

WOMEN CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS NETWORK

WeCan: Women celebrate, embrace diversity



Treger Group financial director Jesman Chamisa

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THE month of March is a declared month that highlights the contributions of women to events in history and contemporary society.

For long periods women have trailed behind their male counterparts both in the workplace, as well as in the community.

However, aggressive efforts are now at full throttle to change the *status quo* and demonstrate that women can contribute meaningfully to the advancement of their communities and families.

In the same vein, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Zimbabwe (Icaz), last year launched women empowerment initiative dubbed Women Chartered Accountants Network (WeCan). It is aimed at spearheading the development of women in the chartered accounting field.

The participation of the female body in Icaz committees and council has and continues to be low. The members at the 2016 annual general meeting (AGM) resolved to have 40% female

constitution on council by 2020.

This would also be in line with the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goal 5 and the Zimbabwean Constitution aimed at the development and promotion of female talent in economic decision making processes

So this month, the *Zimbabwe Independent* will profile iconic female chartered accountants (CAs) who are leaving a footprint and huge impact in the field, as well as upcoming female CAs.

To kick start the series, this week, we profile one of the longest serving CAs and pioneer Jesman Chamisa, a financial director at Treger Group. She speaks on the opportunities presented by WeCan, which include inclusion and meaningful participation, as well as mentorship for upcoming young CAs.

Chamisa also opens up about her personal journey through a largely patriarchal and also racial community to attain her dream.

"WeCan presents an opportunity for growth professionally through participation with colleagues of the same thinking. It provides net-

working avenues for the female chartered accountant who has not been in the limelight and mentorship to the young and upcoming female chartered accountant," she says.

Grouping, according to Chamisa, boosts confidence, through sharing experiences and knowledge. But is it a reality that female CAs will participate in not only Icaz activities, but in their respective line of duty?

"It can be a reality if females move away from being back benchers. For some reason, we seem to have accepted to be 'second' to men," Chamisa said.

Chamisa explains that women often have inferiority complexes compared to their male counterparts, resulting from their upbringing (culture has disadvantaged women).

"We need to dismantle this," she says.

Challenges faced

"The girl child has always been disadvantaged. Culturally, we were treated as second class citizens who belong to the kitchen. We do not belong there. Times are changing yes, but at a very slow pace. You stand up for yourself."

She also said opportunities for training are still limited and need to be addressed.

"We go for 'national service' (maternity) for those who want families, which is considered disruptive. If you are young and compete for the same job with a man, employers will prefer the man, whose tenure is deemed undisruptable," Chamisa said.

How did she counter this as a mother?

"But pregnancy is a condition, not an illness. To survive this I did succession planning. I trained the teams adequately to enable me to go for three months leave with no disruptions on the work front," she said.

Speaking on female bosses, Chamisa urged other women to rally behind them and be supportive of senior female bosses.

Chamisa's career path

- First born in a family of seven (three boys, four girls);

- Grew up in Mutasa District, Mutare;

- Did primary schooling at St Matthias School, Tsonzo, then proceeded to St David's Girls High School, Bonda, for form one to six. "However there was a disruption in 1977 when the school was temporarily closed and I went to Hartzell High School to sit 'O' levels. From Bonda I enrolled for an accountancy degree programme at the University of Zimbabwe in 1980.;"

- After university Chamisa did articles with Ernst and Young and qualified as a chartered accountant and entered the private sector from 1987;

- Graduated in 2000 with a Master's Degree in Business Leadership from Unisa;

- Married to Rodgers and have five children.

Her journey was both interesting and challenging.

"First from my neighbourhood and extended family, no one believed in educating the girl child. My mother was my pillar. She believed in equal opportunities and fought for me," she recalls.

To register for the accountancy degree was a nightmare. The principal had refused to sign the forms for onwards dispatch to the University of Zimbabwe. Why? Because, according to him, it was impossible to pass the accountancy degree those days.

"What with my 'A' Level combination of Shona, Geography and Literature in English, I would never pass accounts. My form teacher Solomon Mahaka, argued for me and was finally given the signed forms. Through focus and hard work, I finished the degree in three years, with no 'repeat subject' or supplementary examination," she says.

"And here I am today, a mature chartered accountant. I owe all this to my late mother Blandina Maimbo, who fought for me, believed in me, and inspired me to believe in myself and in God noted in Phillipians 4 vs 13 that I can do everything through him."

But away from work and meetings?

"I am an Anglican and am the current enrolling member (chairlady) of the Mothers' Union at our parish. I participate in parish activities. I enjoy long walks, easy reading and a bit of farming."

As part of her plans, Chamisa wants to continue farming and do consultancy.

Parting shot to young upcoming female chartered accountants?

"We can. If I could do it so can you. Just focus on what you want and go for it. The sky is the limit!"



ZIMBABWE

JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION

(Striving Towards World Class Justice)

AUCTIONEERS

Applications are invited from Auctioneers who wish to provide auctioneering services on behalf of the Sheriff of Zimbabwe for the sale of movable property in the following provinces:

1. Bulawayo
2. Gweru
3. Masvingo
4. Bindura
5. Chinhoyi
6. Mutare

QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS AND COMPETENCES.

The applicants must possess the following minimum attributes:

- Must be a registered company;
- Must have been in practice as an auctioneer for a period of at least two (2) years;
- Must have appropriate storage facilities;
- Must be operating from their own or from premises where they have a tenure of at least twelve (12) months and ;
- Must be insured to a minimum value of \$50.000.00 against damage of goods.
- Preference is being given to local companies.

HOW TO APPLY

Interested applicants must submit their applications together with the relevant supporting documents by not later than **16 March 2018 to The Sheriff of Zimbabwe, Mapondera Building, Samora Machel Avenue, Harare.**

Those who responded to the earlier advertisement relating to Bindura, Marondera and Chinhoyi must re-submit their applications if they are still interested.