TELLING AFRICA'S STORIES AUTHENTICALLY ADVANCING HUNHU/UBUNTU SHAPING OUR FUTURE

IDENTITIES MAGAZINE

NOV 2026 VOLUME 2



THE LIST ALUMNI WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

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+ WHO GETS TO TELL AFRICA'S STORY?

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IDENTITIES MEDIA HOLDINGS

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EDITOR'S LETTER



THE AFRICA WE ARE BUILDING

The world is changing, and Africa finds itself navigating a shifting global order. International development assistance is declining, while trade, investment, technology and strategic economic interests are increasingly shaping global partnerships. For Africa, these changes raise questions about our place in the world, our resources and our ability to determine our own future.

Are we positioning ourselves to benefit from these shifts? Are we investing in our intellect, talent and innovation, or remaining consumers of technologies and ideas developed elsewhere?

For Zimbabwe, what does economic transformation mean for the woman trading in our markets, the farmer confronting changing weather patterns, the young innovator or the artist seeking to earn from their creativity? What does it mean for a child without access to education and technology, or a community leader transforming lives with limited resources?

At home, constitutional developments and national conversations around governance, participation and accountability also invite reflection on the institutions and leadership shaping our future.

These are among the questions informing our editorial choices for Identities Magazine 2026.

Across these pages, we explore enterprise, agriculture, technology, culture, Africa's resources and the people shaping our communities. We connect Zimbabwean experiences with those across the continent, examining the opportunities and challenges of our changing world.

At Identities Media, **storytelling is at the heart of who we are.** We believe African stories deserve to be told with integrity, dignity and respect for both the storyteller and the audience. Through television, documentaries, podcasts, film, digital media and public conversations, we seek to inform, question, connect and amplify African perspectives.

This edition also opens a window into our storytelling ecosystem, from the conversations shaping our podcast and the stories told through Identities Media TV, to the people and ideas featured across our platforms. We also celebrate community champions through The List Awards, recognising women and men whose contributions embody the spirit of Hunhu/Ubuntu, often without recognition.

Together, these stories invite us to reflect on the Africa we are building, who gets to participate, and the responsibility we share in shaping its future.

> **Africa's future is not only about what the world brings to us, but what we choose to contribute to the world.**

ADVOCATE NYARADZO MASHAYAMOMBE
Editor, Identities Magazine
Founder and Chief Executive Officer
Identities Media Holdings



IDENTITIES MEDIA HOLDINGS

OUR STORIES. OUR PLATFORMS. OUR AFRICA.

Telling Our Own African Stories Authentically

Identities Media Holdings is a Zimbabwean and Pan African media and storytelling company committed to amplifying African voices, celebrating impact and shaping conversations that matter. Our work connects journalism, film, digital media, publishing and recognition platforms, bringing stories of people, communities and institutions to audiences across Africa and beyond.

Our journey began with Identities Umhlobo Zvatiri, a national television programme that explored identity, society and current affairs. Today, we have grown into a multimedia platform producing stories that inform, inspire and connect.

OUR PRODUCTS AND PLATFORMS



IDENTITIES MAGAZINE

A premium African publication profiling people, businesses, ideas and communities shaping Zimbabwe and the continent.

THE LIST AWARDS

An annual Zimbabwean and regional recognition platform celebrating Africa's unsung heroes and changemakers.



IDENTITIES WITH NYARI MASHAYAMOMBE PODCAST

A podcast and digital conversation platform exploring leadership, social issues, development and current affairs.

FILM AND DOCUMENTARIES

Original productions including Even Our Dreams, Section 56 and 16 Stories, exploring disability inclusion, women's leadership and social change.



IDENTITIES UMHLOBO ZVATIRI

Our pioneering national television programme, which explored identity, culture, society and current affairs, laying the foundation for the Identities Media storytelling journey.



IDENTITIES MEDIA LIVE AND DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Our digital media, live broadcasting and production services bring stories, conversations and events to audiences through multimedia content, corporate productions and digital platforms.

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IdentitiesMediaHoldings
Identities Media TV
info.identitieszw@gmail.com
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THE NEW ZIMBABWEAN BUILDERS

By Staff Writer

Four entrepreneurs, four blueprints for Zimbabwe's next economy

ZIMBABWE'S next economy will not come from a single blueprint. It will come from food processors turning farm produce into supermarket products, factories making goods locally, small firms finding value in indigenous ingredients and technology companies helping farmers work smarter.

Entrepreneurs in each sector are testing what it takes to turn local ideas into lasting businesses. Their stories show the promise of private enterprise. They also show how hard it is to finance growth, find customers and compete.

Four offer distinct views: Lesly Marange of Glytime Foods, Mohammed Jammal of Bronzepel Gas Cylinder Manufacturing, Tracy Mapfumo of Eny's Treats and Anesu Mapisa of Farmbuzz Agriculture Solutions.



LESLY MARANGE

Making local food competitive

An oven turning out 8,4 kilograms of granola a day is an unlikely start for a manufacturing business. It is where Marange began when he founded Glytime Foods in 2018.

A food scientist by training, Marange wanted to show that Zimbabwean manufacturers could turn local ingredients into packaged foods that compete with imported brands. Glytime has grown from its home-based start into a range that includes granola, oats, cookies, honey and other foods. It has pursued manufacturing expansion and regional markets.

That is agro-processing at work: Produce gains value through formulation, manufacturing, packaging and branding. A processor also needs steady supplies of ingredients, which creates markets for farmers and jobs in processing, logistics and distribution.

Scaling is the hard part. Consistent quality, affordable working capital, packaging costs and competition for shelf space can decide whether a product becomes a lasting brand.



MOHAMMED JAMMAL

Betting on the factory floor

Marange started with a household oven. Jammal's ambition is a US$10 million investment in gas-cylinder manufacturing. Through Bronzepel Gas Cylinder Manufacturing, he has backed a plant in Zvimba District reported to be able to produce more than 3 million cylinders a year. Heavy industry demands big capital, specialized equipment, technical skills and enough demand to keep production lines running.

Gas cylinders are essential for consumers and businesses that use liquefied petroleum gas. Making them locally could supply domestic demand while building skills in metalworking, fabrication and quality control.

The harder question is how much of a factory's potential becomes real output. Headline capacity is not production. Raw-material supplies, energy costs, financing, competition and market access all shape results. For Bronzepel, the test is whether it can sustain production, create lasting jobs and compete with imports.



TRACY MAPFUMO

Turning overlooked ingredients into opportunity

Mapfumo starts from a different question: What if agricultural ingredients were the base for distinctive consumer products, not just commodities?

Through Eny's Treats, founded in 2018, she has developed healthy snacks and seed-based products, including snack bars and seed butters, aimed at health-conscious buyers.

There is a community angle, too. Eny's Treats has worked with a women-run enterprise in Mberengwa that makes marula nut snacks, helping distribute products from a community-based producer. It shows that an entrepreneur can create value by linking producers to markets without owning the whole production chain.

The challenge is turning a distinctive idea into a dependable business: managing production costs, holding standards, winning shelf space and giving customers a reason to return.



ANESU MAPISA

Bringing precision to farming

Mapisa's goal is to improve how Zimbabwe grows food. An agronomist and co-founder of Farmbuzz Agriculture Solutions, he has been associated with drones and other precision-agriculture services. Farmbuzz's services have included drone-assisted crop spraying, fertilizer application, crop scouting, land-use planning and agronomic advice.

The pitch is practical. Farmers must decide on inputs, crop health and field management while under pressure to cut costs. Drones can cover fields quickly, though results depend on the crop, terrain, weather, operator training and application methods.

Unlike a manufacturer selling a physical product, Farmbuzz must prove the value of a service. Cost remains a barrier, especially for smaller producers. Shared services, farmer groups and cooperatives could spread equipment costs across many users.

THE ECONOMY THAT KEEPS ZIMBABWE MOVING

By Staff Writer



AT 5.17am, Tariro Moyo switches on six sewing machines in her small Harare workshop.
She supports six workers and supplies uniforms and clothes to traders over WhatsApp. She has no bank loan, pension or insurance. When a machine breaks, she turns to a savings club, family or supplier credit.

Moyo's business captures Zimbabwe's informal economy in miniature: a system that creates jobs, moves money and feeds families while remaining largely outside the structures built to support it.

Counting the uncounted
Zimbabwe's economy has an awkward habit: the parts that keep it running are largely the parts it cannot see.

ZIMSTAT's 2023 Economic Census found that 76.1% of business establishments nationwide were informal. Most were micro-enterprises, and fewer than one in five of those were formally registered. The Q2 2025 Quarterly Labour Force Survey found that 65% of employed Zimbabweans held informal jobs. Formality is the exception, not the rule.

Moyo is one of them. Her enterprise is not a story about street vending, though vendors are its most visible symptom. It belongs to a parallel economic system of traders, small manufacturers, transporters, artisans, digital freelancers and household enterprises that produces, moves, finances and consumes without ever fully entering the country's official accounts.

The question is blunt: Is Zimbabwe's regulatory system built for the economy it has, or the one it wishes it had?

ZIMRA, the revenue authority, has long tried to bring some of that activity within reach through presumptive taxes on informal traders, omnibus and taxi operators, goods-vehicle owners, hairdressers and cottage industries. In April 2026, it launched a voluntary-disclosure programme for undeclared income, naming informal businesses, online-platform earnings, digital services and transport operators among its targets.

Its 2026-2030 Strategic Plan lists taxing the informal sector as a revenue objective under the National Development Strategy 2. Internally, ZIMRA sees informal-sector growth as both an opportunity, a bigger prospective tax base, and a threat, since the sector is hard to tax and its cash-heavy transactions are difficult to trace.

The ambition is substantial. ZIMRA aims to more than triple its registered taxpayers by 2030 and to lift the tax-to-GDP ratio significantly. Commissioner General Regina Chinamasa said the plan "translates institutional priorities into a structured programme of action."

Whether that closes the informal-sector gap, rather than simply squeezing taxpayers already inside the net, remains an open question. ZIMRA has not yet supplied collection totals or compliance rates by trader category.

Empty stalls, full streets
Local authorities face a similar bind.

The City of Harare's own response to media inquiries lays out the mismatch: its designated CBD markets and rank zones hold just 947 licensed traders, against an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 unregistered vendors on the central streets, pavements and intersections.

Yet the legal space exists. Across the city, thousands of designated stalls in People's Markets, Home Industries and Farmers Markets remain unused, and fewer than half are occupied. In the CBD, 726 of 933 designated stalls stand vacant, the great majority at a single site on Seke/Dieppe Road.

Council says its goal is "not to prevent people from earning a living," but to move trading into serviced, licensed space. Its own numbers complicate that framing. Thousands of CBD vendors trade illegally not for want of legal capacity in the abstract, but because the nearest legal stalls sit mostly empty and mostly in the wrong place.

Moyo's world runs on the same logic. Formal lenders rarely reach small, unregistered enterprises, pushing much of the sector toward mobile money, supplier credit, savings clubs and family financing. An informal financial system props up an informal productive one.

The starkest gap may be social protection. The National Social Security Authority's Pension and Other Benefits Scheme does not cover informal-sector workers or domestic employees. The people most exposed to injury, illness or old age have the least formal cushion against them.

Government has not ignored this. The National Development Strategy 2 identifies informality as a structural feature to be addressed through a National Formalization Strategy, meant to move activity from informal to formal status while widening access to markets, finance and social protection.

The gap between that ambition and the evidence at hand is where this investigation does its real work: a tax authority chasing a moving target, and a city with more vacant legal stalls than it can fill, still unable to close the gap.

None of this makes formalization simply a matter of will. For millions of households, informal activity is not a loophole but a livelihood, and the cost of becoming legal can exceed what many small operators earn in a month: licences, health certificates, market rent, transport, utilities.

The honest framing is not formalize-or-remove, but a harder question: What combination of infrastructure, taxation, finance and protection would let this economy grow more productive without destroying the livelihoods that depend on it?

Tariro, for her part, isn't waiting for an answer. Six machines are already running.

Protecting what they build
Each of these businesses is also a livelihood. For many founders, the enterprise is the main income source, the family's safety net and the retirement plan all at once. That concentration is a vulnerability: An unexpected event can threaten both income and years of accumulated wealth.

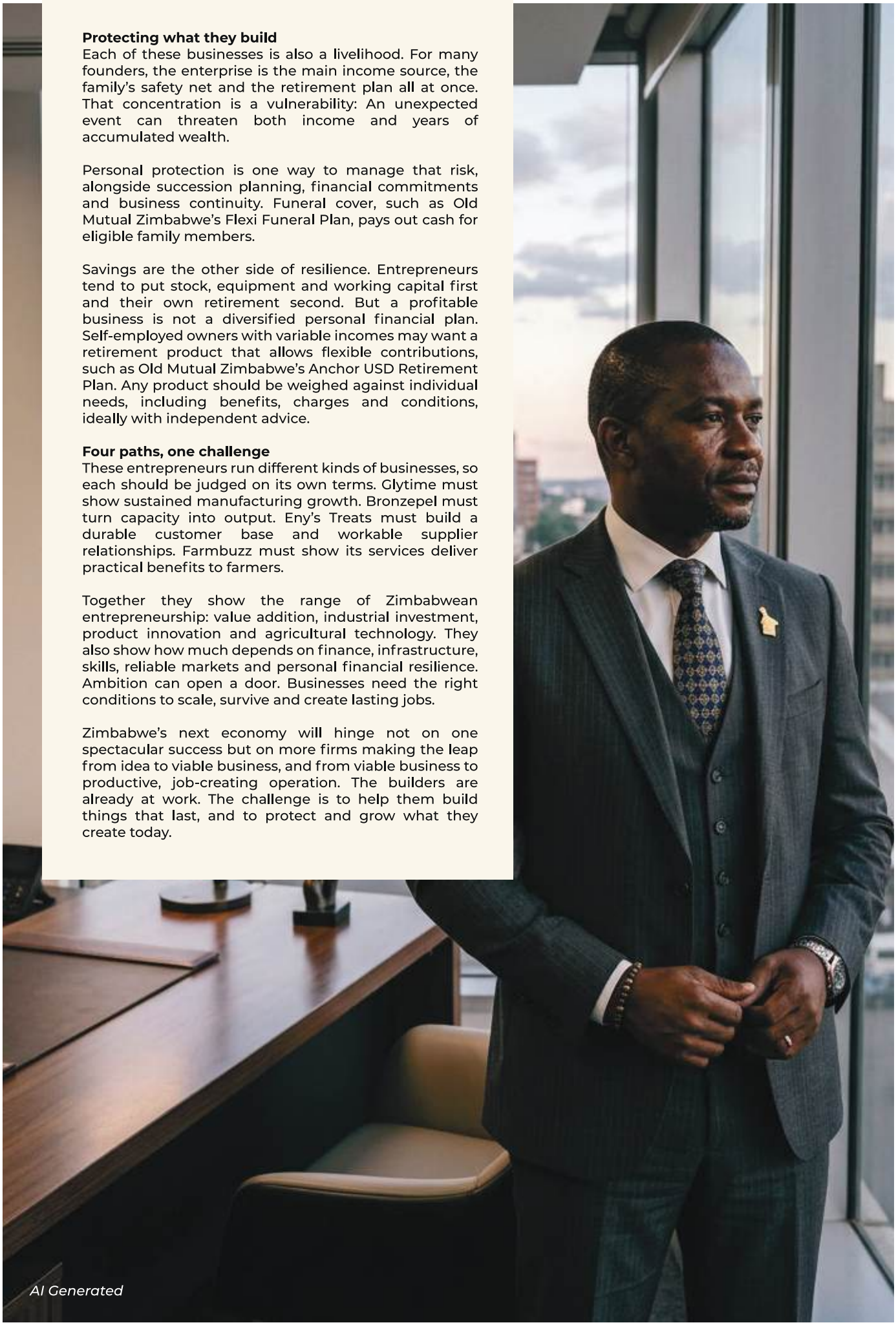
Personal protection is one way to manage that risk, alongside succession planning, financial commitments and business continuity. Funeral cover, such as Old Mutual Zimbabwe's Flexi Funeral Plan, pays out cash for eligible family members.

