



THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Issue 1 of 2021

Accelerating Human Centered Development Responses in the Context of COVID-19

From the Director's Desk

It is our pleasure to launch **The Human Development News**, a quarterly newsletter you can look forward to keeping you, the reader, up to date with the work of the Civic Forum on Human Development (CFHD). Some of you may know us well, and some of you may have only heard of us. For those of you who work with us regularly, thank you for your support and all the great work you do. For those of you who are getting to know us, we are a human-centred development organization working to ensure inclusive, just and resilient communities where local institutions are empowered to drive their own development.

With over 25 years in the development sector, we have a lot to share as we continue to make some intentional changes in how we connect with our beneficiaries and stakeholders. The most obvious is the sharing of this newsletter with you. Enjoy this brief as we share with you some of the work we have been doing ranging from our contributions in reducing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening community participation in local governance planning, budgeting and social accountability at the local level as well as distribution of self-help garden inputs. Enjoy and see you in the next bulletin.

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Constitutional Awareness Raising Workshops

increase and recreational spaces are being allocated to individuals for residential stands. People are being allocated illegal stands by land barons leading to the demolition of houses and flea markets. Early June 2021, families were left homeless after building their houses near the roads. Some of the residents in ward 1, Chiredzi were allocated un-serviced stands on wetland.

- CFHD conducted Constitutional Awareness Raising Workshops targeting four regions of Zimbabwe namely Mashonaland West, Mashonaland East, Midlands and Mashonaland North Provinces. The activities were largely driven by the need to strengthen constitutional awareness around thematic pillars that were identified by communities themselves in each of the project operational sites. CFHD collaborated with its network of Community Based Originations in facilitating the awareness raising and learning platforms from the grassroots to the regional level. It is pleasing to note that established and emerging networks in communities successfully managed to go through the constitutional awareness raising training process and develop action plans.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE TRAININGS

- WOMEN:** Significant increase in women participation was noted throughout all provinces. Issues coming out revealed gender inequalities such as limited access for women participation in production, community management activities and political representation.
- CHILD RIGHTS:** Child abuse among teenagers has increased sharply especially those with mothers that are into commercial sex work. The responsible referral pathways have been less effective in dealing with cases of child abuse and child marriages. In addition, white garment churches within the community are denying children their rights to education and health due to religious beliefs.
- LAND AND HOUSING:** Land issues remain a cause of conflict in Harare and Chilonga area in Chiredzi. It is alleged that the local authority staff is robbing desperate home seekers as they are working in cahoots with the land barons. Corruption in the issuing of land is on an

- DRUG ABUSE:** Drug abuse has been reported as a cause of concern among youths in Epworth. The situation has been worsened by high rate of unemployment and idleness in the wake of COVID-19 induced lockdown restrictions.

- DISABILITY:** Epworth district has a number of people with disabilities and due to myths within the community, this group is facing challenges of discrimination. Charity organizations in Epworth need to be sensitive to the needs and priorities of people with disabilities. There is need for more work in promoting disability inclusion in Epworth and other peri-urban areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Referral pathways need to be strengthened to ensure cases are resolved.
- There is need for training Community Case Workers (CCW) on human dignity violation cases management.
- Religious leaders need to be incorporated in the awareness training workshops.
- There is need for ICT pamphlets on land and housing, women and child rights, as well as disability inclusion.





Community-Based Planning Process

The CFHD has been using the Community-Based Planning (CBP) approach for over 20 years in rural, peri-urban and urban areas to promote participatory human centred development. Its main focal areas have been facilitating local institutional development, dialogue, responsive capacity building and participatory policy development. In all our work, the use of CBP, Training for Transformation and Social Accountability approaches has resulted in shared impacts and results at community, district, provincial and national level.

CFHD and its partners facilitated the CBP Process across 4 districts and a total of 102 ward plans were developed during the process. The districts facilitated are Chikomba (30 wards), Goromonzi (25 wards), Murewa (30 wards) and Mbire (17 wards).

Major Highlights are:

- Gaps in communication of district strategic plans to all citizens so that RDC and stakeholders playing a part in the implementation process can be held accountable.
- The need for the RDC and its strategic partners (government sector agencies, NGOs and other actors) to map out all key stakeholders on the supply and demand side to develop an integrated service delivery action plan
- At local authority level, services need to be facilitated, provided and promoted effectively. Moreover, service providers need to be responsive and held accountable for delivery, or lack thereof, of services.
- The local government structures (ward development committees and village development committees) should be effectively functional and be involved in all planning processes.

CFHD COVID-19 RESPONSE

The CFHD received funding for emergency response to COVID-19 for a project titled **Strengthening Human Rights Monitoring, Protection and Support for Communities Affected by COVID-19 in Zimbabwe**. The project goal was to ensure increased protection, preparedness and response to impacts of COVID-19 at community level. This project also managed to foster a working relationship with the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC) through its Department of Epidemiology Disease Control. Over 800 Volunteer Health Workers were trained on the COVID-19 response. The project also procured and distributed 480*20L tapped buckets, 1800*1kg bars of soap, 560*500ml alcohol-based sanitisers, 300 face shields, 560 fabric face masks and 50 boxes of 50 surgical face masks. The PPE materials were distributed evenly to 18 rural district councils across the country.

CFHD managed to facilitate the development and printing of 1200 pamphlets on COVID-19 awareness.

The pamphlets were distributed through the MoHCC during distribution of other PPE materials that were handed over to the Ministry by various organizations. The pamphlets were to ensure that there is continuous awareness about the pandemic and they were produced in Shona and English languages.

