

# #HASHTAG

NOVEMBER EDITION, 2025



CITE YOUTH  
NETWORK

PAGE 4

# NOVEMBER

THE GREEN-EYED  
MONSTER!!

PAGE 5

HOW ZIMBABWEAN  
YOUTH ARE USING  
DIGITAL SKILLS  
TO BUILD THEIR  
FUTURES



*Together we can  
end GBV*

## PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

PAGE 7

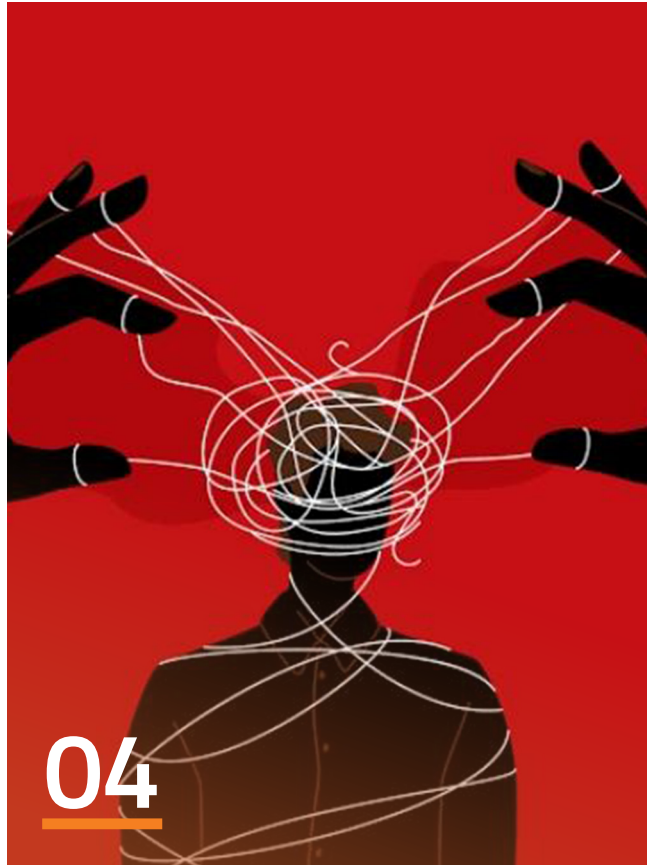
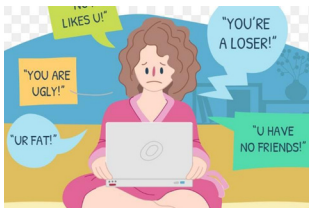
ZIMBABWE'S MEN ARE  
HURTING BUT NO  
ONE IS TALKING  
ABOUT IT

**Brot**  
für die Welt

## Contents



### 03 Editor's Note



04

13

**Moustaches with Meaning: How Movember Grew from Australia to Zimbabwe**

14

**More Than a Moustache: Healing the Modern Man**

15

**Preparations for "DEZEMBA"**

### 08 Building Safe and Empowering Spaces Online for Women and Girls

Every year, from 25 November to 10 December, the world observes the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, a global movement that challenges violence in all its forms and calls for lasting social change.

### 09 The Screenshot: Stories That Hit Home

After speaking with Michelle Princess Mguni, a Joint Hands Welfare Champion, it's clear that the Joint Hands Welfare Organisation (JHWO) is transforming the lives of...

### 10 Prostate cancer and men's mental health: Understanding the connection

Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers affecting men worldwide.



12

**The Digital Safety Guide (That Actually Works)**

# Editor's Note



**Melinda Ncube**  
CITE Youth Network Coordinator

November has been a month of deep reflection and bold conversations. In this issue we explore the realities of young people, the challenges they face both online and offline, and the powerful ways they continue to show resilience. From digital safety to emotional wellbeing, this edition looks at how our communities are shaping spaces that protect, empower and uplift.

We reflect on the experiences of women and girls who continue to claim their place on the internet, building supportive spaces and standing firm against online abuse. We also look at the journeys of young people who are using technology to create opportunities and build stronger futures, even when resources are limited.

This month also brings attention to the often unspoken struggles carried by men, from silent emotional battles to important health issues that are rarely discussed. We join global reflections on the International Day of the Girl Child, reminding ourselves of the importance of protecting the dreams and rights of every girl.

And because relationships and personal growth are central to youth experiences, we take a candid look at the emotions that shape how we relate to one another.

As you turn each page, may you find stories that challenge you, inspire you and remind you of the importance of safe, supportive and inclusive spaces for all young people.

Enjoy the issue.

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# The green-eyed monster!!



By  
Privilege Mathema

**R**elationships are something almost all of us want, the cute vibes, the soft life, the matching outfits, the surprise gifts, the weekend getaways... the whole aesthetic. But while we're busy dreaming about love that feels like a Pinterest board, we forget to ask the real questions. We ignore how this person actually treats us, whether we can trust them, whether we can build something real together, and whether they behave the same when they're broke as they do when money is flowing. Love blinds us, and suddenly red flags start looking like decorations.

Yes, there are healthy relationships out there. We see them online, at functions, even in our social circles, couples who genuinely inspire us and make us whisper, "Yoh, God, remember me too." But that's not the full

reality for everyone. Social media has made it extremely easy for predators and toxic individuals to package themselves as angels. Online, they are perfect partners. Offline, they drain you, manipulate you, abuse you, and turn your life into a slow-burning horror story.

Some platforms even teach manipulation tricks, how to charm someone, how to control them, how to emotionally trap them, and this is how many people end up in narcissistic relationships and marriages without even realising it. And this month, while we honour the women who have suffered or lost their lives to abuse, we must also recognise the men who have experienced the same. Abuse doesn't care about gender, age, or background. It can happen to anyone.

To understand why people hurt those they claim to love, we have to talk about the things we usually avoid as Africans. Mental health

is one of them. We take it too lightly. People mock it, ignore it, or dismiss someone who is clearly struggling as simply "crazy." Yet trauma, childhood wounds, bullying, and past abuse shape how people show up in relationships. When someone hasn't healed, they carry that pain into their romantic life.

Instead of seeking help, they might unleash that emotional chaos on their partner. This is how unresolved issues turn into abusive behaviour. It's also why some men insist on having quiet, dependent women, not because it's healthy, but because of insecurity, comparison, or what they saw growing up. These patterns don't show up by accident; they come from somewhere.