Savings are the other side of resilience. Entrepreneurs tend to put stock, equipment and working capital first and their own retirement second. But a profitable business is not a diversified personal financial plan. Self-employed owners with variable incomes may want a retirement product that allows flexible contributions, such as Old Mutual Zimbabwe's Anchor USD Retirement Plan. Any product should be weighed against individual needs, including benefits, charges and conditions, ideally with independent advice.

Four paths, one challenge
These entrepreneurs run different kinds of businesses, so each should be judged on its own terms. Glytime must show sustained manufacturing growth. Bronzepel must turn capacity into output. Eny's Treats must build a durable customer base and workable supplier relationships. Farmbuzz must show its services deliver practical benefits to farmers.

Together they show the range of Zimbabwean entrepreneurship: value addition, industrial investment, product innovation and agricultural technology. They also show how much depends on finance, infrastructure, skills, reliable markets and personal financial resilience. Ambition can open a door. Businesses need the right conditions to scale, survive and create lasting jobs.

Zimbabwe's next economy will hinge not on one spectacular success but on more firms making the leap from idea to viable business, and from viable business to productive, job-creating operation. The builders are already at work. The challenge is to help them build things that last, and to protect and grow what they create today.


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BEYOND THE DROUGHT

CLIMATE, CAPITAL AND THE FUTURE OF ZIMBABWEAN LIVELIHOODS

By Calvin Manika



In March 2019, Cyclone Idai hit Madagascar, crossed the Mozambique Channel and moved through Mozambique before ultimately hitting Zimbabwe on 16 March 2019. The cyclone destroyed villages in Manicaland province, in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe. More than 340 people were killed, while about 51,000 people were displaced and more than 270,000 were affected. Official UNICEF figures recorded 344 deaths and 257 people missing by early April 2019; Zimbabwe's Cabinet later put the death toll at 347.

The disaster was a major wake-up call for the government to invest in preparedness for climate-related shocks. Government subsequently reported that development partners had pledged more than US$163.1 million for medium-term resilience and disaster recovery.

More than 655 kilometres away from Manicaland, Hwange, a coal-mining town in the north-west of the country, has also been hit by flash floods, leaving a trail of destroyed fields, hunger and uncertainty.

Mpumelelo Ncube, said these events are a reminder of changing times and the need for all stakeholders to help prevent future climate shocks.

“In the past decade we have seen some fluctuations in the change of weather. The greatest blow is that when it rains, it’s no longer normal rains as in previous years. It’s either low or flash floods, but either way, we are being affected,” said Ncube.

This translates to low yields in the fields, water scarcity, droughts, human-wildlife conflict, and family disintegration as both women and men leave the village in search of other opportunities. In Diki village, Hwange, women walk long distances in search of water.

“The water from the rains won’t sustain us long. Our homestead wells run dry, and we need to fetch from the local boreholes or other sources in nearby villages. This is our struggle,” Nomsa Dube shared her experience.

The scale of Zimbabwe's water and food insecurity became particularly clear during the 2023/24 El Niño drought. According to UNICEF 7.6 million people, about half the country's population, faced food insecurity in 2024, while 4% of assessed water sources had dried up and another 11% were broken down.

The consequences are not only social. They are economic. The World Bank estimates that agriculture contributes 17% of Zimbabwe's GDP, 40% of exports and supplies 68% of raw materials to manufacturing, while employing about 70% of the population. Yet the sector remains heavily dependent on rain-fed production.

UNFCCC in various COPs has identified climate financing as a strategic intervention by governments to cushion their countries from climate shocks. In areas like Chipinge and Hwange, the most affected people are not seeing these interventions and do not seem to know of the existence of such facilities.

“The government should consult with us. It is through these well-informed discussions, that they will know what form of support and how much both mitigation and resilience plans cost. It is time to plan about mitigating future climate shocks together. That should be the starting point,” said Ndodana Mwembe, a climate activist in Victoria Falls.

Under Article 9 of the Paris Agreement, developed countries are expected to provide financial resources for both climate mitigation and adaptation in developing countries, while

climate finance is expected to respond to countries' needs and priorities. The UN climate process also recognises the importance of country-driven strategies and a greater flow of adaptation finance.

Activists say the local authorities and members of parliament are equally responsible as the ministry itself, to inform people, but importantly to be transparent with climate funds.

“Climate issues are not widely discussed at grassroots level in Zimbabwe, despite dozens of officials sent to COP every year. The question is therefore not simply how much climate finance Zimbabwe can attract, but where that money goes, who controls it and whether it reaches communities facing the greatest risks,” said Mwembe.

According to the World Bank, the cost of inaction could be far greater than the cost of adaptation. Climate change could erode up to 12% of Zimbabwe's GDP annually, while adaptation could cost less than 1% of GDP. It estimates that every dollar invested in early, anticipatory measures can save up to US$16 in future costs.

Amidst climate change, most of the farmers remain uninsured regardless of the growing recognition that insurance can protect farmers from climate shocks. Government's current development plan specifically calls for climate-risk insurance and index-based crop and livestock insurance. Also, the Insurance Council of Zimbabwe had expanded a weather-indexed insurance programme to 10,000 farmers in several districts.

Farmers who are into maize production have been faced with challenges to acquire resilient seeds and are now adapting the government-led conservation farming, Pfumvudza/Intwasa. Government data show that Pfumvudza/Intwasa produced slightly higher average maize and sorghum yields than conventional production in the previous seasons season, although yields in drought-affected Matabeleland North remained extremely low.

“This suggests that conservation farming can help, but cannot by itself overcome severe water shortages and wider climate pressure,” said Peterson Ncube, an agricultural extension officer.

In Lukosi, a government-run irrigation scheme serves 73 members. The scheme has historically been an important source of food and income for the surrounding community. However, the scheme has competing demands for water from mining and energy developments, showing how climate resilience can depend as much on water governance as on infrastructure.

In September 2026, UNDP reported that a Green Climate Fund-supported programme had developed a 156-hectare irrigation scheme benefiting 300 farmers from 12 villages, while another irrigation scheme in Chipinge was being expanded. The programme is also deliberately seeking to include women and persons with disabilities in new economic opportunities.

Women and young people are already central to this transition rather than simply recipients of assistance. UNDP reports that the first phase of Zimbabwe's Resilience Building Fund strengthened resilience for more than 1.1 million people, 62% of them women and 25% youth. Its interventions included climate-smart agriculture, savings groups, market linkages and livelihood diversification.

“There is need to account for every cent that the government received as part of climate financing. This will help us in planning. As the country starts the national budget consultations, climate change mitigation should be topping discussions. Overall, we need to see all these documents and pledges translated into actionable items. Government should bring stakeholder to mock or mini local COPs. Community consultative meetings and active stakeholder engagement are essential to mitigating future climate shocks” said



“Climate issues are not widely discussed at grassroots level in Zimbabwe, despite dozens of officials sent to COP every year. The question is therefore not simply how much climate finance Zimbabwe can attract, but where that money goes, who controls it and whether it reaches communities facing the greatest risks,”

- **Ndodana Mwembe**

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THE LIST AWARDS 2026

Who do we celebrate when the cameras are absent? The woman keeping children in school, the innovator creating opportunities in rural communities, or the neighbour who risks everything to save another life? Too often, the people holding communities together remain unseen.

Founded by Identities Media Holdings, The List Awards challenges this imbalance. Grounded in Hunhu/Ubuntu, it recognises women and men whose service and leadership transform lives. Its measure of greatness is not fame, wealth or influence, but verifiable impact on others.

Now in its third edition, the Awards reach Zimbabwe, Southern and East Africa through 13 competitive categories. People may nominate themselves or be nominated by others, without a fee. Eligibility requires at least five years of demonstrable community contribution, allowing the search to reach beyond familiar names and established networks.

In 2026, more than 500 nominations from Zimbabwe, Southern and East Africa entered a multilayered assessment process. An independent Selection Committee, including past winners, strengthened initial adjudication. Following training and guided by an established framework, adjudicators examined evidence of impact, leadership, sustainability and service before candidates advanced to further assessment.

Eight categories underwent Jury assessment and five proceeded to public voting. The distinction is deliberate: public participation has a place, but popularity alone cannot measure service. Experienced Jury members scrutinised submissions and undertook further verification, supported by principles of fairness, confidentiality, independence and accountability.

This year, the Board also introduced the Special Heroes Award, honouring extraordinary acts of humanity. Among those recognised are women whose courage during the Lake Kariba ferry tragedy embodied the conviction at the heart of Ubuntu: our humanity is bound to one another.

Recognition, however, is not the final destination. Through financial awards, storytelling, visibility and connections, The List Awards seeks to strengthen community champions and encourage others to serve.

A society is revealed not only by the people it celebrates, but by the people it chooses to see.

THE LIST AWARDS BOARD

LEADERSHIP BEHIND THE VISION

The Board provides strategic leadership, governance and oversight, supporting the integrity, independence and growth of The List Awards. Its members contribute their time, expertise and networks to advance the recognition of individuals transforming communities.



PASTOR PHILANI NYATSANZA
Board Chairperson

As Chairman of the List Awards, I believe the Africa we are building must be one where development unlocks opportunity, leadership serves communities, and those transforming lives are recognised, supported and amplified. Our vision is anchored in integrity, community service, and the Board's enduring responsibility to protect and advance a platform that celebrates excellence with purpose



MS MELLANY MSENGEZI
Board Vice Chairperson

Mellany Msengezi is a marketing and technology education leader with over 20 years of experience across African markets, including executive roles at Econet, Airtel and Gomycode. Currently leads ChezaSTEMed, advancing AI and technology skilling to help individuals and workforces build practical, future-ready skills. She also volunteers her strategic and branding expertise to strengthen The List Awards' visibility and recognition of community impact.



ADVOCATE ARTHUR MARARA
Board Legal Advisor

Arthur Marara is a legal practitioner, author and leadership speaker specialising in corporate law, governance and personal development. Through his voluntary service as Legal Advisor to The List Awards, he contributes legal insight and principled leadership, supporting the initiative's integrity and commitment to honouring people who serve their communities.



MR KUDAKWASHE MZEMBE
Board Innovation & Development Advisor

Kudakwashe Mzembe is a renewable energy project developer, entrepreneur and Mandela Washington Fellow with experience in sustainability and youth mentorship. A cofounder of Grandis Africa and host of the Radiant Culture podcast, he volunteers his leadership and development expertise to The List Awards, helping champion service, innovation and community impact.



MS SUSAN LUBAMBE MWAPE
The List Awards Alumni & Regional Advisor

Susan Mwape is a Zambian governance and Tech advocate, she is Executive Director of Common Cause Zambia. Her work advances citizen participation in governance, accountability and inclusion across Africa. As a volunteer board member, she brings regional experience and a commitment to recognising community leaders through The List Awards.



ADVOCATE NYARI MASHAYAMOMBE
Founder & Convener
Ex Officio Board Member

Advocate Nyaradzo Mashayamombe is a lawyer, women's rights advocate and media entrepreneur who founded Identities Media Holdings and Tag a Life International. As Founder and Convener of The List Awards, she leads its vision to honour unsung changemakers, mobilising partnerships and recognition across Zimbabwe, Southern and East Africa.

THE SELECTION COMMITTEE AND JURY

GUARDIANS OF INTEGRITY: FAIRNESS, TRANSPARENCY AND MERIT

Behind every finalist is a process designed to protect fairness, independence and merit.

In 2026, under the oversight of the Selection Committee, initial adjudicators undertook the assessment of more than 500 nominations received across 13 award categories. The process began with an accessible nomination form designed to encourage participation while gathering sufficient evidence to establish eligibility and impact.

Working within an established selection framework, trained adjudicators assessed nominations against criteria including community impact, leadership, sustainability and service. Each category was reduced to fewer than ten nominees before progressing to Jury assessment or public voting, depending on the category.

The process was guided by independence, confidentiality, transparency and the management of conflicts of interest.

REFLECTION FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



MR WELLINGTON BAKAIMANI

THE LIST AWARDS ALUMNI, SELECTION COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

“Once recognised as an unsung hero, I know the power of being seen. Chairing the 2026 List Awards Selection Committee was both an honour and a responsibility. Together with my team, we championed fairness, transparency and merit, ensuring recognition reaches the people whose extraordinary sacrifices quietly transformed lives. Every deserving hero deserves their moment to shine and be celebrated.”

Other Selection Committee Members

The 2026 Selection Committee also participated in the initial adjudication process, contributing their time and judgement to assessing nominations and identifying candidates for further consideration.



DAVID KANDUNA

Zimbabwean actor, digital content creator and media personality, known for his online entertainment content and community engagement.



TATENDA TAHLA

Development practitioner with experience in project coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and community development programmes focused on women, youth and sustainable livelihoods.



MUZIWANDILE DUBE

Educator, school administrator and 2025 List Awards Poverty Alleviation Impact Award winner, advancing rural education, community development and access to learning opportunities.



TINAISHE KASHAU

Legal practitioner serving as a Legal Officer in Zimbabwe’s Office of the Auditor General, with professional interests in public sector governance, accountability and legal compliance.

Selection Framework and Training Advisor



KUDZAI B DEVE

Leadership strategist, corporate trainer and organisational development specialist.

Working alongside those who contributed to the Awards' selection processes from the outset, the specialist led and guided the review and strengthening of the selection framework, assessment tools and processes, as well as training the Selection Committee, initial adjudicators and Jury in applying the established standards.

The Jury

The Jury provides a further level of assessment for categories determined through jury evaluation. Its members assess shortlisted candidates against the established criteria, considering the evidence, depth and sustainability of their community impact.



CHINGA GOVHATI

Human rights lawyer and child protection advocate, championing women's and children's rights through legal advocacy and community engagement

CHAKA RUZVIDZO

Gender equality and children's rights advocate, Founder of Men 4 Equality Trust, promoting positive masculinity and engaging men and boys in advancing gender justice.





