

# Women, Gender & Society

SCHOOL-BASED PROJECT · ABANTU ARCHIVES INTEGRATION · 14 CURATED SOURCES

**SBP problem statement:** *How were women's lives documented, controlled and advocated for across the colonial and post-colonial divide — and what continuities link customary law, colonial labour patterns and post-independence gender policy?*

*A note on how this pack was built:* unlike the other packs in this series, no curated source list existed for this topic before this revision — earlier drafts described a 14-source pack but never actually contained one. Every source below was located and verified directly against the Abantu Archives master catalogue for this revision.

## 1. Curriculum overview & learning objectives

**Syllabus alignment:** ZIMSEC Heritage Studies (Forms 1–4), with O/A-Level source-evaluation extension.

**Core learning outcomes:**

- Trace how colonial ethnography, custom and law positioned women within family and inheritance structures.
- Compare labour and economic studies of women across the colonial/post-colonial divide.
- Evaluate how organised women's advocacy changed in form and aim, from colonial-era professional bodies to post-independence policy.
- Distinguish description (what a source records) from advocacy (what a source argues for).

## 2. Differentiated resource tracks

| Track                         | Core materials / access & execution                                                                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Local (rural / low-bandwidth) | Printed pack, notebook, wall-chart paper. Teacher-led comparison and local interviews where appropriate.  |
| Diaspora (digital / global)   | Digital catalogue, scans and legal/policy document databases. Digital source analysis and portfolio work. |

## 3. Curated sources (chronological)

### Source 1: Peasants, Traders & Wives: Shona women in the history of Zimbabwe 1870–1939 (1996)

ACCESSION: AA-ARC-0031 | TYPE: Academic history | AUTHOR: Elizabeth Schmidt

*An orienting academic synthesis tracing Shona women's changing economic and social roles across the early colonial period — the reference point for every source that follows.*

Schmidt, Elizabeth. 1996. *Peasants, Traders & Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870–1939*. Abantu Archives, accession AA-ARC-0031.

#### STUDENT ACTIVITY

Identify one way Schmidt describes colonial rule changing women's economic role.

#### CRITICAL QUESTION

How does a scholarly synthesis differ in reliability and purpose from the colonial-era primary sources later in this pack?

## Source 2: The Mashona: The Indigenous Natives of S. Rhodesia (1927)

ACCESSION: AA-WEB-0048 | TYPE: Colonial ethnography | AUTHOR: Charles Bullock, Native Commissioner and Examiner in Native Customs and Administration

*Part II of Bullock's survey covers birth, marriage, death and succession in detail — a colonial administrator's own record of the customary structures this pack goes on to trace forward in time.*

Bullock, Charles. 1927. *The Mashona: The Indigenous Natives of S. Rhodesia*. Juta & Co., Ltd., Cape Town & Johannesburg. Abantu Archives, accession AA-WEB-0048.

### STUDENT ACTIVITY

Identify what Bullock records about marriage customs and the legal interaction between Native and European law.

### CRITICAL QUESTION

Whose voice is missing from an official's account of women's customary roles?

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## Source 3: Rhodesian Tapestry: A History in Needlework Embroidered by Women's Institutes of Rhodesia (1971)

ACCESSION: AA-BK-0065 | TYPE: Cultural artefact record | AUTHOR: Oliver Ransford

*A settler women's organisation telling Rhodesian history through needlework — useful evidence of how colonial-era women's associations produced and controlled their own historical narrative.*

Ransford, Oliver. 1971. *Rhodesian Tapestry: A History in Needlework Embroidered by Women's Institutes of Rhodesia*. Books of Rhodesia Publishing Co. (Pvt) Ltd., Bulawayo. Abantu Archives, accession AA-BK-0065.

### STUDENT ACTIVITY

Identify one historical scene the Women's Institutes chose to depict.

### CRITICAL QUESTION

What does the choice of scenes reveal about whose history a settler women's organisation wanted told?

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## Source 4: Lobola — the Pros and Cons (1982)

ACCESSION: AA-BK-0044 | TYPE: Cultural commentary | AUTHOR: Aeneas Chigwedere

*A post-independence Zimbabwean historian's direct engagement with lobola (bride price) — a custom Bullock (Source 2) recorded from the outside, argued over here from within.*

Chigwedere, Aeneas. 1982. *Lobola — the Pros and Cons*. Books ForAfrica, Harare. Abantu Archives, accession AA-BK-0044.

### STUDENT ACTIVITY

List one argument for and one argument against lobola as Chigwedere presents them.

### CRITICAL QUESTION

How does an argued cultural commentary differ in purpose from an ethnographic record like Source 2?