Then there's the issue of disrespect in modern relationships. Some people confuse "having a voice" with attacking their partner. You hear advice like "show him you're not scared" or "put him in his place," and suddenly a

simple disagreement turns into a wrestling match of egos. It gets worse when people intentionally provoke their partners on camera just to record a reaction for TikTok. We've seen women insulting, slapping, and humiliating their partners online, whether for views, attention, or desperation, and it never ends well. Let's be clear: nothing justifies GBV. Abuse is wrong, full stop. But we can't pretend that some situations aren't deliberately pushed to boiling point, and when emotions explode, everyone loses.

Another major issue is entertaining other people in ways you know your partner wouldn't be comfortable with. The whole "male bestie" or "female bestie" situation becomes messy fast when boundaries aren't respected. It creates insecurity, jealousy, and unnecessary drama. Suddenly your partner feels replaced, ignored, or disrespected, and that emotional shift opens the door to chaos. Many fights, breakups, and heartbreaks start exactly there.

All these small actions, the disrespect, the unresolved trauma, the emotional games, the lack of boundaries, add up. They trigger feelings we don't always understand, but they matter. They shape the energy in our relationships, for better or worse. If we truly want healthier, safer, more loving partnerships, we need to pay attention to these tiny but powerful things before they grow into disasters we can't control.

## How Zimbabwean youth are using digital skills to build their futures



By  
Tafadzwa Gumunyu

In Zimbabwe, where formal jobs are hard to come by and economic uncertainty looms, a growing number of young people are turning to the digital world not just to survive but to thrive. From web design to content creation, from e-commerce to tech startups, youth-led innovation is reshaping what “work” means in a country where unemployment and under-employment hit hard.

One of the engines of this transformation is the Digital Skills 4 Youth initiative run by Impact Hub Harare, Plan International, and other partners. Since 2023, the three-year program has trained 1,680 young Zimbabweans especially women in digital and entrepreneurship skills. In June 2025, 366 of them graduated from the program’s basic and intermediate levels, ready to apply their new skills in real-world projects. Shelton, one of the male graduates, said at the ceremony: “I am now equipped to pursue exciting opportunities in the digital realm ... My journey is a testament to the power of education and the importance of investing in youth development.”

Beyond training, Zimbabwe’s innovation hubs are playing a critical role. Impact Hub Harare provides co-working spaces, mentorship, and access to a global network of entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, TechVillage Bulawayo is emerging as a hotspot for tech ideas from software development to creative industries helping young people build startups that respond to local problems.

Programs run by organisations such as SOS Children’s Villages, in collaboration with Learnio and Bosch, are also creating pathways for youth to break into the digital economy. Their ICT training program includes web development, digital marketing, and business mindset training giving young Zimbabweans the tools to earn income, start businesses, and compete globally.

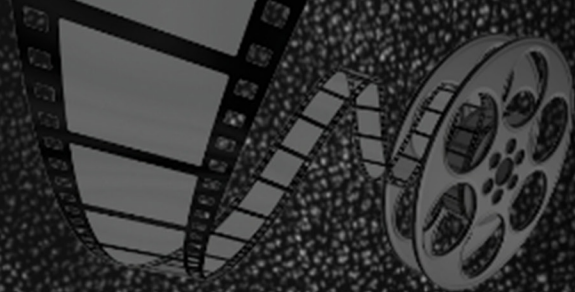
These digital skills are not just theory, they are matching real economic needs. According to a recent analysis, Zimbabwe’s ICT sector is expanding, with growing demand for web developers, digital marketers, IT support staff, and data processors. The youth are not just waiting for jobs; they’re building them.

But it’s not always smooth. Many young people report major barriers: data costs are high, mobile internet is uneven, and payment systems remain difficult to use. On Reddit, for example, one young Zimbabwean wrote:

“PayPal doesn’t work here ... Data is expensive ... Very unstable connection ... It’s quite difficult ... to get WiFi at home when you don’t have the money.” These challenges limit not just entrepreneurship but access to global freelancing and online markets.

Still, hope and innovation persist. Digital Skills Society (DSS) Zimbabwe runs an “eCitizen” program that empowers youth, marginalised groups, and people from underserved communities to engage meaningfully in the digital world. Their courses emphasise practical skills not just using technology, but creating value with it. Youth themselves are leading community-driven ventures. Digital entrepreneurs are forming WhatsApp groups, sharing resources, and collaborating on side gigs. In online forums, new founders are calling for mentorship, shared resources, and co-working networks to sustain their startups.

For Zimbabwe’s young people, digital entrepreneurship is more than a hustle but it’s a lifeline and a statement of resilience. As one 25-year-old computer programmer said after graduation, “I want to build a business that helps my family, but also something that solves problems in my community.” These digital pioneers are proving that youth creativity, paired with the right support, can turn economic stress into real opportunity.



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# Zimbabwe's men are hurting but no one is talking about it



By  
Tafadzwa Gumunyu

**T**his Men's Mental Health Month, Zimbabwe is confronting a crisis that remains largely hidden. Across the country, men are grappling with stress, anxiety, depression, and rising substance abuse, challenges made worse by ongoing economic hardships. High unemployment, inflation, and the pressure to "provide" weigh heavily on men, leaving many feeling overwhelmed, trapped, and isolated.

Recent reports from health institutions and surveys reveal the severity of the situation. Nelson Makore, senior nursing officer at Sally Mugabe Hospital, notes that while cases of schizophrenia, depression, and bipolar disorder continue to rise, substance abuse is now dominating their caseload. "Drug use at the moment is topping the list. It is straining our members of staff, as a hospital we are not a rehabilitation center," he says. Afrobarometer's 2025 survey found that 79% of Zimbabweans believe drug and substance abuse is widespread in their communities, underscoring how economic stress and limited opportunities are feeding into addiction and mental distress. Development consultant Tapiwa Gomo warns that without job creation, especially

for youth, "they will surely become a huge expense on the national budget."

Substance abuse has become a common coping mechanism for men dealing with economic pressure and emotional strain. Many are turning to Broncleer cough syrup (a codeine-based mixture), crystal meth (mutoriro), cannabis, alcohol, and even industrial solvents in search of relief from stress. While these substances may temporarily numb emotional pain, mental health experts warn they often worsen conditions, sometimes leading to psychosis, addiction, or self-harm. Psychiatrist Delma Gumede says drug misuse is one of the fastest-growing mental health crises affecting men across both rural and urban communities.