MERCY JAVARANI

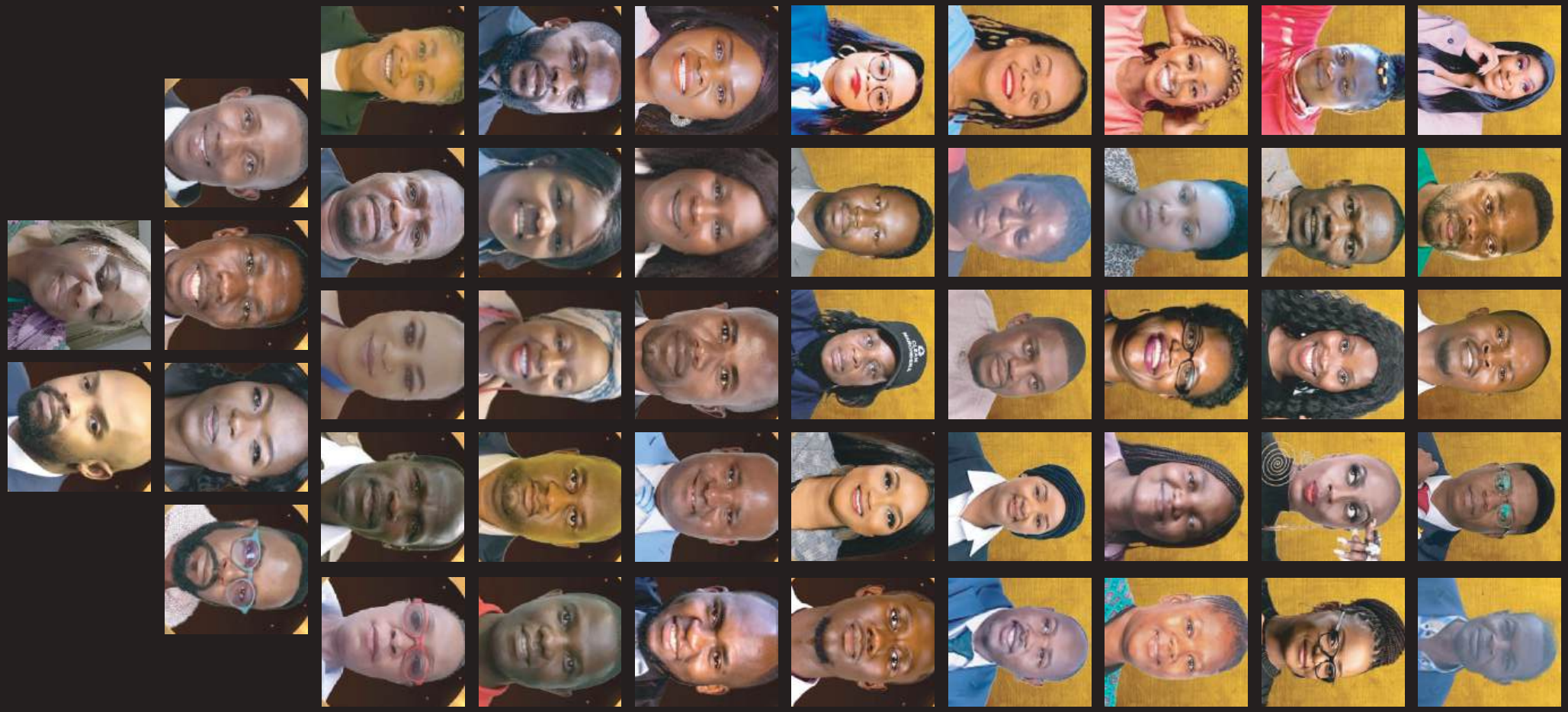
Human rights lawyer and National Coordinator of the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, advancing women's leadership, gender equality and policy advocacy.

WILLIS WATAFFI

Award winning Zimbabwean musician, songwriter and former Afrika Revenge vocalist, recognised for his contribution to Afro fusion music and Zimbabwe's creative arts industry.



MEET THE ALUMNI 2024 & 2025



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PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL



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BUSINESS IMPACT AWARD WINNER
MARTINAGEMA MOYO

Martinagema Moyo, Founder of Chirandu Holdings and Provincial Chairperson for Women in Business Apex under the Ministry of Women Affairs, is a resilient agripreneur transforming local economies in Zimbabwe. Turning personal hardship into purpose after losing her husband, she grew a modest home-based tuckshop into a multi-sector enterprise operating a grocery store, butchery, events space, and a value-addition agricultural division processing Mopani worms and dried fruits. Her model combats local unemployment by hiring neighborhood youth, keeping revenue local, and saving Woodville residents long travel times. Through her ministerial leadership, Martinagema actively mentors female entrepreneurs, advocates for market access, and drives sustainable community development.

BUSINESS IMPACT AWARD RUNNER UP
PANASHE VAKIRA



Panashe is the Founder and CEO of Sweet Greens Events, a boutique event design company transforming celebrations across Harare and Kwekwe. Recognized as the Winner for Events Company at the 2026 HEBA Harare Entrepreneurship Awards, he has successfully delivered over 50 eco-conscious, high-quality corporate and private events. Beyond event coordination, Panashe actively uplifts his community by keeping revenue local and equipping over 20 young Zimbabweans with essential skills in client relations, decor, and business management. His work blends entrepreneurial excellence with youth empowerment, sustainable community development and employment creation.



HUMANITARIAN IMPACT AWARD WINNER
COLUMBUS T. MUSHORE

Columbus Mushore is a recovered addict and Founder of Heal Us Zimbabwe, driving national anti-drug and substance abuse initiatives since 2022. Through school and community outreach, counseling, national walkathons, and media campaigns, he collaborates with government bodies and local leaders to combat addiction, educate youth, and promote nationwide rehabilitation and community healing.



HUMANITARIAN IMPACT AWARD RUNNER UP

PANASHE HAPPYMORE MASHAYAVANHU

Established in 2024, Hamplight Youth in Motion is a dual-impact community organization in Zimbabwe dedicated to intergenerational care and youth development. Through its volunteer-driven outreach, the group restores dignity to elderly individuals in care homes by providing food, clothing, and birthday celebrations while simultaneously conducting drug abuse prevention workshops and career guidance in schools. By connecting generations, Hamplight Youth in Motion addresses social isolation among seniors and equips young people with essential life skills, fostering long-term community resilience and social cohesion.

SOCIAL IMPACT AWARD WINNER

YANIL WOLFE

Yanil and her family Simon, Noah, and Hannah serve as a dedicated "place of safety" and foster family in Zimbabwe, opening their home to children fleeing domestic violence, abuse, or total abandonment. Working in close coordination with Social Welfare, they provide immediate crisis response by escorting social workers, assisting with police and hospital visits, and transporting children to remote areas for family reunification. Beyond essential care, clothing, and shelter, they offer a loving, restorative home environment for vulnerable youth. By investing their personal time, resources, and care, Yanil and her family embody the spirit of community responsibility, inspiring others to revive the African tradition of collective child-rearing.





SOCIAL IMPACT AWARD RUNNER UP

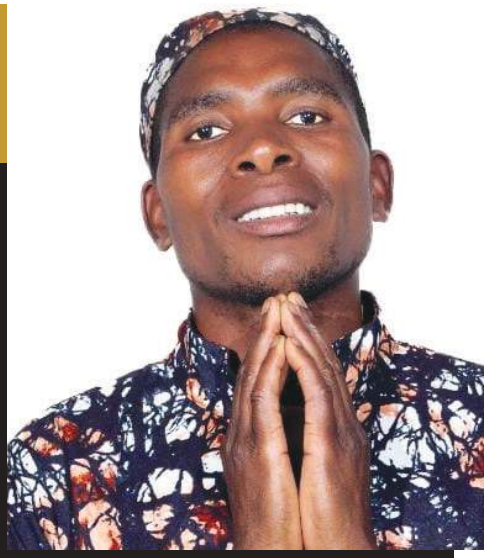
KADELWA NDLOVU

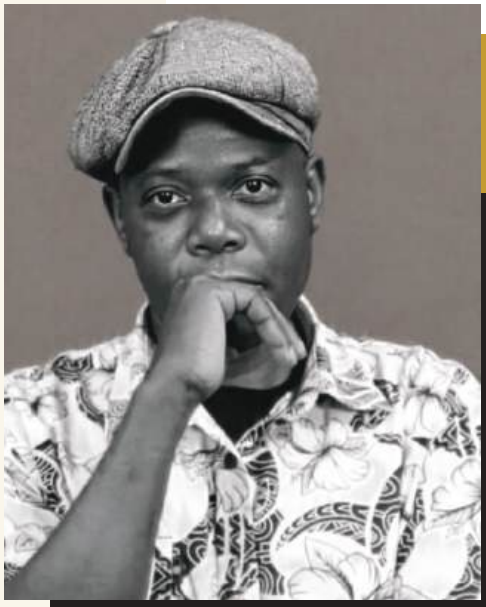
Kadelwa Joab Ndlovu is an animator, digital artist, and Founder of Kadelwa Arts and Kadelwa Animation Academy, dedicated to creative education and youth empowerment across Zimbabwe. For seven years, he has mentored hundreds of young creatives, providing practical digital skills that unlock employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. Kadelwa advances social inclusion by offering free art lessons to people with disabilities, promoting gender equality in tech, and using digital storytelling to preserve Zimbabwe's indigenous languages and cultural heritage. Through workshops and institutional partnerships, he leverages creative technology to foster community resilience, inclusion, and economic growth.

ENTERTAINMENT IMPACT AWARD WINNER

SHEPHERD CHIDIMA

Shephad Chidima is a Zimbabwean educator, author, spoken word artist, and Founder of the UDZAMU Poetry Slam, an initiative dedicated to youth empowerment through creative performance. Designed for children aged 4 to 15, the monthly platform challenges young participants to write and perform original poetry addressing critical social issues, including drug abuse prevention and child marriage advocacy. Through structured themes, mentorship, and public speaking opportunities, Shephad equips young people with confidence, creative writing skills, and civic awareness, using spoken word as a tool for advocacy, cultural preservation, and positive community transformation.





ENTERTAINMENT IMPACT AWARD RUNNER UP

VINCENT GURURE

Since 1996, Vincent Gurure, a veteran audio-visual producer and technical director has been a foundational pillar behind the scenes of Zimbabwe's music and broadcast industries. He launched and shaped the careers of iconic Matabeleland artists, including Beatar Mangethe, Jeys Marabini, Sandra Ndebele, and IYASA. Working alongside Cont Mhlanga, he served as Head of Technical for Keyona TV and helped establish Bulawayo's first commercial radio station, Skyz Metro FM. Through GeeRecordz Productions and Amakhosi Theatre, he operates an audio-visual studio that trains aspiring presenters, sound engineers, and production technicians, ensuring continuous skills transfer across the sector.

THE LIST ALUMNI

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

By Staff Writer

Winning an award can open doors, but what happens after the recognition? For four former recipients of The List Awards, the journey has continued through new opportunities, growing initiatives and a renewed commitment to the causes that earned them recognition.

From filmmaker Leonard Chibamu's efforts to build sustainable creative platforms to Thina Mpofu's expanding women and youth empowerment programmes, their experiences offer a glimpse into life beyond the awards stage. Journalist Theresa Takafuma continues to champion stories from marginalised communities, while climate advocate Matthius Begede is strengthening partnerships to advance environmental protection.

As The List Awards by Identities Media Holdings prepares for its 2026 edition, we revisit these alumni to explore how their journeys have progressed, what the recognition has meant to their work and the impact they continue to pursue.



LEONARD CHIBAMU

2024 ARTIST PAN-AFRICAN IMPACT AWARD WINNER

Filmmaker Leonard Chibamu, recipient of The List Awards' Artist Pan-African Impact Award, champions sustainable African creative industries through film and television, including Village Secrets. He said, "creative work can be more than entertainment and it can become an instrument for community development, cultural preservation and social impact." Beyond production, Chibamu explores sustainable financing for creative enterprises, aiming to build platforms that expand opportunities and strengthen the long-term development of Africa's creative economy.

THERESA TAKAFUMA

2024 STORYTELLER/JOURNALISM IMPACT AWARD WINNER

Award-winning journalist Teresa Takafuma, recipient of The List Awards' 2024 Storyteller Journalism Impact Award, champions community storytelling and women's rights. She said, "I'm now reaching more people on the ground than I did before I won the award." Her work increasingly addresses technology-facilitated gender-based violence, empowering women and girls to challenge online abuse. Takafuma believes everyone deserves a voice, asking, "why not raise my voice against this monster called TFGBV, so that everyone gets the chance to express themselves freely without fear?"





THINA MPOFU

2025 HUMANITARIAN IMPACT AWARD WINNER

Thina Mpofu's 2025 List Awards Humanitarian Impact Award boosted the visibility of her Women Empowerment Hub (WEH), supporting its expansion. The initiative established over 20 regional chapters and trained more than 500 women and young people in leadership, entrepreneurship, digital marketing and AI. Partnerships with Empower Bank have strengthened financial inclusion and employment opportunities. Mpofu said, "This award validated our vision and propelled us forward to create scalable, generational change for women and youth across Zimbabwe and beyond."

MATTHIUS BEGEDE

2025 CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT IMPACT AWARD WINNER

Matthius Begede, recipient of The List Awards' Climate and Environment Impact Award, continues promoting tree planting, environmental restoration and climate resilience through the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society. The recognition strengthened partnerships and increased visibility for community-led initiatives. "Winning The List Awards has had a meaningful impact on my work and on the visibility of the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society's climate and environment initiatives," he said, reaffirming his commitment to a greener, climate-resilient Zimbabwe.





VIRGINIA MASHOMO SEFUME

2024 ARTIST PAN-AFRICAN IMPACT AWARD FIRST RUNNER UP

Virginia Mashomo Sefume, first runner-up in The List Awards 2024 Artist Pan-African Impact Award, remains committed to community service and women's empowerment through HCF Outreach. She described the recognition as a "huge push and encouragement."
"It means to keep working hard to leave a legacy and serve our communities with love and passion," she said. Encouraging aspiring changemakers, she advised: "Always remember your why you started more than your how."

THREE CITIES, THREE FUTURES

WHAT KIND OF ZIMBABWE ARE WE BUILDING?

By Staff Writer

Harare, Bulawayo and Beitbridge are not just ordinary urban centres in Zimbabwe. By design and geography, they each represent distinct challenges and opportunities that shape the country's future. This editorial is organized as three city profiles—each focusing on specific themes:

Harare: Waste, water, traffic, housing, and informal commerce.
Bulawayo: Water, industry, heritage, and creative economy.
Beitbridge: Border livelihoods, freight, migration, extreme heat, and climate resilience.

HARARE

Harare is Zimbabwe's capital and economic hub. Harare's urban landscape mirrors the broader opportunities and challenges.