Also, the CFHD managed to partner with two local popular comedians for production of skits for education through entertainment on COVID-19. The skits were disseminated through social media platforms that are Facebook, YouTube and network groups on WhatsApp. CFHD also managed to produce a series of podcasts on various topical issues with regards to COVID-19. The most popular podcasts were on community preparedness in responding to such a pandemic, the need to take action against GBV and also the importance of the role of indigenous knowledge in tackling the devastating virus.



Councillors Training



The Civic Forum on Human Development (CFHD) implemented a project titled: **“Zimbabwe Councillors Capacity Development Programme” (ZCCDP)**. The project was implemented in Mashonaland East, West and Central Provinces of Zimbabwe with funding support from Konrad Adeneur-Stiftung (KAS). The programme reached out to eleven (11) districts, reaching out to 260 councillors.

Intensive three-day training workshops were conducted in each district. These workshops were conducted using a participatory local governance and social accountability development framework and addressed the following key issues: Participatory Local Governance & Role of Councillors; Participatory Strategic Planning and Inclusive Resource Allocation; Participatory Expenditure Monitoring and Citizen

Feedback Mechanisms; Performance Management and Citizen Voices; Public Integrity Management Systems for Council; Councillors and Key Stakeholders and Citizen Monitoring Systems; Oversight Role of Councillors; Feedback Mechanisms with Communities; Team Building ;Conflict Transformation; and Energy and Climate Change Adaptation.

The training program was such a welcome development in all the districts as it addressed the expressed capacity development needs of elected councillors. It was noted that the training was a useful complement to the inauguration training received upon coming into office and covered community responsibility demands for councillors. CFHD will continue working with KAS to cover the other parts of the country with similar training workshops.

Local Resilience Support Programme (LRSP)

CFHD handed over 213 agricultural inputs which included a hoe, a rack, a shovel, a garden fork, a seed pack and 2kg fertilizer to Mbire Rural District to distribute to identified beneficiaries. The kits were targeted at benefiting migration returnees in Mbire District after the district was identified as the most vulnerable district with the most returnees from Zambia, Botswana and Mozambique due to the effects

of the COVID-19 pandemic. The agricultural inputs were handed over to Mbire Rural District Council and for distribution accordingly to the beneficiaries by the rural district of Mbire. The rural district officials were also empowered to oversee the distribution of the agricultural inputs and to ensure that these inputs were distributed directly to the beneficiaries.





International Women's Day Commemorations

The 8th of March each year is International Women's Day. The CFHD commemorated this year's International Women's Day on Tuesday, March 16th under the theme *"Amplifying Women and Girls' Voices and Leadership Capacity for Enhanced Social Accountability"*. The organization supported a Road Show and Learning Platform at community level in Guruve, working with Lower Guruve Development Association (LGDA). This learning platform was facilitated by the CFHD's Centre for Women and Girls Support Network (WGSN) in Zimbabwe which promotes evidence-based learning and responsive support services to affected community members and citizens.

The learning platform was an opportunity to reflect on success stories, milestones and challenges faced by women and girls in accessing leadership roles and the realization of their human rights space in the development agenda. CBOS, local government and other relevant stakeholder were also invited to share their views on women participation in development. Rural women in Mashonaland Central Province are now participating in influential position starting from the Village Development Committee, Ward Development Committee, School District Committees and provincial leadership positions which was evidenced by the representatives from all invited stakeholders who were mainly women.

Through CFHD and LGDA, women are now the focal persons spearheading women empowerment issues, raising awareness on gender-based violence and referring GBV cases to local referral institutions. The women-led CBOs are also conducting human rights awareness programmes within schools and educating children on human rights issues and the existing referral pathways in place within the province.

The event was well attended by women and girls from all walks of life who were able to freely share their experiences and views. Major take-aways from the event included:

- The teaching of little children on GBV and human rights issues was pivotal in changing the societal

beliefs as young girls now have big dreams and look forward to having promising careers.

- The presence of more women in the delegation tent and representation from the office of the Provincial District Coordinator, police, health and education was encouraging to see as more women are now taking up leadership roles in society which was emulated by the little girls present
- There was inclusion of all vulnerable groups in society including those living with disabilities, the pregnant mothers as well as all age groups that were invited to attend the commemorations

Main issues that were raised were as follows:

- Lack of confidentiality when one goes to report a rape or child abuse case at police stations discouraged victims from following up on their cases.
- Fear of victimization of family members by family and the community at large
- Local leaders were sighted as some of the perpetrators or aides in child marriages
- Women and children in some areas were still forced to provide labour for the fields and this led to some children missing school during the farming season. But when it was time to collect the money from the harvest, they were left out and even on how to use that money they were not involved.
- There were several cases when victims changed their story once the issue had gone to law enforcers. This made it difficult to arrest perpetrators for lack of witness or evidence

Recommendations

- Community Case Workers (CCW) need training on GBV and work ethics as there is now less confidentiality to GBV issues
- There is need to come up with GBV DATs that ensure that all the reported cases are attended to and reported to relevant institutions.
- Chiefs and Headman who were involved in child marriages need to be brought to justice.



International Women's Day Commemorations

Children from the Catch Them Young Initiative acted out a play on the dreams they have as children. This is an initiative that emerged from the Spotlight Project where children from as young as three years old are trained and taught on abuse and the response mechanisms they should have. The LGDA also handed over bicycles to gender champion focal persons for each ward to ease their movement when attending to human rights cases. Some of these scenes from the day are shown below:

