



FAWEZI ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Change Through Equitable and Quality Education

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Foreword:

It is with a profound sense of stewardship and accountability that I present the FAWEZI 2025 Annual Report. It is a year that stands as a strategic reflection point in the organisation's journey to advance equitable, inclusive, and transformative education for girls and young women in Zimbabwe.

The year marked a formal transition from strategy design to strategy execution, following the successful launch of the FAWEZI Strategic Plan (2024–2028) on 6 June 2025. This Plan, anchored on five interlinked pillars: Quality Education; Advocacy and Policy Influence; Knowledge Generation and Dissemination; Capacity Strengthening; and Collaboration and Networking, provides a clear strategic framework for addressing persistent and emerging barriers to girls' education, including poverty, gender inequality, disability, displacement, and climate vulnerability.

The Executive Committee takes pride in having overseen the operationalisation of a strategy that is firmly aligned with national education priorities, the FAWE Africa framework, the African Union Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25), and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDGs 4, 5, 10, and 16. This alignment ensures that FAWEZI's work continues to contribute meaningfully to national, regional, and global efforts aimed at advancing equitable and inclusive education systems.

Throughout the year, the Executive Committee provided strategic oversight to ensure that FAWEZI's institutional growth remained anchored in sound governance, fiduciary discipline, safeguarding compliance, and results accountability. Particular emphasis was placed on strengthening strategic partnerships and institutional collaboration as critical enablers for achieving the organisation's long-term vision.



**FAWEZI Executive Committee
Chairperson Prof Ruth B Gora**

The Executive Committee commends the Secretariat, under the leadership of the Executive Director, Ms. Lydia Madyirapanze, for sustaining programme delivery and institutional performance while advancing the implementation of the FAWEZI Strategic Plan (2024–2028).

As FAWEZI moves into the next phase of implementation of its Strategic Plan (2024–2028), the Executive Committee remains committed to supporting a bold yet accountable vision — one that places evidence, equity, and girls' leadership at the centre of national and regional education transformation.

Executive Director's Statement:

The year 2025 represented a period of strategic activation, scaled delivery, and evidence-informed learning for FAWEZI. Guided by the FAWEZI Strategic Plan (2024–2028), the organisation advanced integrated, results-oriented programming that connects access, quality, safety, skills development, and transition pathways across the education continuum.

A defining milestone of the year was the official launch of the FAWEZI Strategic Plan (2024–2028) on 6 June 2025. The strategy articulates three core objectives: expanding access to quality education, strengthening evidence-based advocacy and policy influence, and enhancing institutional capacity for sustainable impact. These priorities are operationalised through five strategic pillars aligned with the FAWE Africa framework. The launch also marked the unveiling of FAWEZI's new visual identity, symbolising resilience, aspiration, and leadership, and reinforcing education as a catalyst for social transformation.

FAWEZI also launched the Second Chance Pathways for Increased Access to Tertiary Education for Marginalised Young Women and Men under the FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II Programme, a seven-year multi-country initiative implemented across ten African countries. In Zimbabwe, the programme focuses on expanding flexible and inclusive tertiary education pathways, including the Higher Education Access Certificate (HEAC) and Higher Education Access Programme (HEAP), with 80% of programme participants targeted as young women, 20% young men, and 5–15% reserved for persons with disabilities and refugees.

A key milestone was the national call for the first Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) bursary cohort, which attracted 4,564 applications from across all ten provinces. Pre-screening and automated scoring narrowed the pool to 3,687 eligible applicants, from which further screening was conducted through multi-tiered provincial and national committees comprising government, civil society, and education sector representatives.



**FAWEZI Executive Director
Lydia Madyirapanze**

FAWEZI rolled out the Resilient, Innovative, Skilled, and Empowered Girls (RISE) Project, supported by UNICEF, to strengthen adolescent empowerment and community protection systems in Chipinge and Chitungwiza districts through a layered approach that builds on and reinforces existing Government-led coordination structures, ensuring ownership and sustainability.

FAWEZI also concluded the Transforming Adolescent Girls' Opportunities through Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Skills Development (TAGO) Project, which promoted girls' participation in STEM education in Epworth and Hopley. The project supported 354 teachers with Gender-Responsive Pedagogy training, reached 3,000 learners through STEM awareness initiatives, and engaged 1,423 learners through mentorship and empowerment sessions. STEM fairs and mentorship activities supported 1,156 learners across 34 schools, while the provision of mobile science laboratories to all 34 project schools addressed critical gaps in access to practical science learning.

The Towards Resilient Communities with Health, Equity, and Safety for All (TORCHES) Project concluded after 4 years of implementation in Shamva and Chitungwiza, with support from ActionAid Zimbabwe, and recorded 101,019 community exposures, including persons with disabilities. Through TUSEME/Let Us Speak Out Clubs, the project directly engaged 44,732 learners (27,635 girls and 17,097 boys, including 735 learners with disabilities), while 652 survivors of Gender-Based Violence (567 females and 85 males) accessed critical support services.

Advocacy and policy engagement remained central to FAWEZI's work, with the organisation participating in national and global platforms and convening engagements linked to key international commemorations. These efforts contributed to strengthening dialogue on girls' education, gender equality, and inclusive learning environments.

Institutional strengthening and partnerships also remained critical enablers of FAWEZI's work. During the year, FAWEZI formalised partnerships with key government institutions, including the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, and the Tertiary Education Service Council, while strengthening collaboration with 11 tertiary institutions, comprising five public universities, Bindura University of Science Education, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Lupane State University, Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences, and Midlands State University, and six TVET institutions, Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Kwekwe, Mutare, and Belvedere Technical Teachers College.

Organisational Capacity Assessments conducted across these institutions are informing targeted institutional strengthening and supporting the effective implementation of the FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II Programme.

Reflecting on FAWEZI's work in 2025, I am encouraged by the scale of progress made in expanding opportunities for girls and young women across education, protection, and skills development pathways. Our continued focus on equity, evidence, and partnership remains central to delivering sustainable impact.

As we move forward with the implementation of the FAWEZI Strategic Plan (2024–2028), I extend my sincere appreciation to the Executive Committee, staff, partners, government counterparts, and communities whose support continues to advance FAWEZI's mission of promoting equitable and quality education for girls and young women in Zimbabwe.