Waste

For over two decades, waste has been one of Harare's biggest problems. Waste collection systems have often failed, leading to illegal dumping along roadsides, drainage lines, vacant plots, and urban outskirts. A major shift came with the advent of Geo Pomona Waste Management Company in 2022, which took over waste management and introduced technologies to improve collection and reduce pollution. As Mr Gabriel Masvora (Communications Director, Ministry of Local Government and Public Works) observed: Private-sector engagement has produced improvements, and the model could be replicated where appropriate.

Water

Harare's water challenge is longstanding and shaped by erratic supply, aging infrastructure, and informal sustaining strategies: boreholes, water vendors, unprotected wells and other arrangements. A long-term intervention is underway



Unprotected source of water



Kunzvi Dam under construction

through the construction of Kunzvi Dam, located about 55 km northeast of Harare.

Traffic

Traffic congestion in Harare is often described as heavy and worsening due to limited infrastructure, population growth, and the rising number of vehicles. Congestion increases pollution and undermines productivity and quality of life. It also functions as a cost multiplier—time becomes expensive and reliability collapses. There are signs of improvement through installation of cameras on some traffic lights and construction of traffic interchanges.

Housing

Housing in Harare reflects how quickly urban growth outpaces formal provision. Housing shortages and informality reveal disparities in access to affordable and decent shelter. Partnerships through public–private partnerships (PPPs) where councils face capacity and resource constraints, can provide a solution.

Informal Commerce

Informal commerce is now a core feature of Harare's urban functioning. It includes street vending, informal services, and informal transport operations, Efforts to remove informal commerce face resistance because many livelihoods depend on informal business activity.

BULAWAYO

Bulawayo is Zimbabwe's second-largest city. Known as an industrial, manufacturing and logistics hub, The city's economy is more diversified than many other cities.

Water

Bulawayo faces an ongoing acute shortage for both industrial and domestic use. Aging infrastructure and pumping systems have worsened the situation. Supply dams average around 65% annual capacity. Long-term solution is the Gwayi–Shangani Dam project, expected to be completed in 2027.

Industry

Bulawayo carries the promise and burden of the country's industrial heritage. Key industries include manufacturing, mining-related engineering and fabrication, transport and warehousing, cement manufacturing, and agro-processing. A World Bank assessment highlights industrial decline and insufficient reinvestment. Bulawayo, therefore requires massive reindustrialisation.

Heritage
Bulawayo's heritage is not a single story; it is a combination of places, traditions and historical memories. Ndebele identity remains visible through traditional arts and crafts, and living culture—songs and ceremonies—alongside older urban layouts shaped under British rule. Heritage assets include historical buildings, sites, museums, monuments and memorial areas. Bulawayo's heritage can play a stabilizing role in local economies and cultural identity.



Ndebele culture

The Creative Economy
Bulawayo's creative economy is shaped by performance culture, arts practice and heritage. Creative activity clusters around music and dance; visual arts and crafts; film and content creation. These sectors can sustain income through local buyers and tourism.

BEITBRIDGE

Strategically located on the border with South Africa, Beitbridge is a conduit for trade, migration and informal enterprise. Its economy depends heavily on border livelihoods, migration, freight movement, cross-border commerce and climate.

Border Livelihoods
Beitbridge livelihoods depend on cross-border circulation. Movement is not only migration—it is also business activity and the flow of goods. Border livelihoods are often informal and fluctuate with trade patterns.

Migration
Migration—legal and illegal—shapes Beitbridge's social fabric, bringing diversity but also challenges in border control and social services. Local voices emphasize improvements in the lives of residents and travellers and highlight the need for partnerships to create trading space for informal traders. The modernisation of the Beitbridge Border Post has also supported trade and transformed cross-border movement.

Freight
As a logistics hub, Beitbridge treats freight as the cornerstone of its economy: goods movement across the border supports employment and a wider ecosystem of informal trade.
Commerce
Beitbridge's business activity is strongly driven by its position on the Zimbabwe–South Africa border. It functions as a major SADC trade corridor and supports cross-border trade, freight and customs clearing, retail, transport, hospitality and related services.

Climate
Beitbridge faces climate stress, particularly extreme heat. A 2026 study on urban inequalities frames extreme heat as "structural violence". Heat intersects with mobility and informal work because many livelihoods depend on outdoor waiting, loading, selling and traveling. Project evaluations on modernised border post infrastructure recognize climate-resilient improvements such as a water reservoir, and facilities supporting emergency preparedness.
Together, Harare, Bulawayo and Beitbridge reveal that the country can build cities that deepen resilience, inclusion and productive opportunity.



Beitbridge Freight Terminal at night



YOUTH IMPACT AWARD WINNER
LISTEN MPOFU

Listen Mpofu is a legal professional, human rights activist, and youth leader advocating for student rights and social development within religious and secular spheres in Zimbabwe. As a Legal Officer at the Jairos Jiri Association, an alumnus of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Youth Leadership Training Program, and an activist with Amnesty International Zimbabwe and Transparency International Zimbabwe, he leverages faith-based platforms to address youth marginalization. Through his leadership in the Zimbabwe Young Christian Students movement, he champions academic freedom, religious policy reform, and youth empowerment across educational institutions.

YOUTH IMPACT AWARD RUNNER UP
JOSHUA ZINZOMBE



Joshua Zinzombe is a Zimbabwean agripreneur, sustainability practitioner, and Founder & CEO of Greenfarms Organics, serving as the National Youth Coordinator for the Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU). With over 15 years of experience, he has trained more than 12,000 farmers in climate-smart agriculture, greenhouse farming, agroecology, and commercial horticulture. Representing young farmers across Africa through regional platforms like PAFO and SACAU, Joshua empowers youth and women to build profitable agribusinesses while advancing national food security and climate resilience.



POVERTY ALLEVIATION AWARD WINNER
CHIPO MAHAMBA

Chipo Mahamba is a Zimbabwean community activist and founder of Vana Vedu Trust, an organisation dedicated to supporting underprivileged children in Chitungwiza. Drawing inspiration from her difficult childhood experiences, she transformed personal adversity into a mission to improve the lives of vulnerable children. Despite facing numerous challenges while growing up, she remained determined to make a positive difference in her community. Her work reflects compassion, resilience and a commitment to helping disadvantaged children access better opportunities.



POVERTY ALLEVIATION AWARD RUNNER UP

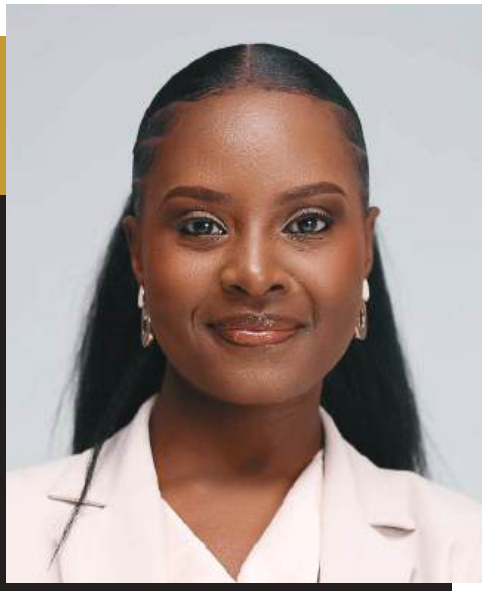
MAKHOSI MAHLANGU

Makhosi Mahlangu is a Zimbabwean food scientist, lecturer, and Founder of the African Food Revolution. He transforms local food systems by blending indigenous knowledge with climate-smart agriculture and rural industrialization. Through initiatives like the 500 Women Chilli and Aromatic Herbs Project in Matabeleland North, Makhosi equips smallholder farmers with solar dryers, value-addition processing, and direct market access. A lecturer at Lupane State University and Board Member of the Food and Nutrition

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT IMPACT AWARD WINNER

TAFADZWA KUROTWI

Tafadzwa Kurotwi is a Zimbabwean climate activist, Ambassador for She Changes Climate, and Founder of the Emerald Climate Hub. She drives gender-inclusive renewable energy initiatives in rural districts like Wedza and Buhera through the Emerald Biogas Initiative. By deploying portable biogas digesters, Tafadzwa enables communities to convert organic waste into clean cooking gas and bio-fertilizer. Her work combats energy poverty and deforestation while empowering rural women and youth with technical, entrepreneurial, and maintenance skills across the clean energy value chain.





CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT IMPACT AWARD RUNNER UP

RUDO OPRAH MUTSAGO

Rudo Orpah Mutsago is a Zimbabwean entrepreneur and founder of Rudo Orpah Designs (R.O.D.). Starting with a sewing machine borrowed from a friend, Rudo entered the market through clothing alterations and gradually built a loyal client base. Determined to overcome language barriers and expand her reach, she translated her promotional flyers into Setswana.

Upon returning to Zimbabwe, Rudo established R.O.D. in Harare, where the business is now formally registered. Her entrepreneurial journey reflects resilience, creativity and determination, demonstrating how challenges can be transformed into opportunities.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT AWARD WINNER
ARTHUR GWAGWA



Arthur Gwagwa is a Zimbabwean researcher, educator, and community leader who founded the African Centre, a library and learning hub providing access to books, study spaces, literacy activities, and robotics training for youth. A doctoral researcher at Utrecht University specializing in law, AI, and digital governance, Arthur combines international expertise with grassroots action to mentor students, guide scholarship applicants, and foster sustainable, community-led educational growth.



HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT AWARD RUNNER UP
PURITY MANYOWA

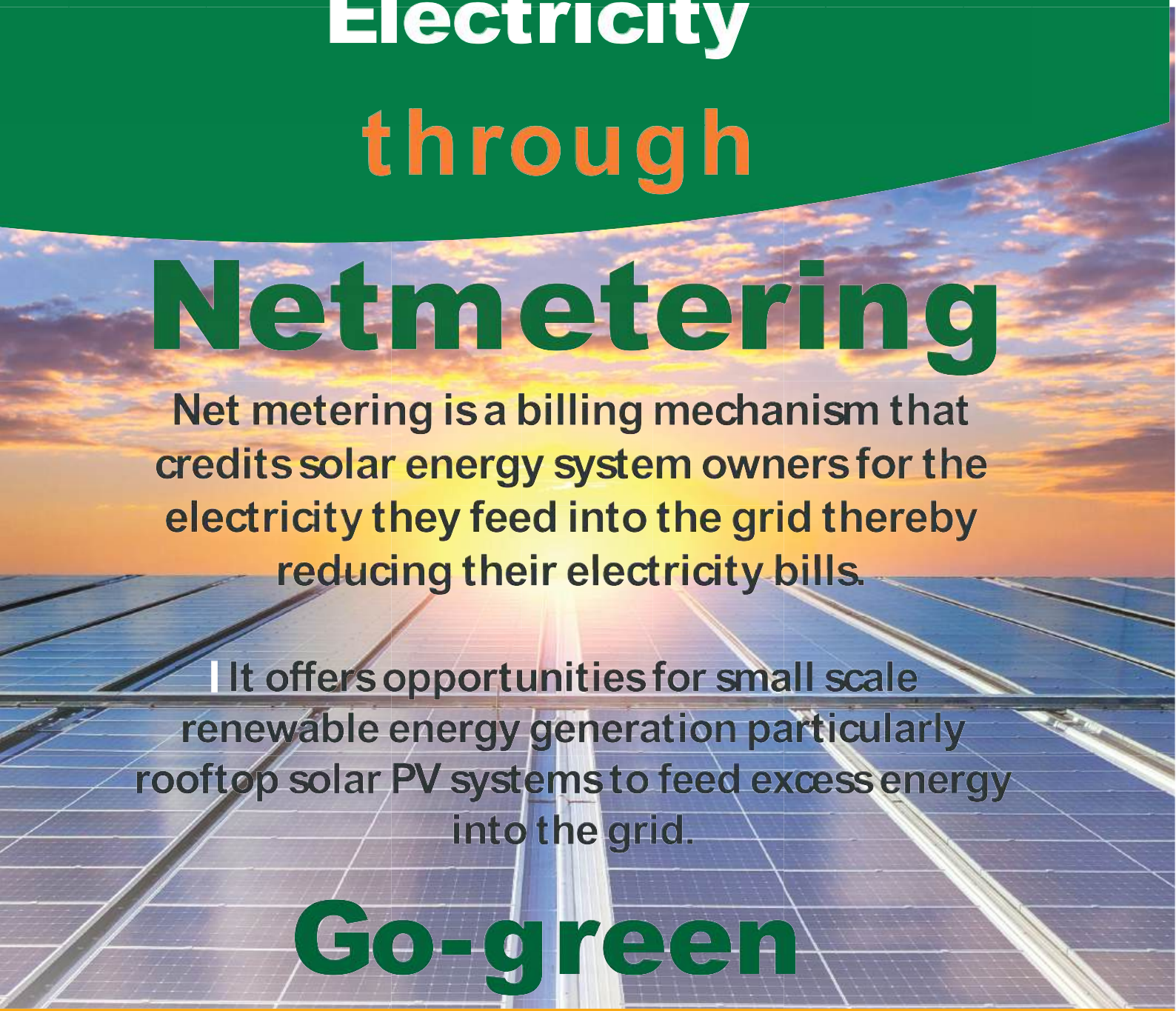
Purity Manyowa is a 23-year-old Zimbabwean humanitarian, gender advocate, and Electronic Commerce student at the Harare Institute of Technology. Serving as the Director of Programs at Ignite Youth Organization and National Executive Gender Secretary for the Student Christian Movement of Zimbabwe, she leads grassroots initiatives focused on youth leadership, gender equality, climate action, and civic participation across tertiary institutions and local communities.

ZERA

ZIMBABWE ENERGY REGULATORY AUTHORITY

For sustainable energy

You can be a Prosumer of Electricity through



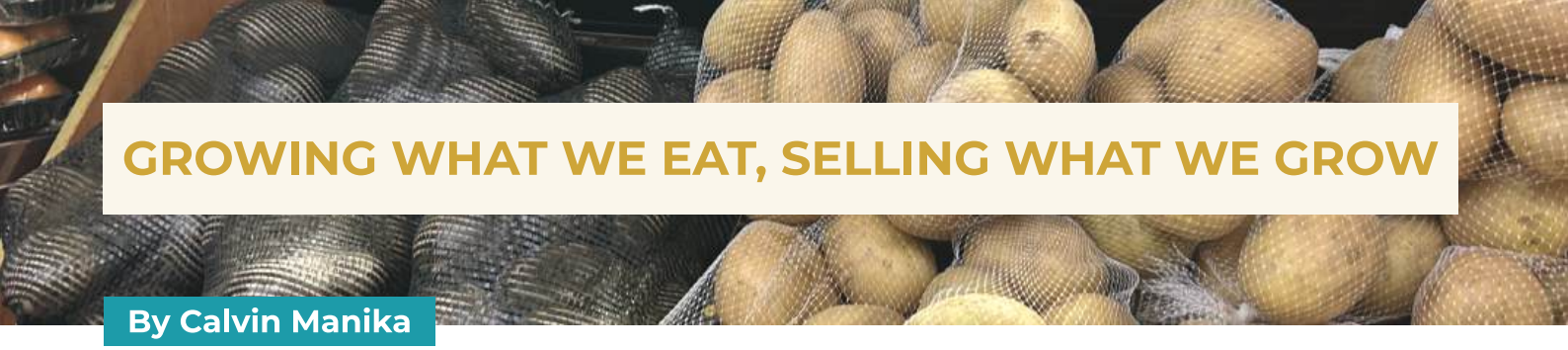
Netmetering

Net metering is a billing mechanism that credits solar energy system owners for the electricity they feed into the grid thereby reducing their electricity bills.

