

ZIMBABWE CHAMBER OF INFORMAL ECONOMY ASSOCIATIONS



"THE CHAMBER THAT DELIVERS"

STUDY CIRCLE BASIC EDUCATION MANUAL FOR INFORMAL ECONOMY WORKERS

BOOK 7



GENDER ISSUES IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

Table of Contents

Foreword.....	2-3
Acknowledgements	4.5
Abbreviations	6
Chapter 7: Gender Issues in the Informal Economy	7
1. Objectives of the chapter	7
2. Introduction	7
3. Definition of Terms	7-8
4. Stereotypes and Myths	.8
5. Background to Gender Inequality	8-9
6. Myths and Perceptions.....	9-10
7. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS	10
7.1. Feminisation of Employment.....	10
7.2. Definition of Gender	10-11
7.3. Feminisation of Informal Economy performance.....	11
7.4. Social Security (Medical Aid)	11
7.5. People with disabilities	12
7.6. The Girl child.....	12
8. Roles of Women and Men around Gender Equality..	12
9. The Role of ZCIEA	12-13
10. Strategies for Promoting Gender Equality	14
10.1 Gender Mainstreaming	14
10.2. Participation	14
11. Conclusion	15
12. Exercise	15

Foreword

ZCIEA is an umbrella organisation for informal workers and their associations formed fifteen years ago through the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions' initiative. Its goal is to protect the rights and advance the interests of all small and unregulated businesses and workers in Zimbabwe as these are not covered under the existing labour laws. One of its key functions in advancing the interests of the members is developing capacity through education and training.

A research by Labour and Economic Development Research Institute of Zimbabwe on Decent Work in the Informal Economy confirmed the following.

1. It is now widely accepted that the informal economy involves income generating activities that fall outside the purview of state regulation. The International Labour Organisation defines the informal economy as "... all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements" (ILO 2002). Most workers enter into this economy not by free choice but out of frustration of lack of job opportunities after being retrenched or graduating from high school or college.
2. Informal economy thrives in the context of high unemployment, underemployment, poverty, gender inequality and precarious work. In such circumstances, the informal economy also plays a significant role in income-generation due to the relative ease of entry and low requirements of education, skills, technology and capital. Most people enter the informal economy by necessity rather than by choice, as a means of survival.
3. This sector is characterised by:
 - ✓ easy entry, meaning anyone who wishes to join the sector can find some sort of work which will result in cash earnings;
 - ✓ lack of stable employer-employee relationships;
 - ✓ small scale of operations, and
 - ✓ Minimum skills gained outside of a formal education.

ZCIEA has therefore planned education for all its members in the informal economy to empower them with knowledge and skills that assist them to effectively address the challenges and gaps in this sector.

This basic informal economy workers education manual is designed in a simple manner for convenient learning. The method is in a study circle group which means members need to organise themselves into small groups of between 5 and 10 people. Each group should have a leader who will lead the discussion and this can be done in rotation where one can lead discussion of a topic. This is a popular approach just like in the shona tradition of "padare" where specific issue is discussed to find solution or way forward.

The organisation has trained Study Circle Leaders from the territories who will assist in coordination and organising of groups in Chapters and Zones. It is expected that this low cost and membership centred approach will open opportunities to all members of ZCIEA to acquire basic knowledge of their sector and be able to contribute to the improvement of the labour standards and conditions of work.

The manual is in eight chapters which cover information necessary for elementary knowledge that will enable participants to appreciate their important role in building the organisation, resources and contributing to national development.

These chapters include:

1. Informal Economy Organisation;
2. Occupational Health, Safety and HIV & AIDS;
3. Mobilising and building Capital Resource;
4. Good Leadership qualities and skills;
5. Economic Literacy and Decent Work Agenda;
6. Laws Affecting Informal Economy;
7. Gender Issues in the Informal Economy;
8. Climate Change and the Informal Economy Climate Change and the Informal Economy.

Participants who complete all the eight chapters will be awarded a certificate of completion and thus qualifies to be enrolled in further education and training courses such as Negotiators, Organisers, Educators, Researchers, etc.

Through this effort, our objective is to build a formidable and strong membership organisation that champions the workers agenda from grassroots to national level.

Wisborn Malaya

SECRETARY GENERAL

Acknowledgments

The ZCIEA Informal Economy Study Circle Education is a programme that was designed after consultation with the members on their needs in their organisation. Consultations done with membership indicated a number of needs and among these was the need for knowledge of the organisation, rights, work skills, legislation, policies and other information that assist the informal workers to efficiently operate.

In respect of its membership rights and to address the identified needs, the organisation established the education and training programme that targets the rank and file membership. As the ZCIEA slogans outline “the Chamber that Delivers – Nothing for Us without Us”, the chamber has the responsibility of empowering the membership with knowledge and skills to be able to actively participate in and contribute towards recognition and respect of the informal economy and the workers’ rights.

In the process of developing this basic education material whose objective is to enlighten all members of ZCIEA and workers at large, the organisation and programme received support in various ways. Therefore acknowledgement is attributed to the members who participated in the consultation activities that were done in the territories, those who participated in the research by LEDRIZ, participants to the collective negotiations workshops. All the information provided from these activities assisted ZCIEA in identifying the education and awareness needs as well as the specific areas that shaped focus of this material.

We also acknowledge the research done by LEDRIZ on Informal Economy whose report informed the writers on the status of the informal economy, working conditions and the decent work standards.

Special gratitude is given to the writers of the Study Circle Manual Lucia Chinyamakobvu – ZCIEA Harare Territory Secretary, Ropa Chikoore - Midlands State University Student Intern, Dyke Munetsi – Chitungwiza Territory Youth Forum Chairperson, Agatha Chabwinja – ZCIEA Administration Secretary and Wisborn Malaya – ZCIEA Secretary General who were skilfully guided by Miriam Assumpta Chikamba – Trade Union and Community Organisation Development Mentor to put together all the information required and produced this manual.

Our most sincere gratitude is extended to the Fredrich Ebert Stiftung (FES Zimbabwe Country Office) for their unwavering support and faith in ZCIEA’s capability by technically and financially supporting the production of this education manual that will go a long way in empowering and liberating the informal economy workers in Zimbabwe.

We also thank the ZCIEA National Assembly, all structures and other supporters whose encouragement, motivation and initiatives contributed to the success of this informal economy workers basic education programme and material.

We wish all the informal workers and those who encounter with this material the best in transitioning the informal economy towards formalisation, respect of workers' rights and implementation of better labour standards.

ZCIEA – THE CHAMBER THAT DELIVERS

Lorraine Sibanda

PRESIDENT

ABBREVIATIONS

ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LEDRIZ	Labour and Economic Development Research Institute of Zimbabwe
NSSA	National Social Security Authority
PWD	People Living With Disabilities
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
ZCIEA	Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions

Chapter 7: Gender Issues in the Informal Economy

1. Objectives of the Chapter:

- Workers will know and identify causes of gender inequality at the workplace and in businesses.
- They will be able to develop strategies and measures for action towards gender equality and equity.

2. INTRODUCTION

The module equips the reader with the essential tools to adopt a “Gender approach to Development” and familiarise with gender issues in the world of work. It empowers the reader with a simpler definition of the basic concepts and terminology used in Gender and development issues. The module has been designed to introduce participants to concepts relating to gender sensitive indicators and in so doing, it illustrates the rationale for promoting gender equality and the methodological

approaches to attain Gender equality by the society as well as ZCIEA. The reader will also get information on the myths and perceptions of Gender and the problems relating to Gender inequality.

3. Definition of Terms

Gender

Gender can be defined as a set of characteristics, roles and behaviour patterns that distinguish women from men which are constructed not biologically but socially and culturally.

Gender Equity

Is a fair distribution of resources, opportunities and benefits according to a given framework.

Gender Roles

Gender roles are socially determined, change over time or by location, and are influenced by the social, cultural and environmental factors characterising a certain society, community or historical period. Gender roles aim at setting boundaries between what is perceived as appropriate for women and for men in the society in relation to both the public and private domains.

Gender Discrimination

Also known as sexual discrimination is the practise of letting a person's sex unfairly become a factor when deciding who receives a job, promotion, or other employment benefits.

Sex

This is the biological differences between female and male.

Gender Equality

It is the equal value of similarities and differences between women and men and the varying roles that they play.



4. Stereotypes and Myths

These are perceptions that influence the people's judgements and attitudes towards other people because of Gender. They are influenced by the way someone was socialised or educated and the cultural beliefs and norms.

5. Background to Gender Inequality

At independence, the new government inherited a dual and enclave economy, which still largely exists today and remains not only the cause of continual poverty and vulnerability among the poor but also makes gender inequality worse. Over recent years, the formal, male dominated economy has shrunk and since women work in the lower levels of the economy, they have been the ones most affected: more women have been pushed into the informal sector in order to survive. Even after the fast track land reform programme, inequalities in the allocation of land by Gender remain evident.

The roots of gender inequality in Zimbabwe lie in the structural inequalities that exist in the social, political and economic spheres. Over the years, policies implemented by the government have failed to respond sufficiently to the needs and responsibilities of women, so gender inequality and inequity have persisted. Furthermore economic policies adopted since 1980 have failed to address the inherited dual and enclave structure of the economy, which has strong gender dimensions in that women are particularly disadvantaged and are concentrated in particular sectors-the rural and informal.

More so rural women's informal activities in the communal areas generate very little income:

they are not viable because the market is small, as rural folk seldom have any money to spend. Unfortunately, gender based barriers inhibit women from accessing the socioeconomic resources (credit, skills training, markets, information and policy environment) that are essential for supporting their livelihoods.

The Zimbabwean culture was patriarchal in nature and created structures where men would sit, discuss and make decisions while women were confined to the kitchen, child minding, family upkeep and child bearing roles. It has resulted in the persistence of gender inequalities prescribed by a number of factors that include tradition, culture and religion. During the colonial era, men entered the labour market (paid employment) while women confined to subsistence farming in rural areas thus women become more economically dependent on men.



A picture above shows how women can be confined to household chores and child bearing.

The Zimbabwe culture treated women as child bearers, housekeepers, dependent, submissive, well mannered, long suffering, emotional, fearful, soft-hearted, hardworking, and conservative and confined them to the household chores. Women were not involved in decision making regarding family matters, neither were they asked their opinion on critical issues. It denied women basic rights such as the right to own property, right to open a bank account and the right to vote. Therefore culture, stereotyping and religion has left women less confident, oppressed and feeling less equal to men. Even today people often make the misleading assumption that someone's sex is a predictor of his/ her abilities, strengths and weaknesses.

6. MYTHS AND PERCEPTIONS

Throughout history, many cultures and traditions have been shaped through what the society perceives to be the figures that base reality.

Myths have been created, established, adopted, and interiorized in different societies. Not only have myths been present throughout history, but they have also shaped history in some way by contributing to the creation or reinforcement of culture and beliefs.

Men are considered to be masculine whilst women are said to be feminine. Masculinity and femininity are “gender roles which individual men and women perform by constantly engaging in practices which are deemed typical and appropriate for men and women”

Women and men have always been assigned roles within society which could be asserted to establish and maintain the different roles undertaken by them. These determine the base of social patterns which do not share the same privilege when it comes to roles.

Culturally a woman may be expected to be dependent, submissively mannered, endure suffering, emotional, fearful, soft-hearted, hard-working and conservative.

On the other hand, men are expected to be the opposite- independent, ambitious, brave, aggressive, without emotions and economically empowered.

The patriarchal system also considers men as superior to women and their interests dominate the norms and value of that society. This system expects a woman's place to be in the kitchen while men are the bread winners and make decisions while women are confined to the kitchen, child minding, family upkeep and child bearing roles.

According to the Zimbabwean culture the girl child could not inherit property at the death of her parents or husband. In the event of death of a married man, his wife would be expected to be inherited by one of the late husband's brothers. She would have no choice or allowed to refuse.

Economically, paid work would be a source of identity for men for many years. But this identity source has been challenged lately by the increase of temporary and part-time jobs as well as by the breakthrough of women into the work field.

The myth of sexual dominance and the way sexual practices are supposed to be undertaken by men is another key element in the shaping of culture and society. Sexuality is a topic that is strictly treated through the male perspective and in benefit of men, where they are portrayed as dominant and even using violence in their sexual acts to dominate the opposite sex, as seen in the media.

7. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

7.1. Feminisation of Employment

There is the existence of constructed roles and duties for women and men in the workplace. Women are usually employed in the informal economy earning less income. They are involved in jobs like hair dressing, cross boarder trading and vending whereas men are usually employed in the formal economy and they earn high incomes. This is as a result of the perceptions that women are feminine and men are masculine hence women should be involved in easy jobs compared to men. Therefore there is need for women and men to freely choose jobs of their own choices to ensure Gender equality and equity in the society and workplace.

More so there are no child care facilities for informal economy workers. Women usually carry their children to work as they are given the role of looking after the children. Men do not want to share equal responsibilities with women of looking after the children hence children especially whose mothers work in the vending sector, are usually vulnerable to many accidents as there are no child care facilities for the children in the streets. It also becomes difficult for women to concentrate on both the business and looking after the child. Therefore there is need the provision of child care facilities especially in the streets and equal responsibilities for both women and men. This is needed to promote social protection, occupational health and safety environment.



An image showing the feminisation of employment.

7.2. Definition of Gender

There is the existence of a negative attitude towards the concept of Gender. The society lacks full knowledge and a clear understanding of the term Gender. The society does not know that the term Gender is socially constructed and not biologically constructed hence the existence of given roles, duties and responsibilities of women and men in a given society. This has a negative effect in the sense that it promotes gender inequality in a society. Therefore, there is need for the society to be educated on Gender issues so as to create a positive attitude and a clear understanding of the term Gender.

7.3. Feminisation of Informal Economy performance

As most of the people who dominate the informal economy are women they are vulnerable to a lot of problems but there are no provisions for informal economy workers to have access to resources to support their businesses. This includes lack of collateral and high interest rates charged by the Bank institutions which the informal economy workers cannot afford. Women are more vulnerable and have limited access to finance.

7.4. Social Security (Medical Aid)

In the informal economy which is mainly dominated by women, they cannot afford medical cover for themselves. Women have limited access to maternity cover, benefits and medical aid insurance. This results in the vulnerability of women to have limited access to adequate health care provisions as they cannot afford to pay and have access to medical treatment. Therefore there is need for the provision of affordable medical aid schemes especially for pregnant women in the informal economy. There is also need for them to contribute to the NSSA schemes as the informal workers are excluded from contributing to the NSSA benefits.

7.5. People with disabilities

There are no special environmental provisions for People living with disabilities. They are denied working space and provisions such as nearby toilets in areas which they operate. They are faced with a lot of challenges especially when they are being harassed by the police. They are often looked down upon and their rights are normally violated and discriminated. Therefore there is need for special environmental provisions for PWD and the protection of their rights.

7.6. The Girl child

The informal economy is mainly dominated by young girls. This is because they are denied the right to education simply because the boy child is given first preference to go to school as compared to the girl child especially in child headed families or low income earning households. The girl child is normally denied her right to go to school and so there is need for gender equality in terms of having access to education and the distortion of the myths and perceptions of Gender in a society to ensure gender equality and equity.

8. ROLES OF WOMEN AND MEN AROUND GENDER EQUALITY

Men should also be involved in domestic duties and care giving (Equal responsibilities between women and men)



- Removal of barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workplace
- Elimination of discrimination on the basis of Gender, particularly in relation to family and caring responsibilities.
- Both partners should be involved in housework and teach children to assist in the little ways they can. Sharing domestic responsibilities ensures the work burden doesn't only fall on one person and instils the value of gender equality and essential life skills for children

Divide child care responsibilities and ensure that both get to spend an equal amount of “play” time with the children

Work towards creating a more inclusive work culture. Stand up to issues like harassment and gender bias at the workplace

Part of mainstreaming gender is to ensure that specific attention is paid to the improvement of the status of women. And, since women make up the largest

percentage of the poor and unemployed, all poverty alleviation programmes and projects should target women. Furthermore, because women continue to be the primary care givers in communities, programmes aimed at other vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, disabled and sick also tend to target them.

Sexual harassment is a violation of women's human right. So whenever one see or becomes aware of such instances, whether in the workplace, streets, home/ the online space, one should raise their voice against it.



Ensuring full human resources development, through equal access to education and skills development opportunities for youth could enhance their chances of higher employability, in particular, for young women.

Increasing employability of women and men through equal access to life-long learning and productive resources can also enhance their chances of obtaining decent and productive employment and income opportunities throughout their adult lives.

9. The Role of ZCIEA

The third ZCIEA congress of 2015 resolved to adopt the gender policy. Therefore ZCIEA should prioritise and ensure effective implementation of the adopted gender policy. ZCIEA should draw and implement awareness campaigns and education programmes targeting the structures and general membership

Create awareness among ZCIEA members on sexual harassment and victimisation. The informal economy workers must be aware of their rights and laws that protect them from sexual harassment and any other forms of discrimination.

10. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

10.1 Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy or tool for achieving gender equality officially adopted at the 1995 Beijing platform. It is a process of assessing the implications for women and men or boys and girls of any planned action including legislation, policies or programmes in any area of interest and at all levels. This can be achieved by:

- Effective planning and evaluation methods
- Effective information dissemination
- Formalizing equal representation in social dialogue
- Building knowledge and capacity of members through education and training
- Advocating for legislative reform including gender sensitive collective bargaining agreements
- Establishing gender policies which are sensitive to the rights and freedoms of both men and women
- Gender specific actions i.e. affirmative actions to help bridge persistent inequalities and reduce gender based disparities

10.2. Participation

- Women and youths equal participation in the decision making process, in policy making, planning and administration. It is a particularly important aspect of development projects, where participation means involvement in needs-assessment, project formulation, implementation and evaluation. Equality of participation means involving women making the decisions by which their community will be affected, in a proportion which matches their proportion in the wider community
- Child labour-Elimination through Education, Awareness and Collective Bargaining
- Mobilising Young Women
- To educate and raise awareness amongst young female workers about:
 - Their fundamental rights
 - Employment opportunities
 - Gender equality
 - Career possibilities
- Family responsibility and family building
- Work and family balance
- organising young women and encouraging active participation in the trade union, business and in society
- enable young women to make informed decisions about their future on paid employment, family building and work family balance
- strengthen trade union capacity to negotiate better pay and working conditions for women
- enhance the recruitment of female workers for the trade unions
- creating equal opportunities for young women at the workplace in trade unions
- Lobby with governments for positive legislation that promotes gender equality

11. CONCLUSION

In conclusion the module has managed to outline the general definition of the term gender as well as examining the problems relating to gender inequality and the myths and perceptions towards Gender. It also equipped the reader with the possible roles of women, men as well as ZCIEA in a bid to ensure gender equality in the workplace.

12. Exercise

1. What actions can you take to ensure gender equality in the informal economy businesses?
2. Suggest strategies for gender balance in the ZCIEA.