Acknowledgments:

The Forum for African Women Educationalists Zimbabwe (FAWEZI) extends its sincere appreciation to all those whose commitment and collaboration have made the achievements captured in this Annual Report possible. We begin by acknowledging the FAWEZI Executive Committee, under the able leadership of Professor Ruth B. Gora, whose strategic oversight, steadfast commitment, and guidance continue to anchor the organisation to its vision of advancing gender equality in education.

We commend the dedication and leadership of the FAWEZI Secretariat, led by the Executive Director, Ms Lydia Madyirapanze. Her visionary leadership has been instrumental in broadening FAWEZI's reach and impact. Appreciation is extended to Ms Nqobile Nkiwane, Programmes Manager, for coordinating the seamless execution of programme activities. We further appreciate the Finance Department, led by Finance Manager Mr Kelvin Karumazondo, for ensuring the seamless financing and prudent management of programme resources.

We are grateful to the Government of Zimbabwe, our development partners, and funding partners for their continued trust, partnership, and unwavering support. Your investment and collaboration remain vital in sustaining and scaling initiatives that promote equitable and quality education for girls and young women.

Special recognition is accorded to the Monitoring and Evaluation Department, led by Mr Edmond Shoniwa, for ensuring that this report is grounded in evidence and accurately reflects the outcomes and impact of our work. We also acknowledge the Communications and Advocacy Department, led by Mr. Menard Ziko, for thoughtfully documenting, designing, and amplifying FAWEZI's milestones, voices, and stories of change.

To our members, alumni, and programme participants, we extend our heartfelt thanks. Your voices, experiences, and resilience are the soul of this report and continue to inspire and strengthen our collective mission.

As you engage with this Annual Report, we invite you to reflect on the progress we have made together and to continue walking with us as we strive to build a future where every girl is holistically empowered for socio-economic transformation.

Acronyms

AAZ – ActionAid Zimbabwe

BUSE – Bindura University of Science Education

CAMFED – Campaign for Female Education

CESA – Continental Education Strategy for Africa

CUT – Chinhoyi University of Technology

DFC – Design for Change

ECOZI – Education Coalition of Zimbabwe

FAWE – Forum for African Women Educationalists

FAWEZI – Forum for African Women Educationalists Zimbabwe Chapter

FODPZ – Federation of Organisations of Disabled People in Zimbabwe

GBV – Gender-Based Violence

GRP – Gender-Responsive Pedagogy

IDGC – International Day of the Girl Child

LCDZ – Leonard Cheshire Disability Zimbabwe

LSU – Lupane State University

MHTEISTD – Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development

MoHCC – Ministry of Health and Child Care

MoPSE – Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

MoPSLSW – Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare

MSU – Midlands State University

MSUAS – Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences

MWACSMED – Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development

MYEDVT – Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

'O' Levels – Ordinary Levels

PPC – Parliamentary Portfolio Committee

PWD – Persons with Disabilities

RISE – Resilient, Innovative, Skilled and Empowered Girls Project

SBCC – Social and Behaviour Change Communication

SGBV – Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

SRGBV – School-Related Gender-Based Violence

SRHR – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

TESC – Tertiary Education Services Council

TORCHES – Towards Resilient Communities with Health, Equity, and Safety for All

TVET – Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund

UKFIET – United Kingdom Forum for International Education and Training

***“Fueling innovation through STEM
shaping smart futures”***





About FAWEZI

FAWEZI is a membership-based organisation that was launched in March 1998 and registered as a welfare organisation in terms of subsection (5) of section 9 of the Welfare Organisations (Chapter 93) in 1999, Registration No: W/O: PVO: 11/99. FAWEZI registered as a Private Voluntary Organisation in terms of subsection (5) of section 9 of the Private Voluntary Organisation Act (Chapter 17:05), Registration No. PVO 150/23 in 2024.



Our Vision

An inclusive Zimbabwe where gender disparities are eliminated and girls and women are holistically empowered for socio-economic transformation.

Our Mission

To enhance provision of and access to quality education and training opportunities for girls and women in Zimbabwe



Our Moto

Change through Equitable and Quality Education

Our Values and Guiding Principles

Integrity, Respect, Teamwork,
Safeguarding and child protection, Accountability





FOUNDING MEMBERS

FAWEZI's founding members include: the former Minister of Education, Dr. Fay King Chung; former Deputy Speaker, Ednah Madzongwe; former Public Service Commissioner, Dr. Hope Sadza; former Zimbabwe's High Commissioner in Namibia, Mary Mubi; former Chief Educational Psychologist, the late Dr. Tommie Marie Samkange; the first woman to enrol at the University College of Rhodesia, now the University of Zimbabwe, the late Dr. Sarah Kachingwe; a renowned academic, Professor Rudo Gaidzanwa; the late Salome Nyoni who was then the Deputy Secretary of Women's Affairs; and the former Principal of Belvedere Teachers College, Mrs. Jannie M. Makawa



Executive Committee 2024-2026



Chairperson:
Prof Ruth B. Gora



Vice Chairperson:
Prof Sunungurai
Chingarande



Secretary:
Dr. Shupikai
Zebron



Vice Secretary:
Caroline Dimingu



Treasurer:
Dr. Varaidzo
Denhere



Committee Member:
Dr. Eng. Prudence
Kadebu



FAWE

FORUM FOR AFRICAN WOMEN EDUCATIONALISTS
FORUM DES ÉDUCATRICES AFRICAINES

FAWEZI is affiliated with the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). FAWE is a membership-based pan-African Non-Governmental Organisation established in 1992 in Kenya, operating through 34 National Chapters to promote girls' and women's education. FAWE's vision is that of an equitable and inclusive society where all African girls and women are thriving. FAWE was founded by five African women Ministers of Education:



Hon. Simone de Comarmond
of Seychelles



Hon. Dr. Fay Chung
of Zimbabwe



Hon. Paulette Missambo
of Gabon

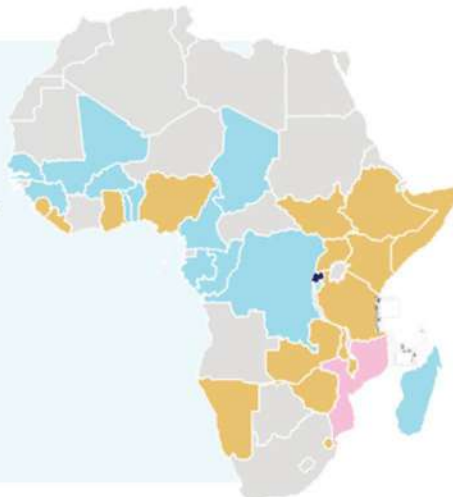


Hon. Alice Tiendrebéogo
of Burkina Faso



The late Vida Yeboa
of Ghana

FAWE National Chapters: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, The Gambia, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zanzibar, and Zimbabwe.



How We Work Our Approach

FAWEZI adopts a comprehensive and holistic approach to promoting gender equality, girls education, and women's empowerment in Zimbabwe. The key elements of our approach are designed to influence policy reform and drive positive change in communities where we work, in partnership with other stakeholders.



Where We Worked in 2025

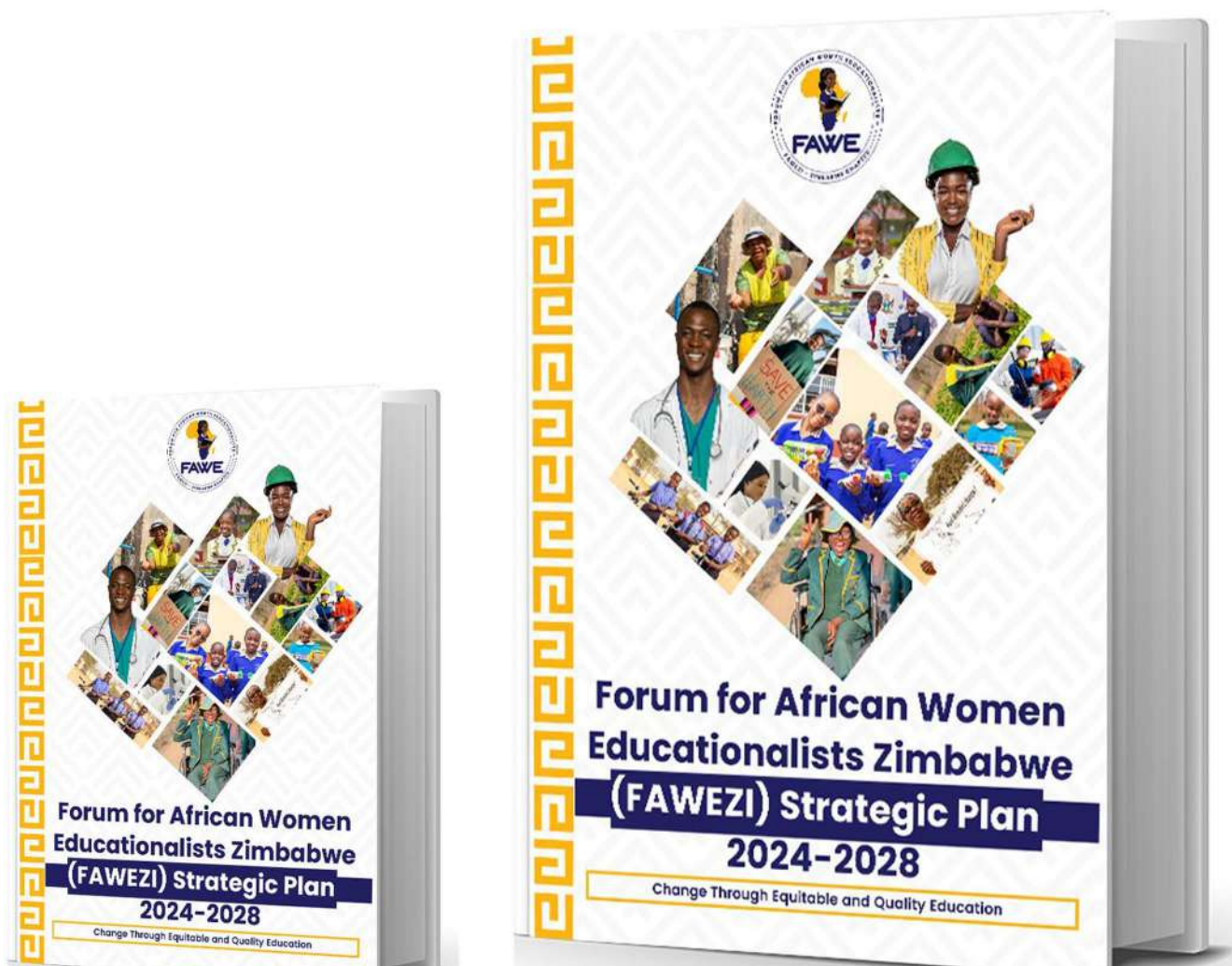


Manicaland - FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II, RISE
Mat North - FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II
Mat South -FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II
Mash West - FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II
Midlands - FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II
Bulawayo -FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II
Mash East - FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II
Masvingo -FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II
Mash Central - TORCHES, FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II
Harare - FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II,
TORCHES, TAGO, RISE.

Sweden
Sveri

**“Driving community advocacy
amplifying girls’ voices for change”**





Unpacking the FAWEZI Strategic Plan (2024–2028)

Strategic Direction and Institutional Repositioning

The FAWEZI Strategic Plan (2024–2028) provides a clear roadmap for positioning the organisation as a leading national and regional actor in advancing girls’ and young women’s education in Zimbabwe. Anchored in FAWEZI’s longstanding mandate and aligned with the FAWE Africa framework, the Strategy responds to persistent and emerging barriers to education, including poverty, gender inequality, disability, displacement, harmful social norms, and climate-related shocks.

At its core, the Strategy is underpinned by an intersectional and rights-based Theory of Change that recognises education as both a protective factor and a catalyst for social transformation. It deliberately shifts FAWEZI’s programming from isolated interventions toward systems strengthening, evidence-informed advocacy, and sustainable institutional partnerships that deliver measurable and scalable impact.