It offers opportunities for small scale renewable energy generation particularly rooftop solar PV systems to feed excess energy into the grid.

Go-green

SET UP A RENEW ABLE ENERGY SYSTEM TODAY AND FEED THE EXCESS INTO THE NATIONAL GRID



GROWING WHAT WE EAT, SELLING WHAT WE GROW

By Calvin Manika

At exactly 6 o'clock every morning, Antony Mtisi's clock rings, waking him up. The first thing he does after his morning prayer is check his fields, the progress of his crops, insects and water levels. By the time school children leave home, he will already be seated, jotting down notes from his observations in the fields. This is followed by calls to suppliers and customers before he returns to the field for the day's work.

Despite operating on communal land, Mtisi wants his farming business to be run professionally and commercially. He has installed a borehole for irrigation on his 2-hectare farm. For the past three years, he has planted cabbages, onions and potatoes. Among these crops, potatoes have proved to be in demand and have provided good returns.

“I wake up every day with an expectation of improving my farm and the quality of products I am working on. I call suppliers of inputs, including chemicals, to check on the availability of some pesticides I would be needing. Also, I call my customers with updates on the progress here. It is always prudent to keep checking on the market, you cannot run the business on assumptions” said Mtisi.

Mtisi does not have his own transport. Delays in getting fresh produce to the market or breakdowns on the road have affected his business in the past. He believes that with more government support and investment, farmers like him could help Zimbabwe create stronger value chains around crops such as potatoes and other horticulture products.

Potato production can provide relatively quick returns because of its 90- to 120-day growth cycle. Mtisi shared that, costs can range between US$4,000 and US$10,000 per hectare, driven by certified seed, fertiliser and irrigation costs.

But farmers can lose value before the crop reaches consumers through poor handling, mechanical injuries, inadequate storage, sprouting, rotting and dehydration. To Mtisi, this means creating value is not only about producing more potatoes. It is also about protecting what has already been produced.

“Better storage, transport, grading and packaging can reduce losses, while processing can turn potatoes into products with a longer shelf life and potentially higher value.”

Over the years, Mtisi has supplied vendors, restaurants and sometimes ‘green veggies’ markets through middlemen. His dream is to export his products to other countries or move into value addition.

Mtisi's ambition exposes a bigger question facing Zimbabwe's agriculture, on how much value can the country create between the farm and the final consumer. A potato sold immediately after harvest generates income, but the same potato can create more economic activity through transport, storage, grading, packaging, processing, manufacturing, retail and exports.

Between Mtisi's field and the final consumer, the potato changes hands several times. Each stage adds costs, but experts say, it can also add value.

“The challenge for Zimbabwe is to build a system where farmers are connected more directly to the businesses that can finance production, process crops, create finished products and open larger markets,” said Clemence Chingwe, an agro-economist.

Every pack of potato on the vendor’s stall has a hidden and long journey from the farm to the market. Buying seed, planting, irrigating and harvesting is a long, laborious and costly process.

At Mbare Musika market, up to 1,000 tonnes of potatoes are traded during peak daily volumes. Agro-processors such as Cairns Holdings also source some of their raw materials from local potato farmers. Many farmers, however, still struggle to access seed finance, sufficient chemicals and proper storage facilities needed to create a sustainable potato value chain.

Amid the growing concerns, AFC Holdings launched the national Potato Value Chain Financing Facility. The facility is backed by government performance guarantees. Other banks, including CBZ Bank and FBC Bank, offer agricultural loans requiring business plans and collateral.

“Collateral is the challenge and the biggest in our part. Our farming business is still growing,” said Mtisi.
Without enough capital and meeting bank requirements, some potato farmers are ending up in contract farming. Through an initiative called Profarmer, Innscor Africa provides seasonal input financing and buy-back arrangements to potato farmers through its agricultural operations.

Chingwe said, these arrangements show how finance can become more than a loan to the farmer.
“When banks, input suppliers, farmers and corporate buyers are connected, production can be linked to an identified market. The farmer gets access to inputs, while the buyer gains a more reliable supply.”

The Profarmer initiative targets smallholder farmers, who collectively account for a significant share of Zimbabwe's table potato production. The model includes the distribution of certified potato seed and fertiliser to growers, while farmers can sell mature produce through structured buying arrangements.

The bank finances the production, the farmer grows the crop, and registered buyers, such as supermarket chains, fast-food outlets and processors, pay the bank directly upon harvest. This structure guarantees that the bank recovers input costs immediately while eliminating market risk for the grower.

Agriculture remains one of Zimbabwe's major economic sectors, contributing an estimated 5.4% to 9.5% of total GDP. In horticulture, potatoes are regarded as a lucrative and high-yielding crop. Zimbabwe has also been moving towards self-sufficiency in table potatoes. In a bid to promote domestic value chains, the government permits (only) imports of specialised seed potatoes.

Zimbabwe's annual potato production, according to FAOSTAT, is 673,000 metric tonnes, up from 52,000 tonnes in 2010. The 2026 winter plan production target was 243,850 tonnes from 9,000 hectares.

Mtisi's dream of producing Zimbabwean potato crisps therefore goes beyond one farmer. It raises the possibility of connecting farmers to manufacturers, banks, retailers, exporters and investors so that more of the economic activity created by agriculture remains within Zimbabwe.

FROM RIGHTS TO RESILIENCE

WOMEN BUILDING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH CLIMATE ACTION IN RURAL ZIMBABWE











In Hurungwe, women are confronting the realities of climate change through an initiative connecting renewable energy, livelihoods, environmental restoration and women's rights.

In Zimbabwe's Hurungwe District, drought, deforestation and declining agricultural productivity have placed increasing pressure on rural households, particularly women responsible for securing food, water and cooking fuel. The 2023/24 drought exposed this vulnerability nationally, with maize production falling by more than 60% below the five year average, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2024).

In Bravo Village, 39 households represented by women are participating in an initiative that seeks to address these interconnected challenges.

Established in 2021 by Tag a Life International (TaLI), with support from the UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme, the project combines renewable energy, piggery farming, environmental restoration, nutrition and women's economic empowerment.

Central to the initiative is an 80 cubic metre biogas digester, constructed to convert animal waste into cooking energy, reduce dependence on firewood and ease women's unpaid care responsibilities. Although substantially constructed, technical challenges have prevented its operation.

The project also established a four compartment piggery, a community orchard and nutrition garden, alongside a restoration initiative covering 50 hectares. These interventions seek to improve household livelihoods, food security and environmental sustainability.

Beyond infrastructure, the project promotes education, women's rights, gender based violence prevention and community participation. Ten women have emerged in leadership roles, with men and traditional leaders supporting community efforts.

The journey has faced drought, water shortages, rising costs and maintenance challenges. Subsequent G20 Global Land Initiative support has helped sustain piggery operations and restoration activities.

For TaLI, these experiences are informing plans for decentralised biogas systems, improved water access and expanded livelihoods. The organisation continues seeking partnerships to strengthen the pilot and extend its reach to more communities.

Tag a Life International (TaLI): www.tagalife.org.zw

Sources: FAO (2024), GIEWS Country Brief: Zimbabwe; World Bank (2025), Zimbabwe Economic Update; TaLI (2022–2026), Hurungwe project reports. The drought statistic is national, not specific to Hurungwe, and the 50 hectares refers to the restoration initiative's scope rather than completed restoration.

BUILDING THE INSTITUTIONS AFRICA NEEDS

A NEW GENERATION OF CIVIC LEADERSHIP

By Staff Writer

Across Africa, governance is increasingly shaped by developments that extend beyond national borders. Digital technologies are changing how people access information and participate in democratic processes, while climate change, natural resource decisions and cross-border information flows are reshaping public accountability and institutional responsibilities.

This is the context in which Accountability Lab East and Southern Africa (ALESA) works. Established in 2023 and formally launched in 2025, ALESA supports active citizens, responsible leaders and accountable institutions across East and Southern Africa.

"We are in the business of ensuring that citizens participate effectively in issues that relate to their own governance. " says McDonald Lewanika, ALESA Executive Director ALESA's work spans natural resource governance, climate justice, local governance, public financial management, electoral governance and digital governance. Its approach focuses on ecosystem building and strengthening, translocal learning and innovation, regional intelligence and influence, and organisational sustainability.

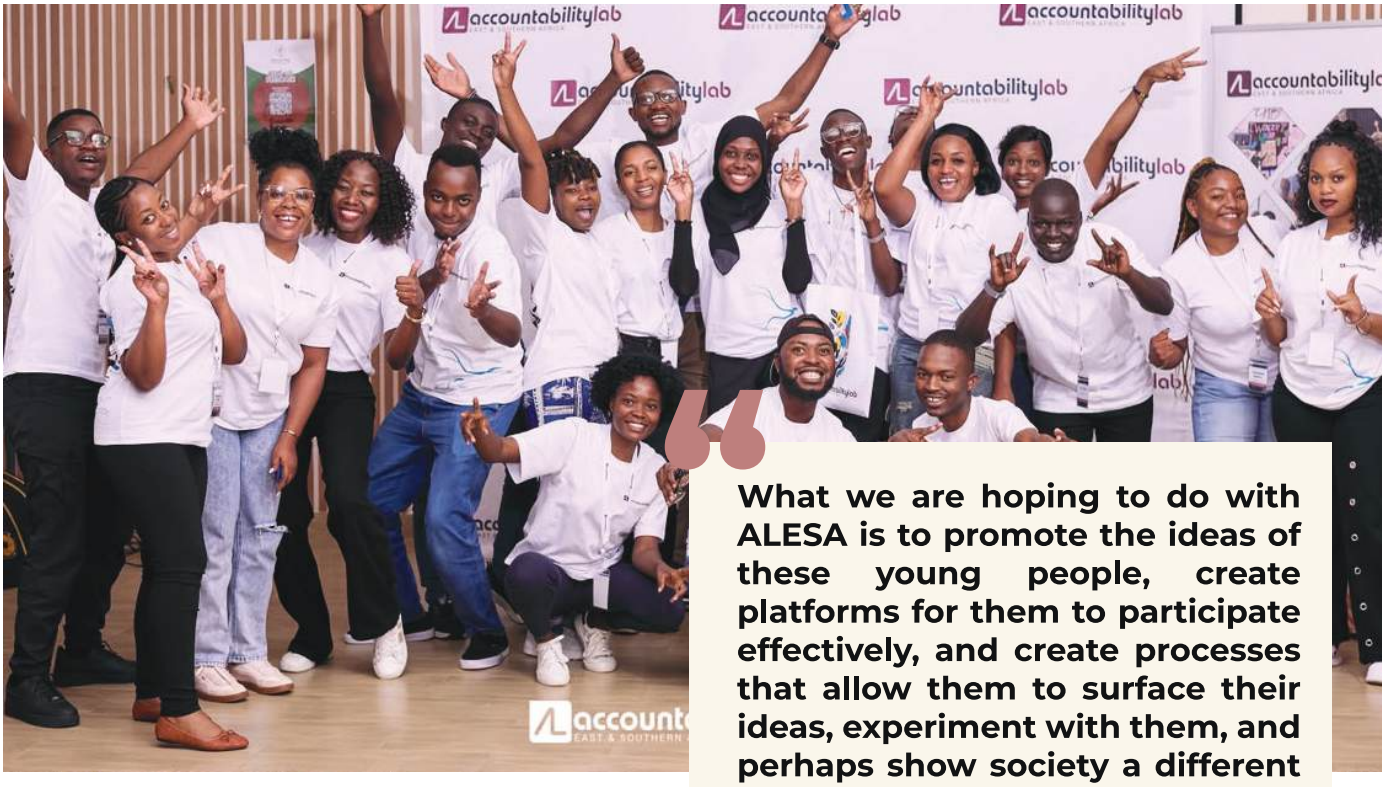
Through its incubator program, ALESA supports emerging civic innovators developing practical responses to governance challenges, including digital governance and climate justice. Participants have opportunities to develop ideas, build skills and test solutions within their communities.

"What we are hoping to do with ALESA is to promote the ideas of these young people, create platforms for them to participate effectively, and create processes that allow them to surface their ideas, experiment with them, and perhaps show society a different way of doing business and doing things. " Lewanika explains.

ALESA also recognises the importance of making governance issues accessible to wider audiences and unlikely partners. Its Make It Make Sense campaign works with musicians, comedians, poets, artists, animators and other storytellers to translate complex issues aroungovernance, human rights, public policy and accountability into accessible formats that encourage public understanding and discussion.

Through its programmes, convenings and knowledge-sharing efforts, ALESA creates opportunities for civic actors and institutions across the region to exchange experiences, build connections and explore approaches that can be adapted to different contexts.

Strengthening accountability requires continuous learning and attention to local realities. For ALESA, this means building a regional institution while remaining connected to the communities it serves, supporting emerging leaders and creating platforms through which citizens can contribute to making institutions more responsive and accountable.



> **What we are hoping to do with ALESA is to promote the ideas of these young people, create platforms for them to participate effectively, and create processes that allow them to surface their ideas, experiment with them, and perhaps show society a different way of doing business and doing things.**
>
> - **McDonald Lewanika**

ECHOES OF MHLAHLANDLELA

UNITY, HERITAGE, AND THE LIVING LEGACY OF KING MZILIKAZI.

By Andile Tshuma

Long before the first drumbeat echoed across the granite kopjes of Matopo, the digital landscape was already alive with anticipation. Weeks ahead of the main event, social media had transformed into a virtual gathering place, a relentless, buzzing corridor of countdowns, rare archival photographs, and spirited debates on regalia and ancestry. By the time the weekend arrived, the digital noise had swelled into a full-scale cultural movement, signaling that this year's commemoration was not merely an event on a calendar, but a nationwide awakening.

History at Mhlahlandlela was never meant to rest quietly in dusty archives.

On the first weekend of September 2026, culminating in the electric surge of Saturday the 5th, the crisp Matopo air embraced an extraordinary convergence of culture, community, and pride. Marking 158 years since the passing of a visionary leader, approximately 20,000 souls from all walks of life, crossing boundaries of race, tribe, and creed descended upon the historic venue twenty kilometres outside Bulawayo to celebrate the annual King Mzilikazi Commemoration Day, a revered tradition that has been proudly happening since the year 2000.