Zimbabwe's mental health system is struggling to keep up. Rehabilitation centres are overwhelmed, and hospitals like Sally Mugabe Central are admitting thousands of substance-related cases each year. In many rural areas, specialised mental health services are almost nonexistent, leaving men with few options for care. Community-driven initiatives such as the Friendship Bench in Harare and Bulawayo have become vital, offering therapy through trained community health workers, peer support sessions, and mindfulness

practices. These efforts prove that even outside formal healthcare systems, community-based solutions can provide meaningful support and save lives.

Cultural pressures add another layer to the crisis. In Zimbabwe, the Shona term "kufungisisa", meaning excessive worrying or overthinking, captures the emotional burden many men carry. Experts say stigma plays a major role, with many men avoiding help because they fear appearing weak or incapable. Combined with high unemployment, poverty, and familial responsibilities, this stigma drives some men toward unhealthy coping mechanisms that spiral into addiction or violence.

Suicide has become a deeply alarming component of the men's mental health landscape. In Bulawayo alone, 21 suicide cases were recorded since June 2024, and 20 of them were men, a tragic reflection of silent suffering. According to the World Health Organisation, men in Zimbabwe die by suicide at a rate of 26.9 per 100,000 people, far higher than women. Psychologist Dr Francis Siziba attributes this to the harmful "men don't cry" ideology, saying, "There's a lack of emotional support... men are out there pretending to be happy while inside they are hurting." Experts also point to debt, financial stress, and addiction as major drivers of suicide, calling for urgent awareness campaigns, community mental health programs, and crisis support systems.

Cultural expectations and societal stigma make the crisis even more complex. Men are often told to be strong, silent, and self-reliant, roles that discourage them from acknowl-

edging emotional pain. Faced with unemployment, debt, and economic instability, many turn to alcohol, codeine syrups, cannabis, or other substances to cope. Across the country, mental health services remain limited, particularly outside major cities, and many rehabilitation centres are stretched beyond capacity. While programs like the Friendship Bench, peer-support networks, and community mindfulness classes offer hope, experts stress that without broader national strategies, increased funding, and culturally sensitive education, many men will continue to suffer silently.

As Men's Mental Health Month continues, advocates are calling for collective action to support Zimbabwean men. Experts recommend expanding mental health services, improving access to rehabilitation, and integrating culturally appropriate counselling into communities. Grassroots initiatives, from the Friendship Bench to community yoga and peer networks, show that meaningful progress can begin at local level, even in resource-limited settings.

Public campaigns under the theme "UNiTE for Men's Mental Health" aim to break stigma, encourage open conversations, and connect men to professional help. Movements and organisations are urging government, civil society, and local leaders to create economic opportunities, fund mental health interventions, and strengthen emergency response systems to ensure no man suffers alone. By uniting communities, policymakers, and the media, Zimbabwe can begin to address the hidden toll of poor mental health among men, and pave the way for a future where seeking help is seen as strength, not weakness.

# Building safe and empowering spaces online for women and girls



By  
Amanda Ndlovu

Every year, from 25 November to 10 December, the world observes the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, a global movement that challenges violence in all its forms and calls for lasting social change. This year's theme, "Unite to End Digital Violence Against All Women and Girls," is both urgent and timely.

## A New Face of Gender-Based Violence

The internet, once a symbol of connection and opportunity, now mirrors the inequalities of society. Digital platforms that should empower women have, in many cases, become arenas for harassment, exploitation, and exclusion.

Women leaders, activists, journalists, and influencers are particularly targeted. They face online threats, body shaming, sexist trolling, and cyber-attacks aimed at silencing their voices. The cost is more than emotional—it's social and political. When women withdraw from digital spaces out of fear, their representation in public discourse diminishes, and democracy itself suffers.

## What is Digital Violence?

Digital or online violence refers to any form of harm, harassment, or abuse that occurs through digital technology. It can take many shapes:

Cyber bullying – repeated online attacks meant to shame, threaten, or humiliate.

Online stalking – monitoring and tracking a woman's activity without her consent.

Non-consensual sharing of images – sometimes called "revenge porn."

Impersonation, doxxing, and hate speech – revealing private information or spreading falsehoods to damage reputations.

These acts might occur behind screens, but their consequences are painfully real, mental health struggles, reputational damage, social withdrawal, and even physical danger.

## The Digital Divide and Gendered Power

Digital violence thrives on the same power imbalances that fuel traditional gender-based violence. Women are judged more harshly online, their opinions dismissed or attacked, their safety is

undermined. In many cases, fear of harassment drives women to withdraw from digital participation, silencing their voices and limiting access to opportunities like remote work, e-commerce, and leadership in tech.

Globally, research shows that nearly 1 in 3 women under 35 has experienced some form of online harassment. For young girls, especially those exploring identity, education, and activism, this can be deeply discouraging.

## Inclusion and Intersectionality

It's also vital to recognize that digital violence doesn't affect all women equally. Women and girls with disabilities, rural women, and those from marginalized communities face unique barriers. Many struggle to access safe technologies, lack digital literacy, or are more vulnerable to exploitation. Ending digital violence means designing an internet where everyone belongs.

## Building a Culture of Respect and Accountability

To truly end digital violence, we must go beyond awareness—we must demand accountability. Social media platforms must improve safety tools, content moderation, and reporting systems. Schools and communities must teach digital ethics and empathy from an early age. Governments and policymakers must enforce stronger cyber laws to protect women and punish perpe-

trators. Men and boys must be allies, not bystanders, in challenging online misogyny and abuse. Each of us has a role to play. Whether we are sharing awareness posts, reporting harmful content, or supporting survivors, our small actions ripple outward to create safer digital ecosystems.

## Moving from Awareness to Empowerment

The 16 Days of Activism are a reminder that the struggle for gender equality has no boundaries—not even digital ones. The internet should be a stage for innovation, creativity, and empowerment, not intimidation. By standing together, we can turn technology into a force for freedom and equality, not fear. Every post, every voice, and every click can make a difference. Ending digital violence isn't just about laws or technology—it's about culture change. We must raise boys and men who understand that respect extends into the virtual world; we must build digital platforms that protect users, and we must empower women and girls with digital literacy.

Together, we can transform our digital spaces into inclusive communities that amplify women's voices instead of silencing them. The fight against gender-based violence has entered a new battlefield and together, we will win it.

