

LINCZ Project Commemorates 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence

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What are the 16 Days of Activism?

[Gender-based violence](#) (GBV) is a serious and widespread concern in Zimbabwe. According to recent data from the 2023–24 Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS) and assessments by the World Bank and UN agencies, an estimated 39.4% of women have experienced physical violence, 11.6–12% experience sexual violence, and 44% experience intimate partner violence (IPV). UNICEF further reports that one in two women experience emotional, physical, or sexual abuse by a partner. Child marriage also persists, with 16.2% of women married before the age of 18. Emerging forms of violence are equally alarming, with 75% of respondents reporting experiences of online or digital GBV, according to a [2025 Emthonjeni Women’s Forum survey cited by UN Zimbabwe](#).

The [16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence](#) (GBV) is annual global campaign taking place between November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) and December 10 (Human Rights Day). The campaign unites people around the world to raise awareness, demand action, and call for an end to all forms of violence against women and girls. [Created in 1991 by activists](#), it is internationally recognized by various agencies and organizations including UN Women, International Labour Organization and UN-OHCHR. Throughout the campaign, the colour orange is used to symbolize a future free from gender-based violence.

Commemorating 2025’s 16 Days of Activism

In November 2025, the Locally led Indigenous Nature-based Solutions for Climate Change Adaptation in Zimbabwe (LINCZ) Project joined the international community and reaffirmed its commitment to advancing women empowerment and gender equality as one of the chief cornerstones of climate change adaptation by actively participating in the 16 Days of Activism campaign.

The 2025 edition of the global campaign centred around the theme, “[Unite to End Digital Violence Against All Women and Girls](#).” This focus on [technology-facilitated gender-based violence \(TFGBV\)](#) resonates strongly with the LINCZ project’s use of technology-facilitated interventions to strengthen community resilience in the face of

climate change across Binga, Gwanda, and Mwenezi districts of Zimbabwe, where project activities are being implemented.

During the 2025 Project Review Partner Gathering in Masvingo Province, LINCZ introduced a contextualised sub-theme for the 2025 commemoration activities. **“End Violence Today! The Future Depends on the Actions We Take Now”** underscores the core project conviction that what we do *today* affects our *tomorrow*. The sub-theme encourages partners, project staff, project participants and communities at large to adopt actions to protect women and discourage GBV, while bearing in mind that sustainable climate adaptation cannot be achieved without safe, inclusive, and equitable social systems, particularly for women and girls.



Figure 1: Gamuchirai Bidi (MCC Zimbabwe Gender and Social Inclusion Officer) and Agree Dube (MCC Zimbabwe LINCZ Program Manager) commemorating the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, standing together in solidarity to call for an end to violence today.

implementation, monitoring and reporting of climate adaptation initiatives. Partners reinforced the shared commitment to challenge harmful gender and social norms, promote women’s leadership, achieve gender justice and work with district and community-specific structures to address all forms of GBV as part of sustainable development practice.

On November 25th, 2025, the project teams wore the colour orange to mark the commencement of the campaign. Orange placards bearing different key messages denouncing GBV were prepared in three languages common in the three project districts - *isiNdebele* (Gwanda district), *Shona* (Mwenezi District) and *Tonga* (Binga district) to ensure inclusive community engagement.

The 2025 Project Review Partner Gathering brought together MCC and partner staff from the three LINCZ implementing partners: Kulima Mbobumi Training Centre, Score Against Poverty, and Brethren in Christ Compassionate and Development Services. The gathering presented an opportunity to collectively reflect on the importance of gender equity in climate change adaptation programming. Partners shared how gender equality considerations enhance the outcomes of climate adaptation investments, particularly in community-managed landscapes. Discussions emphasised the importance of mainstreaming gender equity across planning,



Figure 2: Vurayayi Pugenzi (MCC Area Director for Southern and Central Africa and Nigeria) joining in the march for a global call to end GBV during the 16 Days of Activism commemorations.



Figure 3: Staff from MCC partner organizations KMTC & BIC-CDS marching together as advocates, allies, and activists to show their commitment to ending GBV.

Community-Inclusive Awareness and Collective Action

The LINCZ Project held a joint community-based awareness march in Ward 14 of Mwenezi District in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MWACSMED), Agricultural and Rural Development Department, local government, traditional leaders, community-based project animators, and community members at large. The march served as a visible

demonstration of collective action against gender-based violence, as well as a call-to-action for households and communities to address and stop GBV.



Figure 4: Community of Mwenezi marching in solidarity to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism.

Notably, LINCZ project participants supported by the implementing partner Score Against Poverty shared testimonies on how the project is empowering them to produce their own food, care for their environment and challenge GBV while advancing gender equity and equality. These testimonials not only affirm the important work being done by LINCZ partners but also emphasise that gender education is not delivered in isolation, but rather

integrated into everyday project activities such as food production systems and natural resource management.