Born near Mkuze in Zululand in 1790, King Mzilikazi forged the Ndebele nation after breaking away from King Shaka in 1823. His final resting place lies at Entumbane in Matopo, where he was laid to rest following his death on 9 September 1868. Standing on these hallowed grounds, the generational tapestry was breathtaking, from toddlers strapped to their mothers' backs to elders in their nineties leaning on walking sticks, the oldest and youngest of our people stood shoulder-to-shoulder. As one veteran custodian of culture reflected: "It's important for us to bring our grandchildren here at Mhlahlandlela to celebrate the legacy of King Mzilikazi. Our generation is getting older by the day, hence we must show our children and grandchildren where we come from." (photo creds: Khulumani fm)

Organized by the Mthwakazi ka Mzilikazi Cultural Association (MMCA), the event has grown into a powerful two-year-running educational framework. Reflecting on the expanding scale of the gathering, MMCA spokesperson Prince Ncube, widely known as Dr. Gasolo, noted with profound pride: "The event was exceptionally grand this year, it's no longer centered merely on the people of Bulawayo, but draws participants from everywhere." This sentiment was rooted in a structured two-day experience: Friday's sessions offered youth an immersive look into the King's background, featuring direct lessons from the Khumalo family, with Liberty Ndaba emphasizing, "We want children to learn the history directly from the family and from people who have a direct connection to that history."

Then came Saturday. The day broke with an unmatched pulse, starting with a vibrant, colourful public march through the bustling, horn-blaring streets of Bulawayo before the massive, convoy-heavy procession journeyed out to Matopo.

As the 20,000-strong crowd filled the grounds, the atmosphere became utterly intoxicating. The earth vibrated with the thunderous, synchronized stamp of amabutho, the deep and commanding rhythms of amaguqa, and the breathtaking, high-stepping grace of the amatshitshi (maidens) and izintombi. Traditional war cries, echoing praises, poetry and centuries-old songs filled the valley. It was a living, breathing exhibition of Hunhu/Ubuntu, the core motto championed by Identities Media Holdings. (photo creds: Khulumani fm)



This spirit of unity transcended all borders.

The celebration drew a dazzling global crowd, traditional chiefs from across the regions sat in solemn dignity, while proud delegations travelled alongside Chief Tshovani all the way from Chiredzi, marching side-by-side with diasporan community members, international visitors, and high-profile celebrities who had flown in from abroad just to witness the majesty of Matabeleland. (photo creds: Khulumani fm)

Delivering the keynote address, the guest of honour, Matabeleland South Provincial Affairs and Devolution Minister Albert Nguluvhe, captured the modern vision: "Let our culture be a source of jobs, tourism and innovation, not something we leave behind."

And long after the dust settled in Matopo, the digital wave surged once more. Social media became an absolute hurricane of pride, with a relentless stream of live videos, dazzling traditional attire selfies, and trending hashtags. Phones buzzed continuously across continents, proving that in a world where global influences are only a smartphone away, our roots run infinitely deeper than any digital feed. History was lived, breathed, and danced, leaving an indelible, thunderous imprint that demanded the world's attention.

Photo Credit; Phillip Moyo





THE STATE OF THE ARTS INDUSTRY IN ZIMBABWE

WHO OWNS THE WORK, WHO EARNS FROM IT, AND WHO PROTECTS THE ARTIST?

By Plot Mhako



As a nation we are finally having the copyright conversation we should have had years ago. What started with arguments around cover bands and licensing fees has opened a much bigger conversation about ownership, royalties, licensing, publishing, masters and, ultimately, whether our music industry has systems that actually protect the people who create the music. We need to move beyond the noise. The real question now is: what are we going to do about it?

Zimbabwe has a music business problem, but the problem is not the lack of creativity and talent. We have some of the most amazing musicians, dancers, filmmakers, visual artists, writers and cultural practitioners in the world. The biggest challenge is what happens after the work is created. Who owns it? Who earns from it? Who accounts for that money? And, perhaps most importantly, who stands up for the creator when the system does not work?

For years we have seen legendary artists dying poor despite their music having made a big impact. I will track back this situation to yesteryears. Zimbabwe's music industry has a complicated history. From Gramma and other record companies to the Urban Grooves era, production houses, Zimdancehall and now streaming platforms, music has been recorded, distributed, licensed and monetised in different ways. Yet many artists still struggle to answer basic questions about their own work: Who owns the copyright? Who owns the master recording? Who controls publishing? Who collects the royalties and what happens to those rights when the artist dies?

Behind the singer are songwriters, composers, arrangers, backing vocalists, instrumentalists, session musicians, engineers and producers. Their fingerprints are all over the music we celebrate. Are those contributions properly documented? Are the rights recognised? Are the people being paid? We should also be asking who is making money from Zimbabwean music on YouTube, Spotify and other digital platforms.

There are also growing concerns about older Zimbabwean music being commercially distributed online without families or rights holders clearly understanding where the

money goes. Claims about foreign ownership or control of catalogues need proper investigation and documentation. That is precisely why Zimbabwe needs a transparent, accessible rights-management system.

The issue of Cover bands and most recently the Legends Nights tribute concerts is where the conversation became visible. The US$150 blanket licensing fee imposed last year by the Zimbabwe Music Rights Association (ZIMURA) sparked the debate and raised a legitimate question about balancing copyright protection with the realities of the live music economy. Artists need to respect other people's intellectual property but licensing systems must also be practical, in line with international standards and easy to understand.



We have serious questions about the roles of two collective management organisations, transparency, accountability and how rights are administered. We have the Zimbabwe Council of Copyrights (ZICCO) and Zimbabwe Music Rights Association (ZIMURA) both collecting for the same music rights. The two institutions have an ensuing cold-war and the artists are the proxies and the biggest losers. The current situation is exploiting the composers. For instance ZIMURA reported US$1.64 million in collections in 2024, while about US$1.05 million went towards staff and administration. The most recent royalties payout by ZIMURA indicate a 67% decline with 5000 artists sharing $200 000. The crisis is real and should be alarming for the music rights owners. We need a clear and publicly understood framework showing who licenses what, who collects, how much is collected and how the money is distributed with transparency.

Music composers can't be standby victims, they need to have an active interest and voice in their music rights. They need to be organised, have contracts, understand music publishing rights, document songwriting splits and be clear as to who owns what before signing agreements. In the situation of death, copyrights can form part of an estate, but there is need for written clarity as to who ultimately controls or benefits from those rights depends on the legal arrangements surrounding the work.

The reforms and systems that are needed in the music industry should involve a multi-stakeholder approach. The Government, regulators and the composers also have work to do. Zimbabwe needs a modern copyright framework that responds to streaming, digital distribution, artificial intelligence, neighbouring rights and the realities of today's creative economy. Rights information should be digitised and accessible, making it easier to identify works, owners and beneficiaries.

And us as the media we must do better too. Copyright stories should not only become news when artists are fighting. We should explain the music business, interrogate institutions, follow the money and help artists understand their rights.

The current moment gives Zimbabwe an opportunity. Let's audit the system. Let's revisit the copyright, let's digitise rights records and let's strengthen institutions. An improved royalty collection, distribution and monitoring system will benefit not only the composers but the growth of the industry as a whole.





SPORTS IMPACT AWARD WINNER
TAWANDA ZAZU

Tawanda Zazu is pioneering community transformation through sports in rural Hwange and Matabeleland North. By founding Young Sables Soccer Academy, he uses football as a practical tool to keep girls in school, prevent early marriages and teen pregnancies, and provide essential life skills. His holistic approach combines sports development with economic empowerment, running poultry and sewing projects alongside technical-vocational partnerships with Douglas Eland Technical College. Under his leadership, the academy established the women's division under the Rhino Cup Champions League in Dete, supported local schools, and nurtured top talent like Francisca Ncube (Zimbabwe U15 National Team), Colleta Khumalo (Black Mambas), and Yeyan Ncube (Maningi). Now serving on the ZIFA Southern Region Area Zones Board, Tawanda has built an innovative, sustainable, and scalable model for grassroots sports development.

SPORTS IMPACT AWARD RUNNER UP
OZWELL GONO

Ozwell Gono is a 32-year-old certified handball coach, former player, and founder of Raiders Handball Club in Mbizo, Kwekwe, Zimbabwe. Through the club, he provides a structured, safe space for school-going girls and teenagers, offering regular coaching, mentorship, and life skills to build confidence, discipline, and teamwork while steering youth away from negative social influences. He serves as a coach for the Zimbabwe Under-19 Girls Handball Team, actively developing female sports talent and grassroots youth empowerment across the country.





STORYTELLER/JOURNALISM IMPACT AWARD WINNER
KEEGAN CHIPATO

Keegan Chipato is an award-winning digital journalist, media consultant, and CEO of ACRI Media Group from Harare, Zimbabwe. As Managing Director of Living in Victory Magazine and contributor to outlets like Motimagz, he uses platform-building journalism to profile influential figures in faith, business, and culture. A representative at the World Bank Youth Summit, Keegan integrates strategic brand consulting with youth advocacy to amplify African leadership.

STORYTELLER/JOURNALISM IMPACT AWARD RUNNER UP

FADZAI NDANGANA



Fadzai Ndangana is a health communications specialist, former health reporter, and Public Relations Officer for Gweru Provincial Hospital in Zimbabwe. Combining data-driven investigation with deep community engagement, she exposes systemic healthcare failures such as drug shortages and maternal mortality in marginalized settlements like Epworth. Through initiatives like her documentary Shadows of Epworth, Fadzai advocates for healthcare equity, mental health awareness, and community-informed public health solutions.



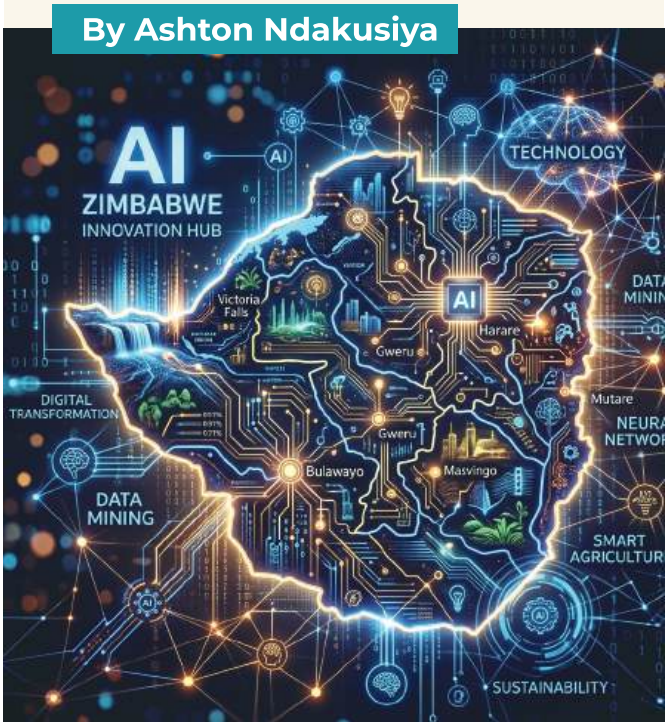
ARTIST PAN AFRICAN IMPACT AWARD WINNER

FAROOK MAHOMMED

Farook Mohammed is a contemporary visual artist and cultural leader from Gqeberha, South Africa. As creator of the Makoti Project, he uses visual arts to advance Pan-African unity, cultural diplomacy, and gender-based violence education. A 2024 MIPAD Honoree, Farook collaborates with academic and regional institutions like TUT and SADC to drive social transformation through creative dialogue.

CAN ZIMBABWE BUILD A DIGITAL ECONOMY EVERYONE CAN USE?

By Ashton Ndakusiya



With the widening of internet access, Zimbabwe is making inroads into the digital economy. Digital payments have become routine in commerce and artificial intelligence is now a topic in discussions on where business is headed. The pace of such change is not uniform it is a matter of having the means, the skills and the infrastructure to reap the rewards.

According to DataReportal's Digital 2026 :Zimbabwe report, which draws on October 2025 figures, there are 6,54 million internet users in the country or 38,4% of the population. The report tallied 16,2 million mobile connections, but noted that a connection is not an individual user since some people have more than one.

Coverage numbers do not tell the whole story when it comes to Zimbabwe's digital economy. UNCTAD's 2025 eTrade Readiness Assessment for Zimbabwe describes e-commerce as largely informal and urban, identifying affordability, last-mile connectivity and the urban-rural divide as structural impediments.

To a small business, digitisation is not merely a case of having a website. A trader might accept electronic payments and take orders via social media while marketing on WhatsApp. A larger SME may employ data analytics, online advertising and cloud accounting. In either case, the owner needs a dependable device, the skills and affordable connectivity.

UNCTAD notes that digital businesses face high costs, limited skills and restricted access to finance. Lending to young people, women and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) makes up a mere 3-4% of what banks lend.

Small and medium enterprises will be at the heart of the country's digital transformation, accounting for 76,1% of economic activity by the official count but there is a price to digitise. A big firm can invest in staff training, cybersecurity and cloud services, while a small operator has to decide if the next US$10 is for stock, transport or data.

Then there is the cost of connectivity. MISA Zimbabwe, in August 2026, referencing a POTRAZ report from the fourth quarter of 2025, put internet penetration at 84,55%. NetOne data shows 3G coverage of 80% of the population and 4G reaching 69%.

Zimbabwe's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy for 2026–2030 places AI within the wider digital transformation agenda, highlighting ethics, inclusion, data governance and skills. However, businesses still face basic impediments like connectivity, skills and electricity to operate basic digital systems. The country's AI ambitions will need to develop alongside the infrastructure that allows communities and ordinary businesses to participate. Otherwise, the digital divide risks widening between those able to use AI to improve productivity and those left behind.

Digital payments are another part of the equation. According to the World Bank's 2021 Digital Economy Diagnostic, digital financial services form the bedrock of Zimbabwe's digital economy, with 96% of formal-sector transactions conducted digitally. However, the Bank flagged low internet banking uptake in rural areas and transaction costs as limitations.

Digital payments can widen financial participation, but only if the cost of using them does not outweigh their benefits. Where barriers are too great, businesses and consumers may resort to cash.

Trust is another factor. Zimbabwe has a legal framework for processing and protecting personal information through the Cyber and Data Protection Act of 2021. In its 2026 assessment, MISA Zimbabwe identified further issues arising from AI, including data ownership,transparency and algorithmic accountability.

Businesses that hold customers names, payment details or contact information are already part of the digital economy. Where users do not trust the systems handling their information, adoption may slow and the benefits of digitisation diminish.

Geography also matters. A farmer with online access to buyers and market data can overcome some of the barriers imposed by physical distance. A student can access educational resources beyond their community, while a business can reach customers further afield. But these benefits depend on reliable and affordable infrastructure.

Zimbabwe has more than 200 Community Information Centres, according to UNCTAD's 2025 figures, but the urban-rural divide persists, alongside affordability challenges and limited productive digital skills among MSMEs.