Join us this November. Stand with survivors. Speak up. Unite to End Digital Violence. **#UNiTE2025 #EndDigital-Violence #SafeOnlineSpaces #16DaysOfActivism**

# The Screenshot: Stories that hit home

## THE SCREENSHOT

By  
Melinda Ncube

**T**he Screenshot has been capturing the heartbeat of youth life across Bulawayo and surrounding communities, bringing out stories that are honest, relatable, and deeply reflective of what young people are experiencing today. From uplifting conversations with young women creating change to on the ground storytelling in Esigodini, the show continues to open up spaces where youth voices lead the narrative.

**Young Women Leading the Way**  
One of the standout episodes celebrated young women who are doing incredible work to uplift the girl child in Bulawayo. They talked about what

drives them, the challenges they face, and the change they're creating on the ground.

The episode was hosted by Youth Network member Privilege Mathema, who brought an easy, confident energy to the conversation. Seeing a young presenter take charge of such a powerful discussion showed just how much talent and leadership is within the network.

**A Trip to Esigodini: Two Episodes, Two Sides of Youth Life**

The Screenshot crew also hit the road and travelled to Esigodini for a special two part feature that opened up a real, unfiltered look at youth life in the area.

**Part One: The Hustle**  
The first episode focused on how young people hustle to

make ends meet, juggling small jobs, dreams, fun, and everything in between. The vibe was relatable, the stories were honest, and the TikTok clips from the episode quickly sparked conversations among young viewers who saw themselves in these everyday moments.

**Part Two: Growing Up With Challenges**

The second episode went deeper, highlighting some of the tougher realities young people face growing up in Esigodini. Issues like drug exposure and prostitution came up, shared openly by the youth themselves. It was raw and emotional at times, but it also showed a lot of strength. Even in difficult circumstances, these young people are pushing

forward, finding ways to move through life with resilience. **Why These Stories Matter**

What stood out across all episodes is how diverse youth experiences truly are. No two stories looked the same, yet every one of them felt real and important. Whether it was young women making a difference or Esigodini youth speaking honestly about their lives, The Screenshot created a space where young people could express themselves without filters.

The Screenshot reminded us of something powerful, when young people tell their own stories, the narrative becomes more truthful, more relatable, and more inspiring. And that's exactly what The Screenshot delivered.

# Prostate cancer and men's mental health: Understanding the connection



1. Fear of Mortality: Learning that one has cancer often triggers fears about life expectancy and mortality. Even when treatment is successful, the fear of recurrence can be persistent.
2. Treatment Side Effects: Prostate cancer treatments, such as surgery, radiation, or hormone therapy, can affect sexual function, urinary control, and physical strength. These changes can profoundly affect a man's sense of masculinity, self-esteem, and confidence.
3. Social and Relationship Strain: Men may struggle to communicate their emotions or ask for support from loved ones, leading to feelings of isolation. Changes in sexual function or physical health can also affect intimate

By  
Tafadzwa Gumunyu

**P**rostate cancer is one of the most common cancers affecting men worldwide. According to global statistics, one in every eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during his lifetime. In Switzerland and many other countries, this condition represents a major health concern, not only because of its physical implications but also due to the profound impact it can have on mental health and emotional well-being.

## What is Prostate Cancer?

The prostate is a small gland located below the bladder and in front of the rectum, responsible for producing seminal fluid. Prostate cancer occurs when abnormal cells in the prostate grow

uncontrollably, forming a tumor. Early stages of prostate cancer may not show obvious symptoms, making regular screenings and check-ups critical for early detection. Common symptoms, when they do appear, may include: Difficulty urinating or a weak urine stream, Blood in urine or semen, Pain in the lower back, hips, or pelvis, Erectile dysfunction. Although prostate cancer can often be treated successfully, the diagnosis itself, and the potential treatments, can bring significant psychological challenges.

## The Mental Health Impact of Prostate Cancer

A cancer diagnosis, particularly prostate cancer, can be emotionally overwhelming. Men may experience a range of mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and stress. Several factors contribute to this:

relationships.

4. Depression and Anxiety: Studies show that men with prostate cancer are at higher risk of depression and anxiety than the general population. Anxiety can arise from worries about treatment decisions, side effects, and long-term outcomes.

5. Identity and Masculinity: Societal expectations often pressure men to appear strong and emotionally resilient. A prostate cancer diagnosis can challenge these traditional notions of masculinity, making it difficult for men to seek help or talk openly about their fears and struggles.

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### The Role of Support Systems

Addressing mental health is an essential part of prostate cancer care. Men benefit greatly from support systems, including family, friends, peer groups, and mental health professionals. Support can come in many forms: Counseling and Therapy: Psychologists or counselors trained in oncology can help men process emotions, manage stress, and navigate changes in identity and self-esteem, Support Groups: Peer support groups allow men to share experiences, reduce feelings of isolation, and gain coping strategies from others who understand their journey, Open Communication: Encouraging honest conversations with partners, family, and healthcare providers can improve emotional well-being and strengthen relationships, Holistic Approaches: Mindfulness, meditation, and physical activity can reduce anxiety and improve overall quality of life during and after treatment.

### Raising Awareness and Reducing Stigma

Movember and other men's health campaigns have highlighted the importance of discussing both physical and mental

health challenges associated with prostate cancer. Awareness initiatives encourage men to get screened, seek treatment early, and prioritize mental health as much as physical health. Breaking the stigma surrounding men's emotional struggles is vital, as it empowers men to ask for help without fear of judgment. One of the primary focuses of Movember is prostate cancer, the second most common cancer among men worldwide. In Switzerland, prostate cancer affects thousands of men annually, often going undetected until the later stages because early symptoms can be subtle or absent. Regular screenings and early diagnosis are crucial in improving survival rates. Movember supports this cause by funding research to better understand prostate cancer, improve treatment options, and enhance patient care. Programs funded through Movember in Switzerland provide resources for men to access information about symptoms, testing, and support services. These initiatives also help reduce the stigma around men's health discussions, encouraging men to speak openly with doctors and loved ones about their health concerns.

### The Importance of Early Detection

Early detection of prostate cancer is

not only critical for effective treatment but also for reducing long-term mental health impacts. Men who are diagnosed early often have more treatment options and better outcomes, which can lessen anxiety about survival and improve quality of life. Regular screenings, discussions with healthcare providers, and awareness of family history are all essential components of prevention and early intervention. Prostate cancer is more than a physical health issue—it deeply affects men's mental and emotional well-being. Anxiety, depression, and changes in identity are common experiences that can accompany the physical challenges of diagnosis and treatment. Supporting men through both aspects of this disease is essential, whether through counseling, peer groups, or awareness campaigns like Movember.