Strategic Objectives

1

To enhance provision and access to quality education and training opportunities for girls and women in Zimbabwe

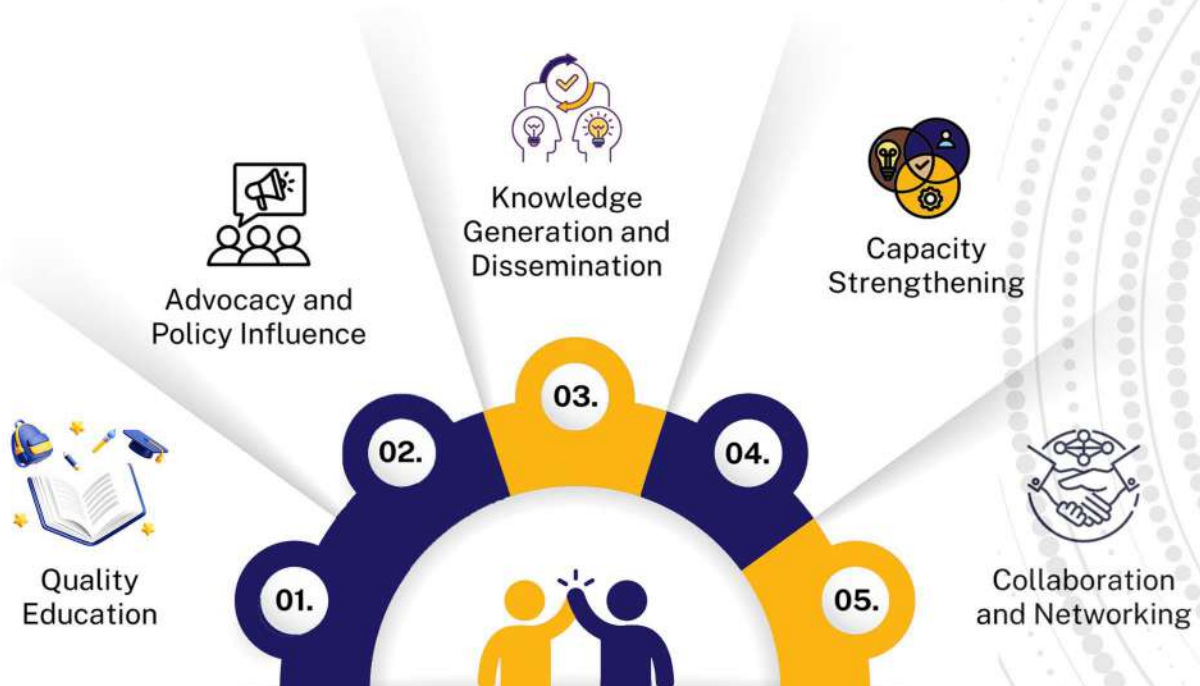
2

To contribute towards generation and utilisation of research evidence to inform education policy and practice

3

To enhance institutional capacity of FAWEZI to deliver its mandate (networking, leadership, technical and financial).

Strategic Pillars



Implementation Approach

The Strategy adopts a systems-oriented and layered implementation approach, working within and alongside government-led coordination structures to integrate education, protection, health, and skills development interventions. Cross-cutting priorities gender equality, disability inclusion, safeguarding, climate resilience, youth participation, and accountability are mainstreamed across all programmes.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) is central to the Strategy, with a strong emphasis on disaggregated data, adaptive management, and learning for continuous improvement. Each intervention is supported by intervention-specific plans integrated into the broader organisational framework, ensuring coherence, quality, and continuous learning. This ensures that programming remains responsive, evidence-driven, and aligned with both national priorities and global commitments.

The FAWEZI Strategic Plan (2024-2028) positions the organisation as a credible thought leader, implementing partner, and advocate for transformative girls' education. The Strategy provides a coherent framework for translating vision into action, strengthening institutional resilience, and delivering sustainable outcomes for girls and young women ensuring that no girl is left behind.



Expanding Access and Transition Pathways

- Launched the FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II Programme, expanding inclusive TVET and tertiary pathways for marginalised young women and men, including persons with disabilities and refugees.
- Reached nationwide demand with 4,564 applications (3,687 eligible), demonstrating both unmet need and FAWEZI's ability to reach underserved populations.
- Implemented a transparent, multi-tiered selection process, including 187 verification visits, strengthening accountability and establishing a credible, scalable model for equitable access.



Strengthening Protection and Community Accountability

- Integrated education, health, protection, and youth empowerment systems under the RISE Project in Chipinge and Chitungwiza, strengthening coordinated service delivery.
- Engaged 205 community stakeholders in reflective dialogues, shifting community attitudes and strengthening accountability on issues such as child marriage, GBV, and school exclusion.
- Trained 201 Community Child Care Workers, improving referral pathways, safeguarding, and case management for vulnerable children.
- Reached over 1,000 community members directly and 21,000 through media platforms, increasing awareness and uptake of protection and education services.



Improving Quality and Relevance of Learning

- Strengthened inclusive teaching practices through training of 354 teachers in Gender-Responsive Pedagogy.
- Reached 3,000 community members, increasing awareness and support for girls' participation in STEM.
- Supported 1,156 learners across 34 schools through mentorship and project-based learning, enhancing practical STEM skills and confidence.
- Addressed critical infrastructure gaps by equipping 34 schools with mobile science laboratories and facilitating STEM fairs, improving experiential learning and career exposure.



Consolidating GBV Prevention and Survivor Support

- Reached over 101,000 individuals through community-based GBV prevention initiatives, including persons with disabilities.
- Strengthened school-based prevention platforms by engaging 44,732 learners through TUSEME Clubs.
- Enabled 652 survivors of GBV to access essential services, strengthening response systems and improving protection outcomes.



