign benefits ordinary Zimbabweans, 89% answered that the statement is FALSE. They explained that the majority of Zimbabweans cannot access any benefits, because they think they are being shared between ZANU PF members only! They said there is a lack of transparency, there is too much collateral demanded for loans, the lack of information about benefits. Those 11% who answered that people do benefit generally knew someone who had received some benefit, but also linked the beneficiaries to ZANU PF.

Statement 3: Zimbabwean women can and ARE fully playing the role of making the family food secure. They are growing enough food and can afford to buy different affordable foods for better nutrition in the home. The response required a **Strongly Agree / Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly disagree** answer

Many members, 42% gave a NEUTRAL response excusing women for not being able to fulfill their role due to severe challenges affecting women. Only 19% agreed or strongly agreed, while 39% disagreed or

strongly disagreed. While women are trying very hard to provide for their families and the majority do manage, they barely put food on the table, have to work very hard to do that, and have nothing left over to save or to afford anything beyond the absolute necessities.

Statement 4: A good social security system must first deal with legalizing the right to trade so that informal vendors, the majority of which are women can conduct income generating projects without being harassed by police. The response required a **Strongly Agree / Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree** answer

Over 90% agreed or strongly agreed **that any** good social security system must first legalise informal trade. They explained that the informal sector is what has saved them and enabled them to survive with their families, but it has been very difficult because they are always harassed by the police and lose much of their potential income through confiscation of their goods. Those who did not agree generally felt that it would be better for government to provide jobs since not everyone can be a vendor.

Statement 5: The natural resources found in Zimbabwe are being used for the development of the community they are found in. **Strongly Agree / Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree**

This statement presented the view that natural resources are generally used for the development of the community in which they are found. 93% of members answered that they DISAGREE or STRONGLY DISAGREE. Those who answered AGREE knew someone who had benefited. Members also pointed to the fact that budgets are centrally controlled and a large chunk of the funds coming from natural resources is often misappropriated to corrupt purposes.

Statement 6: I have confidence that the constitution points on gender and development will be activated in the not too distant future. **Strongly Agree / Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree**

This was a confident test question. WOZA wanted members to gauge their confidence that the ZANUPF government will quickly implement the new constitution. 64% said DISAGREE and strongly disagree.

Statement 7: I have compared my community development from the year 2000 to now and I find that my community is now underdeveloped. **Strongly Agree / Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree**

The final statement asked respondents to indicate whether or not development in their community had deteriorated since the year 2000. 65% felt there was deterioration, but some did give examples of improvement in their communities, so the news was not all that bad.

This survey only showed the impressions held by WOZA members in Harare and Bulawayo and WOZA members do not believe that women are respected and do not believe that violence against them has ceased. Responses indicated little confidence in ZANU PF's indigenization policies as far as women are concerned, and frustration at the criminalization of women informal traders and their resulting harassment by the police. All believed that women were working very hard to create food security for their families, but many noted that this was done against all odds. The vast majority believe the development situation in their communities had deteriorated. They do not believe that ZANU PF will implement the new constitution effectively. The responses show great disillusionment with and distrust of government and a keen sense of the disadvantages felt by women in spite of their hard work to provide for their families. The scars that women bear today are not just a result of physical violence but are deep rooted in years of poor governance by the state, emotional and psychological manipulation in the home, community and workplace as well as deliberate marginalisation of women in all spheres of life. It does not need to be physical violence for women to bear the scars of abuse.

WHAT are your answers to the above questions? Email them to wozazimbabwe@gmail.com

Zimbabweans beat the drum of peace and development to break the silence on violence

Call on your council, members of parliament, senators to DELIVER on election promises now and defend your rights to all the benefits of Zim ASSET. Respect the women in your life as together men and women we can build a new Zimbabwe where there is not violence but lots of development and peace that we all enjoy.