By understanding the connection between prostate cancer and mental health, society can foster an environment where men feel supported, empowered, and encouraged to seek help. Health is holistic, and addressing both the body and mind is the key to surviving and thriving after a prostate cancer diagnosis.



# The digital safety guide (that actually works)



By  
Brandon Ncube

**T**hese days, being online in Zim feels like walking through town on a Saturday – too many people, too much noise, and someone always trying to sell you something you didn't ask for. From fake accounts to random DMs, it's easy to lose your digital peace. But don't stress – we've cooked up a few street-smart ways to stay safe online without losing your Wi-Fi or your vibe.

## 1. Don't Let Your Password Be "Mama123"

That's like leaving your door wide open and hoping no one walks in.

Create strong passwords using a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols (like Zvipo@2025!). If you forget easily, use a

password manager – not that small notebook everyone borrows for class notes.

Pro Tip: Never share your OTP – even if bae says "trust me."

## 2. Two-Factor is Your Bouncer

If your password is the gate, then Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) is your big, friendly bouncer at the door.

Even if someone steals your password, this bouncer asks for a special code from your phone before letting anyone in.

It's that extra layer of security that says, "Access denied, mfana."

Turn it on for your email, WhatsApp, Instagram – anything that matters to you.

## 3. Screenshot Everything

If you're being harassed or threatened online, don't delete the messages – screen-

shot first.

Receipts can help you report to a friend, an org, or even the police.

Think of it like keeping back-up notes for your final exam – you'll thank yourself later. And if you're deleting an account, use Google Takeout to save your data first.

## 4. Don't Post in Anger – That's How Screenshots Are Born

Before you clap back or post that "subtweet," take a breath. Online bullies love drama – don't feed them.

Screenshot, report, block, move on.

Revenge posts might feel good for 2 minutes, but they live online forever – longer than a ZESA outage.

## 5. Community Over Clout

Tag #CiteYouthNetwork when you share your story or report

abuse.

We're building a culture of support – where survivors stand together and trolls get zero airtime.

If your data runs out, someone at the hub, school, or ikhaya lomoya probably knows where to find that free Wi-Fi to report harassment. Because your safety shouldn't depend on your airtime balance.

## Final Word

Digital safety isn't just about passwords – it's about power. Every woman, every person with a disability, every young creator in Bulawayo deserves to scroll, post, and create freely – without fear.

So next time someone slides into your DMs with "Hey beautiful" – just remember: you control the Wi-Fi.



By  
Patricia Moyo

**S**o, what exactly is Movember? Movember started back in 2003 in Melbourne, Australia, when two friends, Travis Garone and Luke Slattery, had a wild idea “Let’s bring the moustache back!” What began as a quirky fashion comeback soon turned into a mission to raise awareness about prostate cancer, testicular cancer, mental health, and suicide prevention. Fast forward two decades, and Movember has gone global from Sydney to Soweto, and

yes, even Harare and Bulawayo are catching the vibe.

**Zimbabwe Joins the Movement**  
Here at home, the moustache trend is more than just a social media challenge – it’s becoming a movement for men’s health awareness. Local organisations like the Cancer Association of Zimbabwe (CAZ) and several hospitals have started using November to talk about topics most men avoid – checkups, screenings, and emotional well-being. “Men often suffer in silence. Movember gives us permission to talk – and to take action,” says Dr. Kudzai Chideme, a

Harare-based urologist.

**From NUST to the Streets**  
At NUST and the University of Zimbabwe, students are giving Movember their own twist hosting “Moustache Mondays” and selfie challenges. Others are using the hashtag #MovemberZim to spread the word online. It’s fun, it’s cheeky, and it’s changing lives.

**Beyond the ‘Mo’**  
Behind every moustache is a message, get checked, talk openly, and support one another. Because whether you’re rocking a full handlebar or just a patchy attempt, every ‘mo’

stands for men’s health and hope. So this November, go ahead – grow that moustache, share a laugh, and maybe save a life while you’re at it.

### NOVEMBER FAST FACTS

- \* Movember began in 2003 in Melbourne, Australia.
- \* The word ‘Movember’ combines ‘moustache’ and ‘November’.
- \* It raises awareness for prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and men’s mental health.
- \* More than 6 million people have participated globally.
- \* Zimbabwe joined the movement through awareness drives and social media campaigns.

# More than a moustache: Healing the modern man

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By  
Lethokuhle Mpofu

**N**ovember is more than just another month, it's that time when men worldwide turn their moustaches into symbols of awareness, courage and real conversation. That's the energy behind Movember: using the "mo" to spark global discussions around men's health, from prostate cancer and suicide prevention to the silent emotional battles many men fight alone. It's a reminder that masculinity isn't about bottling things up; it's about expression – and sometimes, survival.

This year, Bold Dialogue is giving that global movement a local heart-beat through the Movember Grill and Connect event. Happening on Saturday, 29 November at Three Daughters Jazz Restaurant and Pub in Bulawayo's Megawatt Shopping Complex, the gathering promises more than just a braai. It's a relaxed yet intentional space where men can talk, breathe, heal and connect, brother to brother.

"Men often carry so much, yet they're

told to keep it inside," says Barbara Kamba-Nyathi, author, social psychologist and founder of Bold Dialogue. "Through this event, we want to create a safe, judgment-free space for men to have heart-to-heart conversations about life, purpose, pain, and everything in between."

The Movember Grill and Connect experience will bring together men from every corner of society, young and old, creatives and executives, community leaders and everyday brothers. The goal is simple: open the floor for honest conversations that rarely get airtime. Topics will range from mental health, finances and spirituality to relationships, sexuality and personal growth. And of course, there's the Ultimate Braai Challenge, food "fit for a king," and fun activities that make connecting feel natural, not forced.

For Bold Dialogue, an organisation widely known for empowering women through healing and transformation, this event is a natural extension of its vision. "Because we recognise the power of community in our culture, we intentionally engage men in our work,"

Barbara explains. "Empowered men empower the women in their lives, and the healthier our men are, the healthier our families and society become." Rooted in principles of healing, balance and holistic well-being, Bold Dialogue offers psychotherapy, wellness coaching, workshops and spiritual retreats. Opening its circle to men through Movember Grill and Connect is part of a bigger mission: dismantling the outdated belief that men must always be strong, silent pillars. Instead, the organisation wants to nurture men as full human beings with emotions, fears and vulnerabilities.