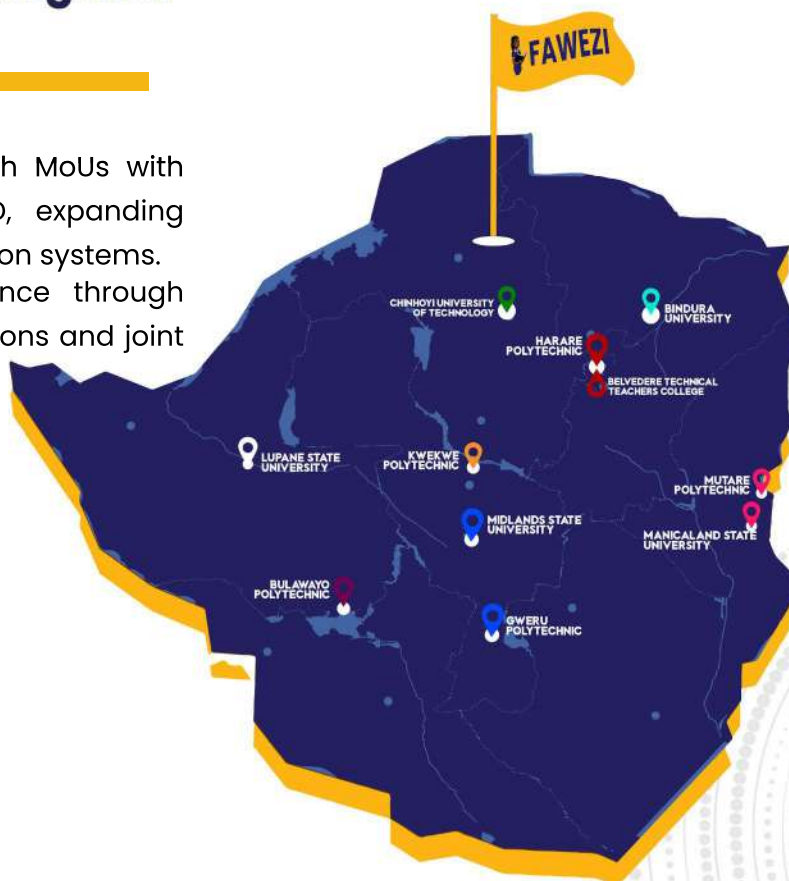
Advocacy, Policy and Visibility

- Amplified girls' voices through national and international platforms, directly engaging 193 participants and generating over 432 digital engagements during key advocacy campaigns.
- Facilitated direct engagement between girls and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee, contributing to policy dialogue and scrutiny of Statutory Instrument 13 of 2025.
- Positioned Zimbabwean evidence at regional and global platforms, including the 3rd Africa Education Summit and the United Kingdom Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET) 2025, influencing discourse on inclusive education and STEM.













Institutional Strengthening and Partnerships

- Institutionalised collaboration through MoUs with five universities, TESC, and MHEISTD, expanding FAWEZI's footprint within tertiary education systems.
- Strengthened institutional performance through capacity assessments across 11 institutions and joint monitoring of 12 schools, improving governance, safeguarding, and quality assurance systems.



Key Numbers at Glance

	 TOTAL	 FEMALE	 MALE
 Teachers trained	354	252	102
 Learners reached (STEM & TUSEME)	47,888	30,021	17,867
 GBV survivors supported	652	567	85
 Community stakeholders engaged	205	143	62
 Direct digital platforms Engagements	60 000+	–	–
 International days Activities participation	193	132	61
 Global Giving	9	9	–

FAWEZI's 2025 results demonstrate how integrated, evidence-driven programming can expand access, strengthen systems, and influence policy. These achievements lay a strong foundation for scaling impact and accelerating progress toward equitable, inclusive, and transformative education in Zimbabwe.

“Accelerating progress toward equitable, inclusive, and transformative education in Zimbabwe.”



Advancing Systems Change for Girls' Education and Skills Development in 2025

Strategic Context and Programming Logic

1 EXPANDING EQUITABLE ACCESS AND TRANSITION PATHWAYS



- 4,564** applicants reached across all ten provinces through the bursary call.
- 80%** female participation, including persons with disabilities and refugees.
- A transparent, data-driven selection process ensured fairness, accountability, and credibility.
- Established a **replicable model** for equitable and merit-based selection within national education systems.

2 STRENGTHENING PROTECTION SYSTEMS AND COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY



- 205** community stakeholders engaged in reflective dialogues to address drivers of school exclusion.
- 201** Community Child Care Workers capacitated to improve case management and referrals.
- Millions** reached through national mass media campaigns.
- 1,000+** individuals reached through targeted community engagements.
- Stronger demand and delivery of protective services for safer, more enabling environments for girls' education.

3 IMPROVING QUALITY AND RELEVANCE OF LEARNING



- 354** teachers trained in gender-responsive pedagogy for more inclusive classrooms.
- 3,000+** individuals reached through outreach campaigns, increasing STEM awareness.
- 1,100+** learners engaged through mentorship, STEM fairs, and school-based projects.
- 34** underserved schools received mobile science laboratories based on baseline evidence.
- Enhanced access to and quality of STEM education, opening future opportunities for girls in science and technology.

4 CONSOLIDATING GBV PREVENTION AND SURVIVOR SUPPORT



- 101,000+** community members reached on GBV prevention and response.
- 44,732** learners directly engaged through school-based platforms.
- 652** survivors accessed essential GBV services.
- Institutionalised referral mechanisms and strengthened school and community systems for sustainable prevention and response beyond the project lifecycle.

5 ADVOCACY, POLICY INFLUENCE, AND VISIBILITY



- Girls influenced policy discussions with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee, contributing to scrutiny of Statutory Instrument 13 of 2025.
- Zimbabwean evidence positioned in regional and global platforms on inclusive education, skills development, and GBV prevention.
- Strengthened FAWEZI's credibility as a thought leader and expanded opportunities for cross-country learning and collaboration.

6 MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT



- 500** sanitary pads distributed in Epworth to address barriers to school attendance and participation.
- Interactive awareness sessions provided critical knowledge on menstrual hygiene and reproductive health.
- Challenged harmful social norms and stigma surrounding menstruation.
- Improved school retention, confidence, and wellbeing among girls through access, information, and empowerment.

"CREATING REAL IMPACT

TRANSFORMING STEM LEARNING FOR GIRLS"



Learning, Monitoring, and Institutional Strengthening



FAWEZI deepened its impact through a mature Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) system that informed decision-making, improved programme design, and strengthened institutional performance. Evaluations, baseline studies, and capacity assessments generated actionable evidence used to refine interventions, manage risks, and strengthen partnerships across 11 tertiary institutions. Joint monitoring visits and research collaborations further enhanced accountability and system-wide learning.

This evidence-driven approach ensured that FAWEZI's interventions were not only implemented effectively but continuously improved, reinforcing its role as a data-driven organisation delivering measurable and sustainable outcomes.



