



TRAINING REPORT

Service Provisions in Hospitality and Gastronomic Establishments

Harare, Zimbabwe | 23rd September 2026

21 PARTICIPANTS	6 CORE MODULES	Harare ZIMBABWE
---------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 23rd September 2026, Smiling Faces International Ltd (SFI), in partnership with the African Regional Standards Organisation (ARSO) and Afreximbank, successfully delivered the Service Excellence Standard Training in Harare, Zimbabwe. The session was facilitated by Mr. Ayub Kato, Managing Partner at SFI, drawing on more than 20 years of senior hospitality management experience across Africa and the United States.

A total of 21 participants attended the workshop, including hospitality professionals, restaurant operators, hotel managers, and F&B supervisors from across Zimbabwe. The training was highly interactive, combining structured module delivery with live case scenarios, role-play exercises, and open Q&A discussions. Participants consistently described the session as engaging, practical, and relevant to their day-to-day operational realities.

2. EVENT DETAILS

Date	23rd September 2026
Location	Harare, Zimbabwe
Facilitator	Mr. Ayub Kato, Managing Partner — Smiling Faces International Ltd (SFI)
Partners	ARSO (African Regional Standards Organisation) & Afreximbank
Attendees	21 Registered Participants
Training Focus	Service Excellence Standard Curriculum

3. TRAINING MODULES COVERED

The curriculum was structured across the following six core modules:

Module 1: Foundations of Service Excellence

The module introduced the philosophy of 'Hire for Attitude, Train for Skill.' Participants explored the essentials of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), brand standards (including telephone, greeting, and uniform protocols), and Emotional Intelligence as a core competency for guest-facing roles. Interactive discussions on communication techniques and body language were particularly well received.

Module 2: Front Office & Guest Relations

This module examined Reservation & Arrival Management, Proactive Sales and Yield Management techniques, and the full Guest Journey from pre-arrival to post-departure. Participants practised the Telephone Call Shopping Checklist through live role-play. The session on Complaint Handling and the S.T.A.R.S Recovery Protocol generated robust group discussion, with participants sharing real-life situations from their own properties.

Module 3: Housekeeping & Facility Management

The module introduced the Zero Defect Room Inspection framework, organised through a five-zone flow: Entrance & Closet, Bathroom, Bedroom, Windows & Balcony, and Safety. Linen and inventory management practices, together with Maintenance Defect Service Level Agreements (SLAs), were covered with a focus on practical, executable standards applicable in the Zimbabwean context.

Module 4: Gastronomy & F&B Service Excellence

This in-depth module covered the diversity of gastronomic establishment types across Africa, the Escoffier Kitchen Brigade system, and the 10 Touchpoints of Order of Service. Food safety received significant attention, including HACCP principles, the Temperature Danger Zone (4.5°C to 60°C), FIFO stock rotation, and minimum internal cooking temperatures for common proteins. F&B emergency contingency planning concluded the module.

Module 5: Management, Leadership & Quality Assurance

The module explored the role of the Manager on Duty (MOD), MICE event management requirements, and the Mystery Shopping & Quality Audit framework. It concluded with the S.T.A.R.S (Strength, Talent, Attitude, Resolution, Success) Aspirations of Greatness Framework - a leadership model that was warmly received and prompted strong participant reflection and discussion.

Module 6: Modern ARSO Standards & Compliance

The module addressed three pillars of modern hospitality compliance: Sustainability & Eco-Tourism (bulk dispensers, local sourcing, and linen re-use programmes); Technology & Data Privacy (review management and data protection); and Accessibility & Inclusion (serving guests with visual impairments, dietary inclusivity, and physical accessibility standards).

4. PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK & RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants engaged enthusiastically throughout the day and reported finding the training both valuable and immediately applicable to their work. At the close of the session, attendees collectively put forward the following five key recommendations:

- 1. Subsidised HACCP Training:** Participants strongly recommended that the cost of HACCP certification training be subsidised and made accessible to all hospitality and gastronomic establishments, not only larger properties with significant training budgets.
- 2. Mandatory Hospitality & Quality Audits:** It was recommended that governments, industry associations, and bodies such as ARSO implement regular, structured Mystery Shopping and Call Shopping audits to support ongoing improvements in service excellence across the sector.
- 3. ARSO-Supported Training for Establishment Owners:** Participants called on ARSO to extend its reach by sponsoring and facilitating similar training programmes specifically for owners and directors of hospitality and gastronomic establishments, helping to ensure that standards are maintained from the top down.
- 4. Advocacy for Minimum Wages & Staff Benefits:** Participants recommended that governments and international bodies such as ARSO champion the establishment of minimum wages and adequate staff benefits across the hospitality and gastronomic sectors in Africa, recognising the relationship between staff welfare and service quality.
- 5. Inclusive Training for All Skill Levels:** Participants recommended that future training programmes cater to both skilled and unskilled hospitality workers, ensuring that the principles of service excellence are accessible throughout each establishment and are not limited to management.

5. EVENT HIGHLIGHTS & OVERALL ATMOSPHERE

The Harare training event was exceptionally well organised from start to finish. The event coordinators created a welcoming and professional environment that set a positive tone for the day. Participants arrived at a well-prepared venue, and logistics were managed smoothly throughout the session.

Catering was a standout feature of the day. Meals were of excellent quality and received warm praise from participants. Well-timed refreshment breaks helped maintain the positive energy in the room while giving attendees time to network and reflect on the content covered.

Mr. Kato structured the day to maximise participant interaction by dividing attendees into small working groups at various points during the training. These exercises encouraged peer learning, constructive debate, and the sharing of real-world experiences from different establishments. Participants consistently described the training as highly engaging, practical, and among the most interactive industry sessions they had attended.

The overall atmosphere reflected enthusiasm and a genuine commitment to raising standards across the sector. Participation was particularly strong during the S.T.A.R.S leadership session and the role-play exercises, with attendees actively volunteering to take part and share insights with the group.

6. PHOTOS FROM THE SESSION



Participants engaging in interactive role-play scenarios



Practical demonstrations during the session



Group photo — 21 participants at end of the session



Participants networking and engaging during group exercises

7. CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

The Zimbabwe training was highly successful. Participants left with actionable knowledge, practical tools, and a renewed commitment to elevating service standards at their respective establishments. The quality of the recommendations generated by the group also reflects strong demand for structured, world-class hospitality training across the African continent.

Building on this strong foundation, the ARSO Service Excellence training series continues with the following upcoming session:

- **Accra, Ghana - 7th October 2026**

The success of the Harare session - from the quality of the facilitation to the enthusiasm of the participants and the excellent organisation by the event team - establishes a strong benchmark for the concluding session in Ghana.