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## Source 5: Inheritance in Zimbabwe: Law, Custom and Practices (1996)

ACCESSION: AA-BK-0036 | TYPE: Legal/policy study | PUBLISHER: Sapes Books

*Examines how customary and statutory inheritance law affected women, particularly widows — direct evidence of the material consequences of the customary structures traced through this pack.*

Sapes Books. 1996. *Inheritance in Zimbabwe: Law, Custom and Practices*. Sapes Books, Mount Pleasant, Harare. Abantu Archives, accession AA-BK-0036.

### STUDENT ACTIVITY

Identify one way customary and statutory inheritance law could conflict.

### CRITICAL QUESTION

Why might inheritance law be one of the clearest places to see a custom's real-world consequences for women?

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## Source 6: Women's Studies 2: A Guide On Family Laws In Zimbabwe (1990)

ACCESSION: AA-WEB-0079 | TYPE: Legal guide | AUTHOR: Mary Tandon

*A practical legal guide aimed directly at women navigating family law — advocacy through information, rather than through policy or protest.*

Tandon, Mary. 1990. *Women's Studies 2: A Guide On Family Laws In Zimbabwe*. Nehanda Publishers, Harare. Abantu Archives, accession AA-WEB-0079.

### STUDENT ACTIVITY

Identify one area of family law the guide explains for a general reader.

### CRITICAL QUESTION

Why might a plain-language legal guide be as historically significant as a piece of legislation itself?

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### Source 7: African Women in Urban Employment: Factors Influencing Their Employment in Zimbabwe (1979)

ACCESSION: AA-REP-0129 | TYPE: Social-science research report | AUTHOR: Joan May, Research Fellow, Centre for Inter-Racial Studies, University of Rhodesia

*A late-colonial academic study of Black women's access to urban employment — read against Source 8's study of the domestic-labour sector most urban Black women were actually confined to.*

May, Joan. 1979. *African Women in Urban Employment: Factors Influencing Their Employment in Zimbabwe*. Mambo Occasional Papers, Socio-Economic Series No. 12. Mambo Press. Abantu Archives, accession AA-REP-0129.

#### STUDENT ACTIVITY

Identify one factor the study finds limits African women's access to urban employment.

#### CRITICAL QUESTION

How does this study's framing of “factors” differ from a source that centred women's own accounts of their work?

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### Source 8: Domestic Workers in Rhodesia: The Economics of Masters and Servants (1974)

ACCESSION: AA-BK-0218 | TYPE: Socio-economic study | AUTHOR: Duncan G. Clarke

*Examines the economic relationship between employers and domestic workers — the sector where colonial-era Black women's urban labour was most concentrated (compare Source 7).*

Clarke, Duncan G. 1974. *Domestic Workers in Rhodesia: The Economics of Masters and Servants*. Mambo Press, Gwelo. Abantu Archives, accession AA-BK-0218.

#### STUDENT ACTIVITY

Identify one economic relationship Clarke describes between employer and domestic worker.

#### CRITICAL QUESTION

Why is domestic labour often less visible in economic histories than factory or mine labour?

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### Source 9: Profiles of Rhodesia's Women (1976)

ACCESSION: AA-WEB-0088 | TYPE: Advocacy/commemorative profile | PUBLISHER: National Federation of Business and Professional Women of Rhodesia

*Published to mark International Women's Year 1975 by a settler-era professional women's federation — organised advocacy presenting its own chosen exemplars, distinct from academic or legal sources.*

National Federation of Business and Professional Women of Rhodesia. 1976. *Profiles of Rhodesia's Women*. Abantu Archives, accession AA-WEB-0088.

#### STUDENT ACTIVITY

Identify what kind of women the Federation chose to profile.

#### CRITICAL QUESTION

Whose experience of womanhood in Rhodesia does a professional women's federation's own publication leave out?

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### Source 10: Zimbabwean Women in Contemporary Culture — 1992 Diary-Notebook (1992)

ACCESSION: AA-WEB-0235 | TYPE: Post-independence cultural directory | PUBLISHER: Zimbabwean Women in Contemporary Culture Trust (ZWICCT)

*A directory of 54 (of 200+ registered) women cultural workers compiled by a trust founded in 1991 — shows organised, internationally-funded women's advocacy taking a new institutional form after independence.*

Zimbabwean Women in Contemporary Culture Trust. 1992. *Zimbabwean Women in Contemporary Culture — 1992 Diary-Notebook*. ZWICCT, Harare. Abantu Archives, accession AA-WEB-0235.

#### STUDENT ACTIVITY

Identify one field of cultural work represented among the women profiled.

#### CRITICAL QUESTION

Compare the organisation behind this source with the Federation in Source 9. What changed about how women organised to advocate for themselves?

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### Source 11: Women in Sport (1995)

ACCESSION: AA-PAP-0023 | TYPE: Concept paper | AUTHOR: Kgogo Mudenge

*A concept paper on women's participation in sport across Central Africa — broadens the pack beyond labour and law into a less-obvious arena of gendered access.*

Mudenge, Kgogo. 1995. *Women in Sport*. Nango. Abantu Archives, accession AA-PAP-0023.

#### STUDENT ACTIVITY

Identify one barrier to women's sport participation the paper raises.

#### CRITICAL QUESTION

Why might sport be a useful, less-studied lens on gender equality alongside law and employment?

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### Source 12: The National Gender Policy (1998)

ACCESSION: AA-REP-0091 | TYPE: Government policy document | PUBLISHER: Gender Department, Ministry of Youth Development, Gender & Employment Creation

*Zimbabwe's own post-independence state policy on gender — the direct institutional descendant of the advocacy traced through Sources 9 and 10, now speaking as government rather than as a voluntary body.*

Gender Department, Ministry of Youth Development, Gender & Employment Creation. 1998. *The National Gender Policy*. Government of Zimbabwe. Abantu Archives, accession AA-REP-0091.

#### STUDENT ACTIVITY

Identify one stated goal of the policy.

#### CRITICAL QUESTION

What changes, and what stays the same, when women's advocacy becomes state policy?

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### Source 13: An Investigation Into the Continuing Under-Representation of Women At Top Management in Rushinga District Education Region (2001)

ACCESSION: AA-REP-0012 | TYPE: Academic thesis | AUTHOR: Zimbabwe Open University, Educational Administration, Planning & Policy Studies

*A post-independence academic study finding persistent under-representation of women in education management — direct evidence that policy (Source 12) and lived outcome are not the same thing.*

Zimbabwe Open University. 2001. *An Investigation Into the Continuing Under-Representation of Women At Top Management in Rushinga District Education Region*. Abantu Archives, accession AA-REP-0012.

#### STUDENT ACTIVITY

Identify one explanation the study offers for women's continued under-representation.

#### CRITICAL QUESTION

Read Sources 12 and 13 together. What does the gap between them tell you about how to evaluate a policy document as a historical source?

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### Source 14: National Women's Economic Development Plan (2010)

ACCESSION: AA-REP-0055 | TYPE: Government policy document | PUBLISHER: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. T. Khupe

*A later state economic-empowerment plan for women, closing this pack's arc from colonial custom, through mid-century labour studies and voluntary advocacy, to twenty-first-century state economic policy.*

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. T. Khupe. 2010. *National Women's Economic Development Plan*. Government of Zimbabwe. Abantu Archives, accession AA-REP-0055.

#### STUDENT ACTIVITY

Identify one economic sector the plan targets for women's development.

#### CRITICAL QUESTION

Trace the whole pack from Source 1 to here. What continuities do you see between colonial-era labour patterns (Sources 7–8) and this plan's priorities?

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## 4. Differentiated project deliverables

### Track A — Timeline & report

Build a timeline (1870s–2010) marking each source by type: colonial record, custom/law, labour study, advocacy, state policy.

*Requirement: write a report citing one colonial-era source (Source 2, 3, or 8), one advocacy source (Source 9 or 10), and one policy source (Source 12 or 14).*

**Track B — Digital source-comparison portfolio**

Build a digital portfolio comparing how women are described versus how women advocate for themselves across at least 5 sources.

*Requirement: submit an analytical report citing at least 5 sources across different types (colonial record, custom/law, labour, advocacy, policy).*

**Adult learner & diaspora extension — continuity essay**

Write a 600-word essay tracing one theme (marriage and inheritance, or women's labour, or organised advocacy) from its earliest source in this pack to its latest, identifying what genuinely changed and what persisted across the colonial/post-colonial divide.

**5. Source criticism protocol**

Students should identify the author/institution, date, intended audience, purpose, and what the source leaves out. Do not treat later histories, reprints, cataloguing profiles or retrospective studies as eyewitness evidence merely because they discuss an earlier event.

**6. Catalogue accessions used**

|             |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| AA-ARC-0031 | AA-WEB-0048 | AA-BK-0065  |
| AA-BK-0044  | AA-BK-0036  | AA-WEB-0079 |
| AA-REP-0129 | AA-BK-0218  | AA-WEB-0088 |
| AA-WEB-0235 | AA-PAP-0023 | AA-REP-0091 |
| AA-REP-0012 | AA-REP-0055 |             |

*Editorial note: Catalogue descriptions are finding-aid information. Teachers and researchers should consult the actual item where possible and distinguish the catalogue record from the historical source itself.*