Mastercard
Foundation

FAWEL

STOP
GBV

Illustration by
Makina

Supporting
Acquire

Supporting Girls and women to
Acquire Education for Development





Significant Stories



STEM Changed My Path:

Choosing Knowledge

Over Revenge



Princess Muteya (15)

At just 14 years old, Princess Muteya, has faced hardships that have shaped her young life. Growing up in a peri-urban settlement, she has endured the instability of moving from one home to another following her parents' divorce. The tragic loss of her uncle, who was shot, deepened her struggles.

With no permanent home, she moves between relatives, disrupting her education and leaving her future uncertain. Despite these challenges, Princess shows great academic potential, but the trauma of her experiences led her to a troubling aspiration, she wanted to become a gunsmith to avenge her uncle's death.

"I was angry and hurt, I thought that if I could make my own weapons, I would get justice for my uncle and myself," She said

Her perspective changed when she encountered the 'Transforming Adolescent Girls' Opportunities through STEM and Skills Development' project. The initiative introduced STEM clubs at her school, creating a platform where young learners can explore science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in a meaningful way.

Through this program, Princess was exposed to new opportunities that shifted her focus from vengeance to innovation. Princess participated in the creation of an eco-friendly grass cutter project, which was later showcased at the STEM Fair held under the project, where students from various schools presented their innovations.

The event broadened her perspective and gave her a new sense of direction. "I learnt so much from the projects at the STEM Fair. It opened my eyes to a future beyond anger. I now want to be a geologist." Said Princess

This transformation has extended beyond Princess, inspiring her classmates to take a greater interest in STEM subjects.

"More girls in my class are now interested in science and mathematics. Many of them now dream of becoming doctors, engineers, and geologists. We have realized that STEM careers can shape our lives in ways we never imagined." She shared



The profound change in Princess is her new approach to healing. She has found peace in leaving her uncle's death in the hands of the Lord and has chosen to focus on her education and aspirations instead of revenge.

She now advocates for young girls who have lost loved ones to violence, urging them to resist the pull of retaliation.

"I now understand the consequences of seeking revenge,"

"I encourage girls who have lost their parents or close relatives to gun violence to choose a different path. If you seek revenge, you could end up in prison, and in the process, you destroy the future you were meant to have," she said.

Princess credits FAWEZI for opening her mind to new possibilities and helping her change her outlook on life.

"Without this program, I might still be thinking about revenge. But now, I have a future." Said Princess

Her journey highlights the power of education and mentorship in transforming young lives. Through the support of the project, Princess is shifting from despair to determination.



How One Girl Found Her Voice Through a Safer School Environment

Audrey Apololi (15)

“They Used to Laugh at My Eyes”

At just 15 years old, Audrey Apololi has lived through something no child should ever face in school: isolation, bullying, and shame, not because of anything she did but simply because of how she looks.

“I used to dread coming to school. The boys in my class would laugh at me, call me names because of how I look. They said I had big eyes, big ears. Some days, I couldn’t even walk into the classroom without hearing whispers behind my back.” Says Audrey

Audrey is a Form 3 learner, for months, a group of boys in her class would taunt her daily, poking fun at her appearance. What started as a few jokes quickly became a daily routine of verbal bullying that left Audrey feeling isolated and embarrassed. This drained her confidence and disrupted her ability to concentrate in class.

“Sometimes, I would fake being sick just to stay home. I felt like I didn’t belong.”

She witnessed change when her school became part of the Data for Change initiative a project designed to confront and dismantle School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV)

Audrey’s story is not unique. Across Zimbabwe, and in many parts of the world, learners, especially girls, are subjected to School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV), a silent epidemic that often goes unchecked. Verbal abuse, bullying, inappropriate comments, and physical harassment have become all too common in school environments where gender power dynamics and lack of awareness create fertile ground for harm. According to the 2021 Zimbabwe violence against children survey report 10% of the 142,749 female respondents aged 13 – 24 years experienced emotional violence.

Before the project's intervention, her school, like many others, lacked formal structures to address bullying and gender-based harassment. Teachers often viewed such behavior as harmless teasing, while affected learners, like Audrey, bore the brunt of the emotional and psychological consequences in silence.

The Data for Change project sought to break this cycle by using data-driven strategies and structured training to raise awareness, build capacity, and institutionalize systems for prevention and response to SRGBV.

Through the project, selected teachers from six schools, including Audrey's guidance and counselling teacher, were trained using the School-Related Gender-Based Violence Manual. The manual equips educators with practical tools to recognize and respond to different forms of SRGBV and to promote respectful, inclusive environments within their classrooms.

The training emphasized the importance of:

- Positive communication between learners;
- Proactive prevention of bullying and verbal abuse;
- Child-friendly reporting pathways for cases of SRGBV;

"Our teacher came back from the training, and everything changed," Audrey explains.

"She started talking to us about respect. She told us that the things we say to each other matter, saying, words can build or break someone."

In a series of Tuseme Club sessions, the teacher engaged students boys and girls, in open discussions about how name-calling and teasing affect their peers. She emphasized that learners needed to treat one another like siblings, building a culture of unity and empathy. Reporting mechanisms were also introduced, allowing students to share concerns without fear of retaliation or blame.

"The boys that used to laugh at me apologized. They told me they didn't know how much it hurt.

Now, they treat me with respect. We talk, we share notes, we help each other with homework." Says Audrey

With these changes, something shifted in Audrey. She began to lift her head higher, participate more in class, and interact with her classmates, boys included.

"Now they treat me like a sister. The same boys who used to mock me now talk to me with respect."

For Audrey, the project didn't just make school bearable again; it made it joyful. Her attendance has improved. Her confidence is growing. Most importantly, she knows she has the right to be herself without fear.

"I feel like I belong now. I'm not afraid anymore," she says. "I know I have the right to be here, to learn, to be myself."

Teachers at her school confirm that overall discipline and mutual respect among learners have improved significantly since the introduction of the Data for Change project. Incidents of bullying have declined, and students now feel more empowered to report issues early.

"Having clear guidance from the SRGBV manual and support from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and FAWEZI made a big difference.

"We did not know how to intervene in these issues. Now we have tools, support systems, and a new mindset," says Ndaneta, Audrey's Guidance and Counseling teacher and Tuseme Club Mentor.

While the impact of the Data for Change project at Audrey's school is undeniable, as with all social change, sustainability remains the biggest challenge. Teachers need continued support. Reporting systems need to be maintained and strengthened. And cultural mindsets around gender and power must be continuously addressed, not just through policy but through consistent practice.



**“If I Had Stayed in School,
My Life Would Be Different”**

Lucia Jambaya (19)

Lucia’s Story of Loss, Resilience and Hope

By the time Lucia Jambaya turned 19, she was already a mother of two.

In Ward 29 of Chipinge District, Mahenye Village, Hlamalani area, Lucia’s days begin before sunrise. She fetches water, prepares meals, and soothes her young children before the heat settles in. Each task is a reminder of a childhood cut short, not by choice, but by circumstance.

“I was married when I was 15. My parents had separated, and no one was paying my school fees. I had stopped school in Grade 4. Staying at home with no support, marriage felt like the only option.”

Lucia’s story is not an isolated one. In her village, girls as young as 12 are married off.

Poverty, family breakdown, and social norms converge to strip girls of their right to education, protection, and choice. Climate change has intensified these pressures, droughts and poor rainfall have weakened livelihoods, increased food insecurity, and pushed families to make desperate decisions.

“When there is no food, no money, and no school, girls are seen as ready for marriage. Some parents believe it will reduce the burden at home,” says Lucia

A Childhood Interrupted

Lucia remembers school, the chalkboard, the songs, the dreams. She wanted to be a teacher. Today, that dream feels distant.

“I am not knowledgeable about anything of value in my life. If I had stayed in school, I believe my life would be different. Education is very important. Without it, you are vulnerable,” says Lucia

Her vulnerability was compounded by climate shocks that disrupted learning and safety for girls. During drought seasons, water sources dry up, forcing girls to walk longer distances, increasing their exposure to violence. Floods damage schools and roads, keeping girls at home where the risk of early marriage and exploitation rises.

Lucia now understands the importance of child protection.

“Child marriages must end, especially when parents separate and children are left alone, Girls need protection, not marriage,” says Lucia



Community Voices Calling for Change

Chipo Mwanangendeve, 45, a shop owner at Chizenge Shops and chairlady of the local business community, has witnessed the impact of these challenges firsthand.

“We conducted a local survey to understand why so many young girls are getting pregnant. What we found is that it all comes back to protection issues. Girls are raised to be wives, not children with rights,” says Chipo

According to Chipo, girls aged 15 and under are engaging in sexual activity, often without adequate information or protection.

The consequences are devastating, early pregnancies, school dropouts, unsafe and illegal abortions, and girls fleeing their homes.

“Some girls run away because they are afraid or ashamed. Others are forced into marriage to ‘solve’ the problem. It is a cycle we have been struggling to break,” says Chipo



Chipo Mwanangendeve (45)



Prisilar Chimanyiwa Jenya (Right) FAWEZI RISE project officer with a participant during a community led advocacy on girls education activity held in Mahenye, Chipinge

A Layered Response Through RISE Project

The arrival of the Resilient, Innovative, Skilled and Empowered Girls (RISE) Project, implemented with support from UNICEF, has been a turning point.

“The RISE Project came at the right time, it has kick-started conversations we were longing for about protection, accountability, and empowering girls,” says

The RISE Project focuses on strengthening child protection systems, adolescent empowerment, and community accountability, with a specific emphasis on safeguarding adolescent girls from violence, harmful social norms, and exclusion from education.

Its impact lies in its layering approach, working through and alongside government systems rather than in isolation.

Through this approach, education, health, protection, and youth interventions are integrated into existing government-led coordination structures at district and community levels ensuring sustainability and local ownership.

Through participatory approaches embedded in the RISE Project, Mahenye village is beginning to challenge harmful norms, strengthen accountability, and respond collectively to the risks girls face from climate shocks to violence and early marriage.

Lucia’s story is a reminder of what is lost when systems fail girls and what can be regained when communities, government, and partners work together to protect them.

In partnership with



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***"DRIVING SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION
THROUGH EDUCATING GIRLS"***

Advocacy and Partnerships



FAWEZI significantly expanded its policy engagement, institutional partnerships, and multi-stakeholder collaboration, positioning itself as a trusted convener and technical partner in advancing inclusive, gender-responsive education and skills pathways in Zimbabwe.

A key milestone was the operationalisation of high-level partnerships under the FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II Programme, which marked FAWEZI's expanded engagement within the tertiary education and TVET sub-sectors. Through sustained dialogue and formal agreements, FAWEZI strengthened collaboration with key line ministries, including the MHEISTD and the MoPSE, aligning programme implementation with national priorities on STEM, skills development, and youth empowerment.

FAWEZI successfully signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with MHEISTD, the TES), and five public universities, BUSE, CUT, LSU, MSUAST, and MSU. These agreements institutionalised collaboration expanding FAWEZI's operational footprint within tertiary education systems.

FAWEZI also strengthened parliamentary engagement and girls' advocacy, facilitating structured dialogue between adolescent girls and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Primary and Secondary Education.

Building on a petition previously submitted by girls and teacher mentors, FAWEZI supported a follow-up engagement in which girls used drama and personal testimonies to highlight persistent barriers such as school dropouts, early marriage, gender-based violence, and financial exclusion.

This engagement contributed to parliamentary scrutiny of Statutory Instrument 13 of 2025, reinforcing the right to education for all children regardless of socio-economic status.

At regional and international levels, FAWEZI leveraged partnerships to amplify Zimbabwean evidence and practice. Participation in platforms such as the 3rd Africa Education Summit, UKFIET 2025, and the FemNet4GTE Regional Action Workshop strengthened FAWEZI's role as a credible evidence broker, linking grassroots realities with national, continental, and global policy discourse.

Collectively, FAWEZI's 2025 lobbying and partnership efforts advanced policy alignment, institutional ownership, and system-level reform, reinforcing education as a pathway to equity, protection, and socio-economic transformation for girls and young women in Zimbabwe.

Looking Forward: FAWEZI's Priorities for 2026



Building on the strategic activation, evidence generation, and scaled delivery achieved in 2025, FAWEZI's way forward is shaped by evidence, community voices, and the practical realities of education, protection, and skills systems in Zimbabwe. The focus is on embedding what works within institutions and policies, ensuring that gains for girls and young women are sustained, scaled, and owned by the systems meant to serve them.

Institutionalising Evidence for Policy and Practice

FAWEZI will consolidate its role as a credible policy influencer, strengthening engagement with line ministries, and regulatory bodies across education and TVET. Building on 2025 engagements, FAWEZI will continue to elevate girls' voices in policy spaces, using programme evidence to inform reforms.

Scaling Protection Systems through Integration

FAWEZI will deepen the integration of SRGBV prevention, safeguarding, and referral mechanisms within education and social protection systems. Through a multi layered approach, interventions will combine safe learning environments, STEM, nutrition, SRHR, Gender-Responsive Pedagogy, and adolescent leadership.

Strengthening Protection Infrastructure and Survivor Support

FAWEZI will advance resource mobilisation and partnerships to support community-linked protection infrastructure, ensuring survivors access timely and coordinated support.

Advancing Gender-Transformative Education

FAWEZI will expand gender-transformative approaches, strengthening teacher capacity, addressing harmful norms, and promoting inclusive, safe learning environments that support girls' retention, progression, and leadership.

Expanding Second-Chance Education and Skills Development

FAWEZI will scale tertiary pathways through bridging programmes, bursaries, mentorship, and strengthened partnerships with universities and TVET institutions, prioritising marginalised young women and men.

Strengthening FAWEZI as a Systems Partner

FAWEZI will strengthen governance, MEAL systems, and partnerships to match the scale of its mandate, while strengthening alliances with government, development partners, academia, and civil society to co-create sustainable, nationally anchored solutions.

This way forward positions FAWEZI to accelerate delivery of its Strategic Plan (2024–2028), translating evidence and partnerships into sustained, system-level change for girls and young women in Zimbabwe.



FAWEZI'S PARTNERS IN 2025



The Civil Society Voice in Education



Key Moments and Impact Highlights



**Launch of the FAWEZI Strategic Plan 2024–2028
and the FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Phase II Programme**





Launch of the Resilient, Innovative, Skilled, and Empowered Girls (RISE) project





**3rd Africa Education Summit
Victoria Falls**



United Kingdom Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET) 2025 Education Development Forum



Feminist Network for Gender Transformative Education (FemNet4GTE) 2025 Regional Action Workshop



**FAWE ALUMNI
CONVENING 2025**

08th September 2025

FAWE Alumni Convening

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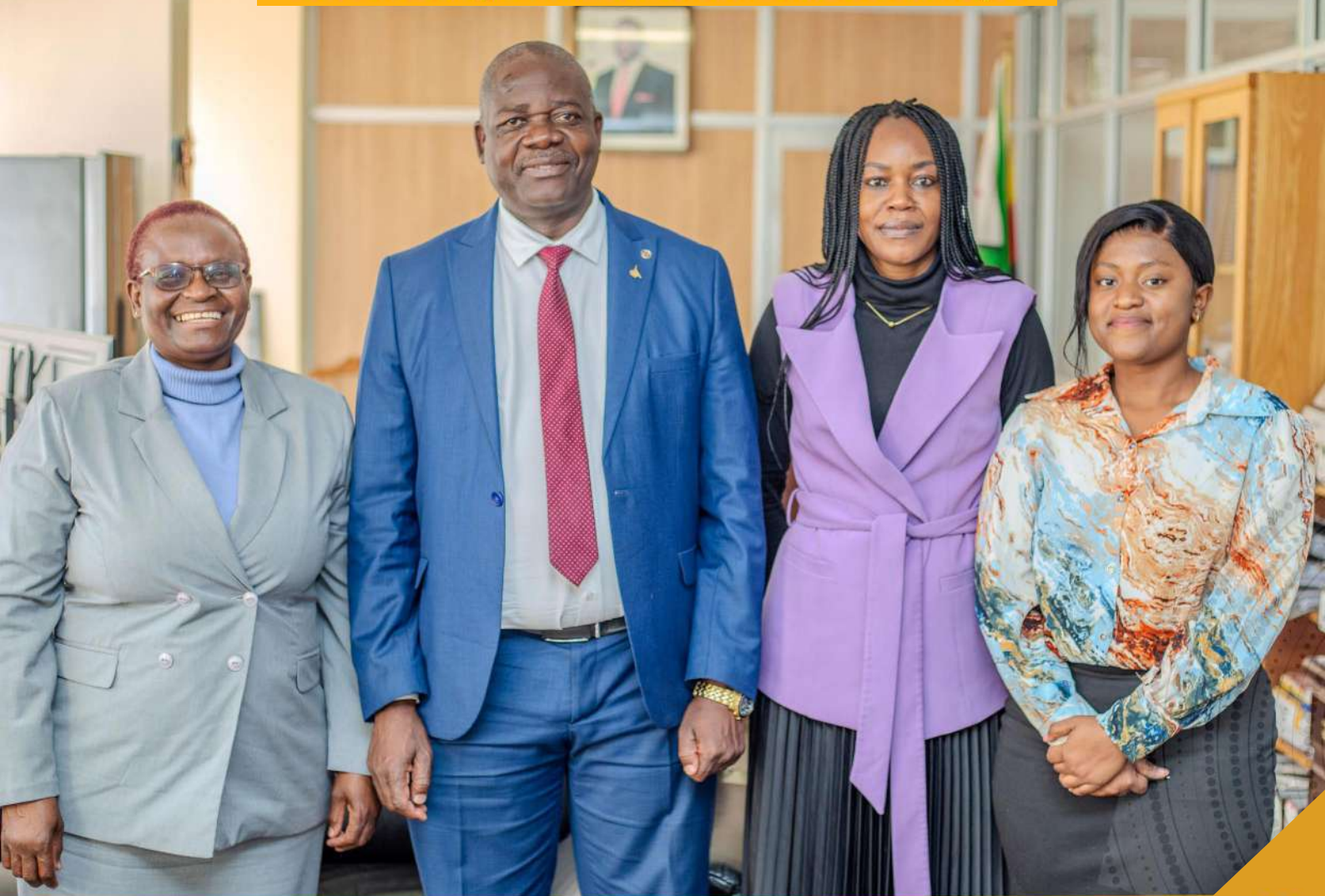
Scholars Program

**FROM LEARNERS TO LEADERS:
FAWE Alumni Leading the Way**

The Alumni



Engagement With Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Hon. Dr. T. Moyo





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