Zimbabwe's rising suicide rates, especially among men, make this work more urgent than ever. Cultural expectations like "indoda must" and "men don't cry" continue to isolate men, often with devastating consequences. "We need to change that script," Barbara says. "Strength isn't about silence. It's about self-awareness, balance, and the courage to seek help." Beyond the deep conversations, the day will also feature psychological games and interactive activities designed to help men relax and open up. The setting is casual, warm and welcoming because Bold Dialogue believes healing doesn't always happen in a clinic, sometimes it starts with good food, good people and an honest conversation.

Movember Grill and Connect is only the beginning. It ties into Bold Dialogue's long-term vision of holistic men's wellness and complements ongoing initiatives like Stringed Moments, a monthly free dialogue on psychology, emotional health, and spiritual well-being. "This is just the beginning," Barbara adds. "We want to see men thrive, not just exist. We want them to live lives of balance, purpose and wholeness." The event costs US\$30, covering all meals and activities. But its real value goes deeper, it's about reclaiming emotional freedom, redefining masculinity and rebuilding how men see themselves and each other. Because sometimes, healing starts with a flame... and a conversation.

# Preparations for “DEZEMBA”



By  
Privilege Mathema

**A**ma2K can definitely testify that DEZEMBA is that month. The only time of the year when literally everyone, and I mean everyone, takes a break, travels, links up, celebrates life, eats, drinks, and just vibes. It's the one season we look forward to like it's a national sport.

Which brings me to you, dear reader.

Allow me to gently provoke your mind (and maybe frustrate you a little).

Have you prepared for the festive season financially? Because the moment the calendar hits December, just know you'll be travelling up and down, awards, braais, weddings, birthdays, family functions, random “pull up” invites. All these things need money. Transport money, fuel money, Uber money, basically, outside is expensive. You

don't want to miss out, and you definitely don't want to be “that” friend who's always financially nagging everyone. Is your summer body ready? We're going to be showing a bit of skin, some of us on beaches, some in rivers, some at pool parties. So why not start getting in shape now? Getting fit doesn't mean extreme gym routines. Sometimes it's as simple as cutting down certain foods, taking daily walks, or practicing self-awareness and positivity so you enter Dezemba with a clear mind and a confident spirit.

Avoid Omah Shonisa (loan sharks).

Festive FOMO is real. It pushes people into making terrible decisions like borrowing money from shady debtors who will manipulate you, add crazy interest, or even threaten you. This is why saving and living within your means is crucial. You can always choose cheaper, chilled alternatives, like skipping expensive concerts

and opting for a small, intimate family gathering instead. Alcohol and substance abuse. Liquor stores will be full. People will be happy. But in that same vibe, we need to be mindful. Drinking beyond your limit leads to fights, accidents, and embarrassing moments you won't forget (even if you can't remember them). Let's encourage each other to drink responsibly — Dezemba is for fun, not funerals.

STOKVEL TIME!

To our beloved Stokvel mothers, please don't forget the essentials:

- Mayonnaise
- Tomato sauce
- Biscuits and sweets
- Macaroni and rice
- Spices

These basics make every house warm, every meal complete, and every visitor happy. Of course, you can add more to elevate the stash! Sound systems and playlists I don't know about your neighbourhood, but where I'm from, good music is non-ne-

gotiable. The beats must beat. The speakers must behave. A vibe cannot vibe without a proper sound system. To all DJs and playlist commanders, please do the following to save the day: Have backup equipment in case the speakers betray you mid-chorus.

Have a generator, because ZESA will humble you without warning.

Have a fire playlist. Not one that kills the mood. Keep up with what's trending, sprinkle in some old-school bangers, and read the room. If the crowd stops dancing, that's on you.

If you get these right, trust me, the party will never flop. Lastly: don't celebrate alone. No man is an island. Find your people, friends, family, your vibe tribe, your crew, your clan, just people who bring peace and joy. Isolation during Dezemba can lead to negative thoughts or even depression. Surround yourself with good company and good energy.

# Young women, digital violence and the fight for safe online spaces in Zimbabwe



By  
Tafadzwa Gumunyu

**W**hen the world went online, it brought new chances for learning, work, and connection but it also opened a new kind of violence that leaves no visible wounds. For many young women in Zimbabwe, the danger now comes through their phones: unwanted sexual messages, stalking in their inboxes, private images shared without permission, online shaming, and blackmail done with screenshots. These forms of abuse are part of a growing global rise in digital violence against women and girls, and survivors say the emotional and social damage is deep and long-lasting.

At a small digital hub in Bulawayo, young creators and volunteers meet every week to teach women how to protect their accounts, record evidence, and

report online attacks. “They come in scared,” says one facilitator. “Phones are now key to work and daily life. So when abuse comes through that same phone, it follows them everywhere.” Research from across Southern Africa also shows that online gender-based violence is common, especially among young women, students, and journalists.

Across the border, South Africa is also facing a serious problem with gender-based violence. Groups like, Women for Change, say the laws don’t do enough and are calling for more action and funding. They plan a nationwide shutdown on 21 November 2025 to show how important women are and to protest the violence. On social media, people are using purple profile pictures and hashtags to raise awareness about femicide, sexual assault, and abuse.

Experts say the causes of poverty, inequality, and patriarchal traditions are similar to Zimbabwe. Studies show that one in three South African women has experienced physical violence and one in five has faced sexual abuse. This shows that gender-based violence is a regional problem, and working together across borders is important to keep women safe both online and offline.

Studies from UN Women and other global organisations explain that this kind of digital violence includes sharing private images without consent, cyberstalking, doxxing, hate speech, and organised harassment. All these actions can cause serious mental-health problems, stress, fear, and even job or school loss. Worldwide, research shows that between about 16% and 58% of women have faced online abuse and the wide range is because different countries define and measure it differently, but it still shows how big the problem is.

In Zimbabwe, the situation is harder to map clearly because there is not enough national data. The country’s recent GBV strategy even notes that there are no strong official statistics on digital abuse, even though smaller studies and interviews show that many incidents happen. Without solid numbers, many survivors remain unseen by policymakers, which is why community support like digital hubs and civil-society reporting channels is so important. Women in journalism and public roles face even more risk. A recent UNE-SCO-supported report showed high levels of digital attacks against women journalists in Zimbabwe, often linked to the stories they publish. These attacks don’t just hurt individuals but they silence women, affect press freedom, and discourage participation in the public space.

On the ground, survivors describe the same patterns. A partner uses private pictures to control them. A stranger creates fake accounts to embarrass them. Trolls attack a woman after a single post goes viral. Abusers rely on the cheap and easy tools of social media, screenshots, anonymous accounts, mass sharing, and coordinated replies. Local studies say Facebook, Twitter/X, and WhatsApp are the platforms where women in Zimbabwe experience the most harassment.

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Researchers also note that existing inequalities make things worse. Women with disabilities often struggle to report abuse because the systems are not accessible. Communication difficulties, stigma, and unfriendly reporting platforms mean digital violence can silence them even more. Disability-rights groups are now calling for easier reporting methods and inclusive safety training.

Experts across the region agree on what needs to be done. Scholars like Dr. E. Ndawana explain that digital technology can both empower and endanger women: it can offer opportunities but also create new ways to hurt them. They say the solution must include prevention, survivor support, improved laws, and stronger responsibility from social-media platforms.

UN agencies support these ideas. They recommend updating national GBV laws to clearly include online abuse, providing better reporting systems, training police and the courts, and pushing plat-

forms to improve their safety rules and respond faster when abuse is reported. Many countries, including Zimbabwe, still need to improve in these areas, which makes community education and digital literacy especially important in the meantime.

Across Zimbabwe, several organisations are active in this work. Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) offers legal help and advocacy. The Zimbabwe Gender Commission keeps track of gender-related issues. Media groups document abuse against women journalists. And digital hubs create safe spaces where women learn about online protection and share their stories. These organisations say that better cooperation with government and better national data are needed to scale up their work.

In Bulawayo, the local hub uses short skits and reels to share simple lessons from survivors: how to spot fake accounts, how to save evidence before deleting anything, and where to report abuse. "Storytelling helps others recognise danger signs early," says the hub's

coordinator. These activities support the global 16 Days of Activism campaign, which this year focuses on ending digital violence against women and girls. Experts say long-term change will require stronger national data on digital violence.

These updated laws respond quickly to online abuse, better training for police and health workers, more responsibility from platforms, and more funding for survivor services especially services that include women with disabilities and women in rural areas. Until these systems improve, local hubs and NGOs will continue to play a key role.

For survivors like Tadiwa, a university student whose painful experience helped inspire the Bulawayo campaign, the message is direct: you are not at fault, the abuse is real, and there are steps you can take to stay safe. "We want girls to know that online safety is just as important as offline safety," says one campaign organiser. "This is how we begin to push the shadows away."



# Happy finance festive: Making healthy financial decisions



By  
Persistence Nkomo

**T**he festive season is loading, and while everyone is getting hyped for road trips, outfits and endless link-ups, there's also that quiet voice reminding us: "Hey... your bank balance matters too." Before the excitement fully takes over, this is the perfect moment to pause and check in on your financial health.

Financial health isn't just a complicated adult term, it's basically the state of your

money life. It's how you manage your income, expenses, savings, debt and investments. It's about being in control instead of letting your money control you. When your financial health is solid, you make better decisions, reduce stress, and set yourself up for long-term wins.

In a tough economy, think inflation, unstable currency, and limited financial services, staying financially fit is a survival skill. Good financial health helps you build emergency funds, pay off debt, save for major goals, and invest in your future.

Whether you dream of buying a home, going back to school, or simply enjoying a soft life in your older years, your financial habits today shape that future.

As December approaches, take a quick breather and reflect on how you've handled your money this year. Where did most of it go? What can you cut back on? Can you create extra income or diversify your hustle? This might also be a good time to clear high-interest debts or make lump-sum payments that reduce what you owe. And don't forget to put something aside for

emergencies, life has hands.

With the holidays around the corner, set a realistic festive budget. Prioritise your needs over impulsive wants so you don't start January fighting for your life financially. For young people especially, this is a great time to look into smarter financial moves like fixed deposits, stocks or even investing in promising startups. These not only grow your money but also support economic growth.

So, as you prepare for Dezemba vibes, stay disciplined and stay focused. Overspending might feel fun in the moment, but financial regret in January is very real. By taking control now, you walk into the new year confident, organised and ready to chase bigger goals.

In the next few weeks, take time to review your financial situation, adjust your strategy, and position yourself for success in 2026. Your future self will thank you.

## December Finance Checklist

1. Review your budget and track this year's income vs. spending.
2. Pay off or reduce debts, especially the high-interest ones.
3. Save and build a cushion for unexpected expenses.
4. Invest – whether short-term income generators or long-term assets.
5. Plan your holiday spending and stick to a realistic festive budget.

# NUST's first campus film premiere? Total movie magic



By  
Ruvarashe Munyoro

**N**UST turned into Hollywood for a night, literally. On the 1st of November, the Delta Lecture Theatre stopped being just a lecture venue and became a full-blown cinema as students, staff, and film lovers pulled up for the premiere of *Friend Zone Safe Zone*, the first-ever film shot, produced, and premiered on NUST campus by NUST students.

The red carpet was rolling, the vibes were immaculate, and by the end of the screening? The applause sounded exactly like a five-star review. *Friend Zone Safe Zone* takes a deep dive into the messiness of friendships

that tiptoe a bit too close to romance, you know, the “I caught feelings for my bestie and now I’m suffering” storyline that Gen Z knows all too well. The short film follows a young guy navigating unspoken emotions, awkward moments, and that terrifying place between “just friends” and “something more.”

Humorous? Yes. Relatable? Extremely. Emotionally chaotic? Absolutely.

“It’s a story many young people can connect with,” one student said after the screening. “We’ve all been there, catching feelings, panicking, overthinking... all of it.” The premiere had all the elements of a proper film event, lights, glitz, dressed-up attendees, and that soft red-carpet glow that makes

everyone feel like a star. The cast and crew took the stage to share their journey, giving the audience a behind-the-scenes peek into the creative process.

The director explained the deeper intention behind the film. “We wanted to show that love and friendship can co-exist, but boundaries matter. Sometimes the safest place for both people is the ‘safe zone,’ not the ‘friend zone.’”

Throughout the movie, the lecture theatre was alive, laughter, gasps, subtle “yooooooo!” reactions, and full-on applause. Viewers loved the witty exchanges, the honest performances, and the way the film portrayed modern relationships without sugar-coating the awkwardness. When the

credits rolled, the cheers were loud enough to confirm it: this film hit.

But beyond the plot and the punchlines, the night was bigger than the movie. It was a defining moment for NUST’s creative scene, a bold declaration that student filmmakers are not just experimenting; they are ready to create, innovate, and produce content that stands tall on any screen.