The message of the day, simple yet profound, reinforced the negative impacts of gender-based violence on family wellbeing, community cohesion, and development outcomes. Commemoration activities focused on mutual respect, peaceful conflict resolution, community-championed education against GBV, and the shared responsibility of men, women, and youth in creating safe and inclusive environments, especially for girls and women.

Why Gender Safety and Equity Matter in Climate Change Adaptation Programming

Climate vulnerability amplifies existing gender inequalities. The United Nations Programme for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) states that [“The climate crisis is not “gender neutral”. Women and girls bear the brunt of its impacts, which amplify existing gender inequalities and pose unique threats to their livelihoods, health and safety”](#). Climate shocks intensify the unpaid care burden, limiting women’s mobility, decision-making power, and access to support services. For example, environmental degradation increases the time and distance required to fetch water and collect firewood, heightening women and girls’ exposure to safety risks such as physical and sexual abuse and harassment. Livelihood losses resulting from droughts, floods, and crop failure also heighten household economic stress which can in turn increase instances of domestic violence and turning to harmful coping mechanisms such as early marriage or transactional sex.

Although these pre-existing socio-economic inequalities render them disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, women and girls

continue to play critical roles in natural resource management and household resilience. The LINCZ project firmly believes that by integrating gender equality and GBV prevention into the [nature-based solutions](#) programming, adaptation efforts will not only be environmentally sustainable, but also socially transformative.

The LINCZ Project promotes various nature-based solutions such as conservation agriculture, farmer-managed natural regeneration, landscape restoration, and sustainable forest management as practical adaptation measures to climate change. All these approaches rely on strong community participation, inclusive decision-making, and cohesive social systems. The project deliberately goes beyond technical environmental interventions by embedding gender equality education and women's empowerment within all project activities. For example, community gender champions receive project training to promote gender equality and facilitate community dialogue and awareness sessions to identify and highlight harmful socio-cultural norms contributing to GBV. In particular, the project creates spaces for men and boys to discuss healthy masculinities.

Recognising the power of technology to address entrenched gender inequalities intensified by climate change, LINCZ has introduced technology-enabled initiatives to support women's capacity to manage evolving climate change-related responsibilities. Two of these initiatives include the introduction of fuel-efficient stoves, which reduce the walking distance required to collect sufficient firewood (heating fuel), and time-saving threshers that speed up grain processing and ease women's food preparation and production workloads. Additionally, important GBV awareness and prevention messages have been disseminated through a short message service (SMS) blasting platform. Delivering climate change and environmental protection messaging through the SMS platform has also helped bridge knowledge gaps for women, who have traditionally relied on their husbands for access to this information.

Beyond Campaigns: Making Gender Equality a Way of Life

The 16 Days of Activism campaign provides an important global platform and moment for advocacy. Building on this momentum, the LINCZ Project extends awareness and action throughout the year by integrating gender equity as an ongoing component of climate change adaptation, rather than limiting engagement to a single campaign. Gender considerations are mainstreamed throughout the project cycle to ensure that interventions are inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. Accordingly, partners, communities, and stakeholders are encouraged to embed gender equality and GBV prevention as ongoing principles within all aspects of project implementation.

By strengthening women's participation and leadership through enhanced decision-making power and more equitable access to resources, the LINCZ Project is contributing to broader cultural shifts in which girls and women are equally valued and respected, and where equality and non-violence are reinforced as everyday norms.



Figure 5: A picture showing MCC visibility materials, with the message 365 days of activism against GBV for Climate Change Adaptation.

Furthermore, by embedding gender-responsive approaches within climate adaptation programming, the project enhances community ownership, strengthens adaptive capacity, and contributes to more resilient socio-ecological systems capable of responding to current and future climate risks. Ultimately, these efforts aim to support communities in adapting to climate change while also fostering social resilience and cohesion.

Conclusion

The LINCZ Project's participation in the 2025 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence underscored its commitment to promoting gender equality as an important catalyst in addressing the impacts of climate change. Bringing an end to GBV requires 365 days of sustained activism throughout the year, and the LINCZ project is dedicated to combating GBV as part of its broader efforts to build resilient, inclusive, and just communities where climate action and social justice advance hand in hand.



Figure 6: Men and women of Mwenezi community marching and standing united to fight against GBV.



Figure 7: Bulisani Mlotshwa (MCC Zimbabwe Learning and Research Hub Coordinator) and Sharon F. Mudhumo (MCC Zimbabwe MEAL Officer) joining hands in commemorating the 16 days whilst they make their presentation on monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL) during the partners' gathering.



Figure 8: All LINCZ partners unit in their commitment to end GBV. Together, we raise voices for the 16 Days of Activism and beyond.



Figure 9: MCC Zimbabwe and Canada stand together to show commitment to ending GBV.