Digital inclusion therefore requires more than access. People and businesses need affordable connections, suitable devices, skills and trust in the systems they use.

Zimbabwe has made progress through expanding mobile networks, digital payments and a national AI strategy. Yet the gains remain uneven. The question is not whether the country can build a digital economy, but what kind of economy it will be.

If secure systems, suitable devices and reliable connectivity remain the preserve of those with the means, digitisation could reproduce existing inequalities in a new form. But if rural communities, ordinary households and small businesses can participate, the benefits could reach a much wider section of society.

Ultimately, Zimbabwe's digital transformation will be measured not simply by how many people are connected, but by what that connection enables them to do.

FROM FOLLOWERS TO FORTUNES

THE BUSINESS OF ZIMBABWE'S CREATOR ECONOMY

By Nyasha Blessing Dube

Just a few years ago, content creation in Zimbabwe was largely dismissed as a pastime for young people with smartphones and too much time on their hands. Today, it has become a growing industry in which comedians, vloggers, musicians and lifestyle creators earn money from advertising, brand partnerships, live performances and small businesses, while employing professional camera persons, editors, as well as social media managers behind the scenes.

A Sneakpeak into Zimbabwe's Content Creators

Madam Boss, whose real name is Tarisai Cleopatra Munetsiwa, is perhaps the most recognisable example of a creator who turned her huge following into a commercial brand. She began with comedy and skits before moving into acting, music and ambassadorships with companies including NetOne, Ingwebu Breweries, Nyaradzo and RwandAir. At one time she publicly disclosed that she earns at least US$20,000 on a good month from content creation, a figure that placed her among the country's most commercially successful digital personalities.



Tarisai Cleopatra Munetsiwa (Madam Boss)

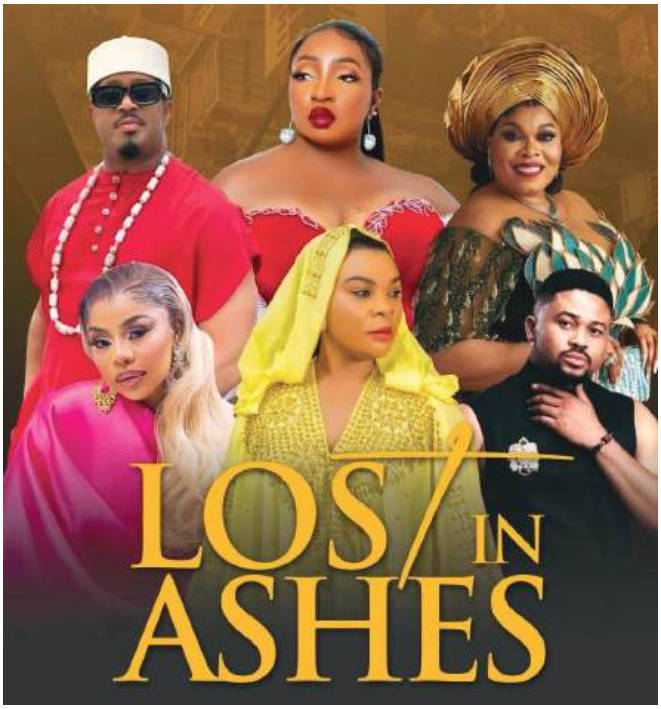
Zimbabwean couple Thando Tshuma and Vusumuzi Mnkandla, popularly known as VusuThando, have turned their passion for travel into a growing social media brand. Their cycling adventures across Africa, documented through videos and everyday experiences, have attracted audiences following their journey through different countries. Beyond entertainment, the couple has used their platform to promote African tourism, culture and environmental awareness, attracting sponsorship and support from followers and tourism stakeholders. Their story demonstrates how content creators can build influence beyond comedy and lifestyle entertainment, transforming personal experiences into opportunities for brand partnerships, tourism promotion and commercial growth.

Popular creator Mai Tt has also built her business around relatable storytelling and a loyal female audience. Early



Thando Tshuma and Vusumuzi Mnkandla (VusuThando)

YouTube estimates suggested that even with a modest subscriber base, her channel could generate meaningful advertising income because her content spoke directly to the everyday experiences of Zimbabwean women. Her success shows that a creator does not need the largest following to build a viable enterprise. What matters is the trust of the community that follows their work.



Felistas Murata (Mai Tt)

Mai Hazvi, played by Angeline Gava, has also become a household name through skits created with her husband, Mike Mafunyise, known as Baba Hazvi. She is a self-made actress who has mastered the art of short-form comedy, a format that has allowed Zimbabwean creators to reach large audiences without relying on traditional television or live performances. For couples like them, the creative partnership has become a business asset.



Angelina Gava and Mike Mafunyise (Mai Hazvi and Baba Hazvi) in action



Mai Hazvi & Baba Hazvi in real life

Anesu, known online as Ryanesu, offers another example of how creators are diversifying beyond online views. In one question-and-answer video, the couple explained that they run a shop at Eastgate Market, selling clothes and shoes, while continuing to create content about their lives and family. Their model reflects a growing trend among Zimbabwean creators who use social media not only to earn from platforms but to direct customers to their physical enterprises.

The Musekaz have built one of the country's most recognisable family brands through stories of relocation, rural



Ryan and Anesu Chidavaenzi (Ryanesu)

life and home-building after returning from South Africa. Their channel describes a decision to leave South Africa and build in Zimbabwe, a narrative that has resonated with diaspora audiences seeking stories of hope, a united family and self reliance. Industry rankings place them among Zimbabwe's most followed social media personalities, with more than 2.9 million followers on their Facebook page.



The Musekaz

The Musekaz have built one of the country's most recognisable family brands through stories of relocation, rural life and home-building after returning from South Africa. Their channel describes a decision to leave South Africa and build in Zimbabwe, a narrative that has resonated with diaspora audiences seeking stories of hope, a united family and self reliance. Industry rankings place them among Zimbabwe's most followed social media personalities, with more than 2.9 million followers on their Facebook page.

Where Does the Money Comes From
Most creators do not depend on one source of income. Platform advertising remains important, especially on YouTube and Facebook, but changing algorithms make it a fragile foundation on its own. Brand partnerships, sponsored content, events and affiliate marketing have therefore become central to their survival.

For women creators in particular, the ability to own the relationship with their audience has been significant. Creators like Madam Boss, Mai Hazvi, Gamue, among others have built followings around lived experience, humour and identity rather than relying on controversial publicity. That kind of audience loyalty is attractive to brands because it offers stability, unlike a sudden viral moment.

Intellectual property remains one of the weakest links in the industry. A creator's characters, phrases, music and archives are commercial assets, yet many do not register trademarks, neither do they negotiate ownership of commissioned work or control how their content is reused by other pages. Without contracts, a popular persona can be monetised by brands, while the person who created it has limited legal protection.

Taxation and Formalisation
Madam Boss' public revenue disclosure caught the attention of the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, intensifying tax compliance checks on digital content creators and influencers in Zimbabwe. The tax question has since become unavoidable. ZIMRA has been urging creators earning from Facebook, YouTube and other online platforms to regularise their tax affairs. Depending on how a creator operates, obligations include income tax, PAYE, VAT, the Aids levy and withholding tax.

The issue of formalisation as well should not be viewed as a burden. Proper records allow creators to prove income, access loans, employ people formally, negotiate contracts and separate business expenses from personal spending. A creator receiving sponsorship fees, donations, affiliate commissions and platform payments is effectively running an enterprise, even if the office is a bedroom and the boardroom is a WhatsApp group.

Reputation as Capital
Fame comes with the need for responsibility. The case involving content creator Evans Sivechere, known online as Vecco Lupa, and the alleged Diamond Migration scheme has raised questions about the role of influencers whose endorsements may lend credibility to commercial services. Sivechere was reported to have been arrested in Botswan, facing fraud-related charges for ochestrating a massive international job seekers fraud scheme, while prominent personalities such as Mama Vee were also previously reported to have been associated with promotional material linked to other ponzi schemes.

The wider lesson is that creators are no longer just entertainers. They are gatekeepers whose recommendations can shape the decisions of followers, especially young people seeking opportunities beyond Zimbabwe's borders. Due diligence, written agreements and the ability to decline a lucrative but questionable deal are essential business skills creators need.

Zimbabwe's creator economy is maturing. The next fortunes will not belong only to those who go viral, but to those who build durable brands, protect their intellectual property, diversify income and treat compliance as part of their professional life. For women creators in particular, the industry offers a rare opportunity to own their stories, employ others and build wealth on their own terms. Followers can disappear with algorithm changes but a well-run, creative business can survive them.



INTRODUCING THE TALI LEADERSHIP ECONOMIC MENTORSHIP HUBS (LEMHS) DIGITAL LEARNING PLATFORM

When girls and young women have access to knowledge, mentorship and opportunities to organise, they can challenge inequality, claim their rights and build movements for change. Through the Digitalising the Leadership Economic Mentorship Hubs (LEMHs) Programme, Tag a Life International (TaLI), with support from the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) through the Leading from the South initiative, is leveraging digital innovation and low data learning to advance gender transformative leadership development, governance, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), climate justice, sustainable livelihoods and feminist movement building, reaching more young women despite shrinking civic space and development funding.





IDENTITIES with Nyari Mashayamombe
The Empowerment PodCAST

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THE EMPOWERMENT PODCAST

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THE TRAGEDY THAT BECAME A MIRACLE

HOW TAURAI CHALIBAMBA SAVED SEVEN LIVES ON LAKE KARIBA

By Fatima Karuweni



The screams of people fighting for their lives, bodies floating in the water and desperate cries for help are images that may haunt Taurai Chalibamba for years. Yet, amid the devastation of Zimbabwe's Lake Kariba ferry disaster, her courage became a lifeline for seven people struggling to survive.

On August 11, 2026, the Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (RIDA) operated Mbuya Nehanda ferry capsized near Long Island on Lake Kariba while travelling from Kariba town towards Chalala Fishing Camp. What began as an ordinary journey quickly turned into one of Zimbabwe's deadliest transport disasters.

The ferry, designed to carry a maximum of 90 people, was reportedly overloaded. Strong winds and rough waters compounded the danger, leaving passengers fighting for their lives as the vessel overturned.

For those aboard, the lake became a scene of panic, loss and desperate attempts to survive.

Among the survivors was Chalibamba, a mother from Mola in rural Kariba, whose extraordinary actions helped seven people reach safety.

According to The Herald, Chalibamba repeatedly swam towards passengers struggling in the water, helping rescue them while her young child was strapped to her back.

"I was moved by the lifeless bodies of many passengers, men, women and children that I was seeing. I was also looking at myself in disbelief, wondering how I had managed to survive such a horrific accident," she told The Herald.

For someone who described herself as an average swimmer, the courage required to keep returning to the water was remarkable.

"I am an average swimmer. I don't know where I gathered the power and courage to swim and save these other passengers," she said.

Her actions unfolded against the backdrop of a disaster that claimed 97 lives, according to police figures reported later in August, while 77 people survived. President Emmerson Mnangagwa declared the accident a state of disaster, paving the way for assistance to affected families and the mobilisation of resources for search and recovery operations.

Chalibamba was not the only person whose actions highlighted the desperate struggle to survive.

In a separate account published by The Herald on August 13, a passenger identified as Mrs Magadaire reportedly made urgent calls to African Parks, Tiger Bay and Bumi Hills as the situation deteriorated. **She raised the alarm** and sought help as the ferry took on water before eventually capsizing.

Her efforts reflected the desperation of passengers who realised they were in danger and needed immediate assistance.

The disaster also prompted questions about the weather conditions and the circumstances surrounding the journey, as survivors recounted the strong winds and worsening conditions on the lake.

As news of the accident spread, rescue teams worked to locate survivors and recover bodies. Police divers, members of the Zimbabwe National Army, the Civil Protection Unit, local boat operators and conservation teams participated in the operations.

An African Parks helicopter also assisted in locating survivors. Some passengers endured prolonged periods in the water before rescuers spotted them, underscoring the ordeal faced by those who survived.

For Chalibamba, surviving the disaster did not mean escaping its devastating consequences. The tragedy left her with painful memories and profound loss, highlighting the emotional toll borne by survivors long after the immediate danger had passed.

Her actions, however, remain a powerful reminder of the instinct to help others even when one's own life is at risk. The disaster left families mourning loved ones, communities grieving and renewed questions about passenger safety on Lake Kariba. Behind the statistics are individual stories of loss, courage and survival.

Recognising these acts of courage, the Board of The List Awards 2026 has resolved to honour Chalibamba and Mrs Magadaire through its Special Heroes Award. The recognition celebrates everyday heroes whose actions, often in moments of crisis, reflect the spirit of Hunhu/Ubuntu and service to humanity.

Chalibamba's story stands out not because it erases the tragedy, but because it reveals the extraordinary courage of an ordinary person doing remarkable things for others.

In the turbulent waters of Lake Kariba, she faced fear and uncertainty yet continued helping those around her. For the seven people whose lives she helped save, her actions offered a second chance. The tragedy may be remembered for the lives it claimed, but Chalibamba's courage ensures that it will also be remembered for the lives that were saved.

BEYOND THE MINE

WHO BENEFITS FROM AFRICA'S CRITICAL MINERALS?

By Fatima Karuweni

At the turn of the new millennium, the world witnessed rapid changes ushered in by climate change, resulting in shifts in the global energy framework as economies lean towards cleaner and more sustainable energy.

Yet embracing climate-smart solutions has created a fresh challenge over how countries position themselves to secure the raw minerals that underpin green economy technology.

These include nickel, cobalt, platinum group metals (PGMs), copper, lithium, graphite and rare earth minerals, among others.

As demand grows, nations are locked in a minerals race to secure these commodities.

However, exploration and exploitation have contributed to ecological damage, biodiversity crises, displacement, and water and air pollution.

An assessment, Africa's Critical Minerals: Beyond the Mine, produced by Vivekananda International Foundation, highlights that the continent holds more than a quarter of the world's recognised reserves of critical minerals, including copper, manganese, bauxite and lithium.

The position paper notes that more than 60% of the world's resources of PGMs, cobalt and chromium are also located in Africa. This is particularly visible in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), where the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is a major source of cobalt, Zambia of copper, Zimbabwe of lithium, and South Africa of platinum and manganese.

Two neighbours on the Zambezi River, Zimbabwe and Zambia, hold much of what the world now needs for its energy transition.

Zimbabwe has the largest lithium reserves in Africa. The globally sought-after mineral, known as white gold, is essential in the production of vehicle batteries and grid storage.

Zambia has been a leading copper producer for close to a century and remains one of the continent's largest suppliers of the red metal that runs through every power line, wind turbine and charging station.

Both countries also hold cobalt, nickel, manganese, graphite and PGMs that global buyers now call strategic. Yet for many Zimbabweans and Zambians, mineral wealth has done little to change daily life.

On the Copperbelt, towns built around mines have lived through booms, privatisation, closures and job losses, while the country remains gripped by poverty.

In Zimbabwe, many mining towns reek of poverty, with roads and clinics in a dilapidated state.

These minerals are extensively extracted and exported in raw form, only to return as steeply priced products while industrialised countries with processing plants rake in billions.

In many cases, damaged land and evicted citizens remain to witness the prosperous future that is yet to arrive. Africa remains at the tail end of the supply chain.

But this is not just a Zimbabwean or Zambian story. It is an African story.

This brings to the fore the question: Beyond the mine, who benefits from Africa's critical minerals?

A Southern African Resource Watch (SARW) report published in September, ONE VOICE. ONE STRATEGY. A Continental Blueprint for African Strategic Minerals, Joint Industrial Policies, and Diplomacy, states that Africa's position at the end of the supply chain is not due to a lack of resources or talent.

Rather, it reflects persistent economic structures established during the colonial era that assigned Africa to supplying cheap raw materials, receiving obsolete and low-value technologies, and consuming manufactured products.



AI Generated

In another 2024 report, Critical for Who? Lithium and Society in Zimbabwe: The Case of Bikita Community, the watchdog highlights that mining communities are not benefiting from the extraction of many critical minerals.

SARW identifies challenges in ensuring that exploitation is transparent, accountable and equitable, with concerns over corporate social responsibility, employment, and social, cultural and environmental impacts in countries including Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Last year, SARW indicated that Zimbabwe was losing more than US$100 million every month in critical battery metals through illicit trade buoyed by weak regulation.

In its May 2025 report, Critical Minerals for Africa's Inclusive Growth and Development, the African Development Bank (AfDB) noted that rising demand underscored the minerals' strategic significance and Africa's place as a leading global supplier.

The continental lender called for collaboration on fair governance frameworks that balance security of supply with sustainable development, while enabling African countries to move from commodity exports to higher-value processing.

Against this background, Zimbabwe recently announced a framework mandating state participation through Special Purpose Vehicles, ministerial approval for mining rights, and restrictions on raw mineral exports unless a government-approved beneficiation plan is in place.

The country designated lithium, PGMs, cobalt, nickel, graphite, copper, rare earths and chrome as critical minerals, while classifying gold, diamonds, coal, iron ore, and oil and gas as strategic minerals.

With Africa's largest lithium reserves, huge PGM and chrome deposits, and an estimated 15% to 19% share of China's imported spodumene concentrate, Zimbabwe's policy directly influences global battery and energy-transition supply chains.

Recent Minerals Marketing Corporation of Zimbabwe (MMCZ) reports show mineral exports hit a record US$2.53 billion in the first half of 2026, an 84% increase over the previous year, buoyed by global demand and commodity prices.

MMCZ linked the surge partly to processing more minerals locally before export, improving value addition and revenue realisation.

Zambia is also showing promise in transitioning from raw mineral exports to value addition, targeting 3 million tonnes of copper annually by 2031.

A 2025 Zambia Mining Industry report by PwC projected copper production of around 1 million tonnes in 2025, after first-half output rose 17.8% to 439,644 tonnes, from 373,264 tonnes a year earlier.

The firm attributed growth to higher production at Konkola Copper Mines, Mopani, Kansanshi and Chibuluma.

In July, Zambia tightened regulations on mineral trade, adjusting export duty rules for copper concentrates and addressing logistical bottlenecks under Statutory Instrument No. 43 of 2026. The government also moved to incentivise local beneficiation.

In Beyond the mine gate: why Africa's critical minerals future will be won or lost in governance, the Africa Centre for Critical Minerals & Energy Transition (ACCET) notes that Africa's minerals offer a rare opportunity to finance development, fast-track industrialisation and reinforce the continent's strategic influence.

However, the think tank argues that expanding extraction alone will not deliver transformation. Decisions beyond the mine gate on governance, value addition, regional cooperation and the treatment of communities will determine who benefits.

Africa's critical minerals future, it adds, will not be secured by the volume exported, but by the value retained, institutions strengthened and prosperity shared across generations.

It remains to be seen whether Zambia and Zimbabwe will stick to their beneficiation and value addition legislation to benefit from their mineral wealth.

Failure to tread the beneficiation path will condemn both countries to the vicious cycle of shipping raw minerals to developed countries.



AI Generated



ROLE MODEL PAN AFRICAN IMPACT AWARD WINNER

PUSELETSO MPEISA

Puseletso Agnes Mpeisa is a Social Worker, human rights advocate, and researcher from Lesotho with over eight years of experience advancing youth leadership, gender equality, and democratic governance across Africa. Serving in key continental roles, including African Union Youth Ambassador for Transitional Justice, she has led community projects benefiting over 4,500 adolescent girls and young women in Lesotho and beyond. Through research, digital advocacy, and policy dialogues, Puseletso bridges grassroots realities in Southern and East Africa with continental platforms like the African Union, driving sustainable Pan-African impact in SRHR, mental health, and social justice.

ROLE MODEL PAN AFRICAN IMPACT AWARD RUNNER UP

CAROLINE K. NYAGA

Caroline Nyaga is an award-winning educator, EdTech consultant, teacher trainer and Founder and CEO of Women in STEAM Initiative, where she empowers girls and young people through STEM, digital skills, mentorship and inclusive education. Caroline has also spoken at prominent African and global forums, including the African Union, UNESCO and UNESCO-UNEVOC.





EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IMPACT AWARD WINNER

MAHA JOUINI

Maha Jouini is a Tunisian AI technologist, AI governance expert, and breast cancer survivor based in Johannesburg, South Africa. She bridges North, East, and Southern Africa through ethical AI and digital inclusion. As founder of HIKMA AI, she integrates African value systems including Ubuntu, Hikma, and Mila into global AI ethics frameworks, notably as a Module Lead for UNESCO. Following her bilateral breast cancer recovery, Maha also founded CHIFAA AI, a survivor-led platform delivering culturally grounded cancer support and advancing health equity across the continent.

THE LIST AWARDS TOP FINALISTS 2026



EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IMPACT RUNNER UP

JEFFREY KATURUZA

Jeffrey Katuruza is a Zimbabwean social entrepreneur, EdTech innovator, and Founder of RuraTech. For over five years, he has bridged the digital divide in rural Southern Africa through the RuraTech Mobile Digital Library an offline-first learning ecosystem featuring tablets, offline content servers, teacher training, and charging infrastructure. Partnering with corporate sponsors like Astron Energy and VumaTel, Jeffrey has deployed 15 mobile libraries across under-resourced schools, bringing quality digital resources, STEM content, and ICT training to over 8,000 learners and 200 educators without relying on internet connectivity.

SPECIAL HEROES

This year, we honour two women whose courage during the Lake Kariba ferry disaster demonstrated the true meaning of selflessness and humanity. Their actions remind us that heroes are not always those in the spotlight, but ordinary people who make extraordinary choices when it matters most.



TAURAI CHALIBAMBA

Taurai Chalibamba is a Zimbabwean woman and mother celebrated for her extraordinary courage and selflessness during the Lake Kariba ferry disaster on 11 August 2026. She risked her own life to rescue seven fellow passengers from the dangerous waters, demonstrating remarkable bravery despite the risks facing her own family. Her actions embody the African philosophy of Ubuntu, highlighting compassion, sacrifice and humanity. She stands as an example of extraordinary courage and selflessness.



RUMBIDZAI NGATIANE

Rumbidzai Ngatiane is remembered as a courageous passenger who demonstrated remarkable determination during the tragic Lake Kariba ferry disaster on 11 August 2026. Recognising the imminent danger as the overloaded Mbuya Nehanda ferry took on water, she urgently contacted African Parks, Tiger Bay and Bumi Hills to request rescue assistance. Despite reportedly facing criticism from some crew members, she persisted in communicating the vessel's distress until it capsized. Her actions helped alert potential rescuers, and an African Parks helicopter subsequently rescued several people. Rumbidzai Ngatiane's bravery highlights the importance of speaking up, perseverance and compassion in the face of danger.

THE NEW AFRICAN BUILDERS

By Staff Writer

What will define Africa in the coming decade is not merely the scale of its economies, but how well it can put right some of the issues that are a drag on communities. One need only look to the innovators who have come of age across the continent to see this at work — they are putting forward pragmatic answers to shortcomings in food production, transport, healthcare and other vital services. Whether it be the smart devices being used by fish farmers in Ghana or the solar-powered healthcare kiosks of rural Zimbabwe, these are builders who make an opportunity out of a problem.



BATSIRAI HATENDI

"In Zimbabwe, Batsirai Hatendi is part of a team behind Azanza Telehealth. He and his team have put together a solution for the dearth of specialist and prenatal care found in the country's rural areas.

The project puts portable ultrasound and telehealth into solar-powered medical kiosks so that local health workers can do their scans and put images before a professional for remote guidance. There are such kiosks in Nyanga, Hauna and Headlands in Manicaland. It is a model made for places where one cannot easily come by diagnostic equipment, an electrician or a doctor. There is more to it than just healthcare. In making diagnostic services available to the rural population, the approach of Azanza and others makes plain how locally adapted infrastructure and technology can overcome the geography that would otherwise stand in the way of essential services.



VIVIAN ARINAITWE
Uganda

Having been brought up in the countryside of Uganda, Vivian Arinaitwe knows only too well that when you are far from a specialist, distance can be fatal. To remedy this, she and her peers at Che Innovations made NeoNest, an inexpensive device for the monitoring and warming of vulnerable or premature newborns on the way from a rural facility to a referral hospital. On the bad roads of many rural areas, a long trip can see a newborn's body temperature fall to perilous levels. NeoNest is a practical response for a low-resource system. The Royal Academy of Engineering has made Arinaitwe a 2025 finalist for its Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation, an acknowledgement of an engineering approach to a local problem as opposed to one imported from a wealthier system.



FRANK OWUSU
Ghana

In Ghana,engineer and entrepreneur Frank Owusu identified another problem affecting livelihoods and food production .The engineer and entrepreneur saw that for a fish farmer without dependable data on the state of his pond, livelihoods and food production were at risk. His answer was AquaMet.With AquaMet he has provided a way of measuring water temperature, dissolved oxygen and pH. Should things go wrong, the farmer is alerted on his phone with a recommendation. The returns are quantifiable. The Royal Academy of Engineering says yields are up 10 to 15 percent for those using AquaMet, whereas losses of 45 percent were not uncommon. At the time of its profile by the Africa Prize, the company had a database of 1,500 fish farmers and 120 users. Owusu intends to take the business to other African markets, tackling in one stroke a commercial issue and the wider imperative of feeding a growing demand.



CAROL OFAFA
Kenya

Kenyan engineer Carol Ofafa is of a different mindset. She wants to get clean mobility out of the big cities. E-Safiri is her answer.Through E-Safari she's developing solar powered electric charging and battery swapping stations aimed at rural and peri urban communities . Any surplus from the solar power can be put to use for street lighting or cold storage.The technology is already showing measurable results . E-Safiri has won grant funding and investment and is looking at franchises, says the 2025 impact report. Ofafa does not see energy and transport as two separate concerns. Her work is indicative of where the African economy is heading renewable energy employed to underpin productive activity and small business in communities left behind by conventional infrastructure, not just to cut emissions.

These four innovators operate in different countries and sectors but the four have a story in common. The new breed of builder in Africa is one who views the realities of the continent and the problems of daily life as an opportunity for a solution rather than an impediment.

WHO GETS TO TELL AFRICA'S STORY?

By Joan Chirwa



For several decades, Africa's story has often been told through the lenses of those located far beyond the continent. From international newsrooms and documentary crews to publishing houses, film studios and global research institutions, outsiders have many times had the resources, platforms and influence to dictate which African stories are told, how they are put together and who gets to hear them.

For several decades, Africa's story has often been told through the lenses of those located far beyond the continent. From international newsrooms and documentary crews to publishing houses, film studios and global research institutions, outsiders have many times had the resources, platforms and influence to dictate which African stories are told, how they are put together and who gets to hear them.

However, the question is no longer just about whether Africans are telling their own stories. The bigger question is: who owns these platforms, controls the resources and captures the value generated by those stories?

In Africa today, journalists, filmmakers, writers, photographers, musicians and digital creators are churning out narratives that challenge stereotypes and are offering more complex representations of the continent. Yet creativity does not necessarily translate into control of the platforms used to disseminate their information.

African media remains constrained in many markets by limited advertising revenue, weak business models, political pressure and concentrated ownership. For the larger part, Independent journalists and smaller news organisations often struggle to finance ambitious reporting, while international organisations enjoy significantly greater resources to investigate and publish African stories internationally.

This is also true in the film industry. African filmmakers are increasingly producing stories for local and international audiences, while streaming platforms have created new opportunities to reach millions of viewers. But access to global distribution can come with difficult questions: Who owns the intellectual property? Who determines which projects receive funding? Who decides what audiences will see? And who ultimately profits when an African story becomes a global success?

The rise of African digital creators has additionally disrupted this equation. Thanks to social media, barriers to publishing have been lowered, allowing creators to bypass traditional gatekeepers and directly reach global audiences. For instance, a creator in Lusaka, Harare, Lagos, Nairobi or Accra can potentially reach a larger audience than a traditional newsroom in any part of the world. Yet these platforms are largely foreign-owned.

We have algorithms determining visibility. Platform policies shaping monetisation. Companies headquartered outside the continent are controlling advertising revenue. In the end, what African creators may generate is mainly enormous cultural value while remaining dependent on systems over which they have little ownership, control or influence.

This extends beyond journalism and entertainment to knowledge production. African researchers, academics and experts continue to confront global inequalities in publishing, research funding and intellectual property. Questions about who funds research, who sets the agenda, whose knowledge is considered authoritative and who receives recognition remain central to the broader struggle over narrative power. These are realities that must be acknowledged and confronted.

The issue, therefore, is not simply about representation. It is about ownership. It is about who finances the camera? Who owns the production company? Who holds the rights to the story? Who controls distribution? Who owns the data generated by audiences? And when a story travels from a local community to a global audience, who derives economic benefits from it?

Africa's growing creative and media industries present an opportunity to shift this balance. Stronger local media businesses, African-owned production companies, independent journalism, regional distribution networks, intellectual property protection and investment in creators can help move the continent from being primarily a source of stories to becoming an owner of them.

The future of Africa's narrative sovereignty will not be determined only by who holds the microphone. It will depend on who owns the microphone, who pays for the story, who controls the platform and who benefits when the world listens.

The truth is that Africa has never lacked stories. The deeper question is whether Africans will increasingly control the systems through which those stories are produced, distributed and valued by the consumers

THE LIST AWARDS 2026
PARTNERS AND TABLE HOSTS

OLDMUTUAL

ZERA
ZIMBABWE ENERGY REGULATORY AUTHORITY

STREET MAZOWE PEDIATRIC HOSPITAL

IDENTITIES with Nyari Mashayamombe

TRUSTAFRICA

TaLI
Tag a Life International

BAINES AVENUE CLINIC

IDENTITIES MEDIA HOLDINGS

NZVEDAN CRYPTO HUB

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