This wasn’t just a premiere. It was a celebration, of creativity, campus talent, storytelling, and the rise of a new generation of filmmakers. And if *Friend Zone Safe Zone* is anything to go by, NUST’s creatives are just getting started. Lights, camera... NUST is officially on the map.



By  
Melinda Ncube

**T**he CITE Youth Network (CYN) recently joined young people, students, and creatives at an event hosted by Zizo Motion Pictures to commemorate the International Day of the Girl Child. The gathering brought together passionate voices from Bulawayo to reflect, debate, and explore how different sectors can better support girls in their communities.

The day opened with a short but powerful discussion on access to female services. Young women shared experiences and concerns about how issues such as menstrual health, repro-

ductive services, and safe spaces still remain difficult to access, especially for girls in marginalized communities. The conversation set the tone for the rest of the event by highlighting just how wide the gaps still are and how much meaningful youth participation matters.

One of the main highlights was a lively debate on the motion: “Private Voluntary Organisations have more impact than Government-led initiatives.”

Representing the CITE Youth Network, Lethokuhle Mpofu joined two volunteers from Zizo Motion to argue in favour of the proposition. They faced a strong opposition team made up of students from the National University

of Science and Technology (NUST). Both sides presented sharp arguments, drawing from real community experiences, national policy, and examples of work done by youth organisations.

The proposition team which included CYN was announced the winner. But what stood out most was what happened next. After the judges delivered the results, facilitators reminded everyone that the real purpose of the debate was not to decide which side is “better,” but to explore how community organisations and government can work together to create lasting change.

The discussion that followed was rich and collaborative,

with participants agreeing that combining grassroots energy with institutional support leads to greater impact for girls and young women.

For the CITE Youth Network, the event was an important platform to show how young people can contribute meaningfully to national conversations. It was also a reminder that empowering girls requires collective effort from creatives, policy makers, youth organisations, and the girls themselves.

As we reflect on the International Day of the Girl Child, CYN remains committed to promoting spaces where youth voices are heard, celebrated, and equipped to shape a better future.

# When profile pics turn purple: How a South African shutdown is becoming a regional call to action



By  
Lethokuhle Mpofu

In Zimbabwe, violence against women is not a distant statistic it is a daily reality that touches families, communities, and lives. One in three women has experienced physical violence, one in four has suffered sexual assault, and thousands report cases of gender based violence every year. These numbers are not abstract; they are mothers, sisters, daughters, friends,

and colleagues whose safety and futures are under constant threat.

It is this lived experience that has made Zimbabweans resonate deeply with the Women for Change shutdown in South Africa. Scheduled for 21 November 2025, the shutdown is a one day withdrawal of labor and public presence, a demand for recognition and systemic change in response to femicide and gender based violence. Many Zimbabweans, with relatives, friends,

or classmates living in South Africa, are taking part virtually, updating their purple profiles, sharing messages of solidarity, and amplifying the movement across TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The campaign is not just about South Africa; it is a regional fight, reflecting shared struggles and the urgent need for systemic intervention.

Founded to combat femicide, gender-based violence, and systemic neglect, Women for Change uses the shutdown as a tool to demonstrate the

critical economic and social role of women. The initiative highlights that violence against women is not only a human rights violation but also a threat to economic productivity and societal development. By withdrawing labor and creating public visibility, the movement compels policymakers, communities, and global leaders to confront the crisis.

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PAGE.....**

The shutdown's timing is strategic. Scheduled one day before the 2025 G20 Summit in Johannesburg, it positions women's voices at the center of the global economic conversation. G20 leaders will discuss issues including development, investment, and economic growth, but Women for Change uses this moment to signal that economic discussions are incomplete without addressing the systemic violence and inequality faced by women. The shutdown demonstrates the economic power of women, both in formal labour markets and in unpaid labour, while highlighting how gender based violence undermines productivity, human capital, and regional development. Participation on social media is more than a symbolic gesture. Updating purple profiles represents victims, survivors, and those who advocate for gender justice. For Zimbabweans, joining the campaign is an act of recognition: the crisis in South Africa mirrors realities at home. Across the region, from Botswana to Namibia, Mozambique to Lesotho, youth and communities are taking part virtually, connecting across borders, amplifying the narrative, and demanding attention. These digital acts of solidarity are a prelude to tangible action, creating awareness and building a network of regional support before the full economic and social impact of

the shutdown takes effect.

The crisis transcends borders. In Zimbabwe, one in three women has experienced physical violence and one in four sexual violence, with thousands seeking help each year and over 20,000 women reporting cases in just six months. Public perception surveys indicate over half of Zimbabweans see gender-based violence as common in communities. In South Africa, one woman is killed every 2.5 hours, and a third of women aged over 18 have experienced physical violence. Across Southern Africa, intimate partner violence affects roughly 33% of women, highlighting a widespread, systemic problem. These statistics reinforce why Zimbabweans are virtually joining the shutdown: the fight against gender based violence is shared, systemic, and urgent.

The shutdown is not a standalone act. It is perfectly timed to lead into the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence, from 25 November to 10 December. Digital solidarity ensures continuity, keeping attention on survivors and victims, and sustaining advocacy across borders. These visible gestures, anchored in the purple profile, are not only symbols but tools, driving awareness, conversation, and action across Southern Africa.

For Zimbabwean youth and regional

communities, the shutdown offers multiple points of engagement. They can participate online, share survivor stories, and amplify the campaign across networks. They can raise local visibility through discussions, workshops, or street-level advocacy. They can demand systemic change by pressuring authorities to strengthen reporting systems, fund shelters, and implement policies that protect women and girls. Most importantly, they can link their actions to the 16 Days of Activism, ensuring advocacy extends beyond digital engagement into real world impact.

These gestures on screens may seem small, but they are powerful symbols of resistance, solidarity, and regional consciousness. The shutdown is real world disruption a demonstration of women's social, political, and economic power. Together, they send a resounding message: gender-based violence is a crisis, the lives lost cannot be ignored, silence is not an option, and solidarity must cross borders.

When the world's eyes turn to Johannesburg for the G20, Women for Change ensures that Southern African women's voices, experiences, and demands are impossible to ignore. Purple has become the colour of visibility, mourning, resistance and now, action.

**CITE**

**END GBV**  
#16Days

**16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM**  
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Follow us: @citezw  
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**16 Days of Activism**

**STOP GENDER  
BASED VIOLENCE  
AGAINST WOMEN**

This year, the UN marks the 16 Days under the theme "UNiTE to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls".

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