

Zimbabwe Parents of Handicapped Children Association

(ZPHCA)

Progress Report the First Trench 2017

For

Headway Africa

Prepared by: ZPHCA

1. Executive Summary

ZPHCA with Financial Support from Headway Africa Implemented the Project entitled Make Voices Head which was aimed at strengthening the status of persons living with disabilities in Zimbabwe, raise awareness on the rights of persons living with disabilities (UNCPD) and to capacitate persons living with disabilities to make their voices heard. During the period, ZPHCA was involved in Membership Planning Meetings, Support Group Leadership Training and Developmental Needs Mapping and hosting Quarterly Board Meeting. The major success achieved during the Implementation period was the ability of ZPHCA to engage with parents of children living with disability and their disabled children laying the road map for the new Project Implementation Phase. The major lesson learnt was that persons living with disabilities, if given the right platform can identify their unique training and developmental needs. The major challenge remain the fact that children living with disability and their parents requires on going leadership training in order to make their local to national advocacy efforts more effective however resources are limited hence some trainings will target the leadership who will be mandated to train their support groups from time to time.

2.0 Planning Meeting

On the 5th of May 2017, ZPHCA hosted the Members Planning Meeting at Mbare Support Group, Harare. The Planning Meeting was attended by more than 300 members from our 23 Support Groups from Harare, Chitungwiza, Epworth and Domboshawa. At the Meeting, mothers, fathers, young adults living with disability and children living with disability were in attendance. The meeting managed to highlight the historical background of the Make Voices Head Projects, its aims and objectives, success achieved to date, lessons learnt and challenges faced. With such a rich foundation the members then deliberated on the future of the project agreeing on the areas of priorities, activities to be implemented, time frames and methodologies. The meeting managed to set the following priorities for the current running project phase:

- a. Strengthening Children Living with Disability Advocacy and Lobby Activism Programs at community level and targeting Local Authorities, Government departments and line Ministries.
- b. Stakeholders Engagement and Dialoguing on Persons Living with Disabilities Rights Fulfillment
- c. Strengthening Leadership and Governance Training for Support Group Leadership, Management and the Board.
- d. Strengthen and empower the current running Support Groups to ensure ongoing grassroots advocacy campaigns.
- e. Expand Persons Living with Disabilities Community Awareness Campaigns in Urban, Peri urban and Rural Communities in current areas of operation.

3.0 Support Group Mapping

During the implementation phase, ZPHCA conducted Support Group Visits with the aim being to assess their progress since the previous phase of the project, noting current challenges and most importantly consult the membership on the prioritized training and development needs of their leaders. The Support Group Mapping proved that the 23 Support Groups are effectively running although most of them have been negatively affected by the economic challenges currently affecting Zimbabwe. During the Support Group Visits and membership consultation it was noted that currently persons living with disabilities are affected by a myriad of challenges including:

- a. Food Insecurity and severe in most families
- b. Persons Living with Disability are failing to access quality and quantity Medical Services since most of such families are living in severe poverty

- c. Children Living with Disabilities are dropping out of school due to expensive school fees and general reluctance of communities to invest in children living with disabilities
- d. The Government through the Department of Social Services has once again failed to offer Social Services grants and assistance to the persons living with disability.

On a positive note, Support Group Members once again pointed out that the training programs they have received in the previous phases of the Forum Syd Funded Project have helped them through psychological healing, negotiating skills, grassroots advocacy skills and community facilitation on the rights of persons living with disabilities. In order for ZPHCA, to increase the effectiveness and impact of the current running project, support group members identified the following areas as key training and developmental areas that need to be prioritized using the Study Circles Concept:

- a. Grassroots Advocacy Trainings (Marches/Protest)
- b. Community Facilitation on Persons Living with Disability Rights (Community Awareness Campaigns)
- c. Land and Property Rights Facilitation
- d. Establishment of Watch Dog Committees (Whistle Blowers).

The Community Mapping Exercise managed to identify key stakeholders and networking partners who are expected to partner and support ZPHCA in its efforts to harness the grassroots women's capacity to claim their right to Land and Property. The following networking Organizations were identified:

1. SCAZ
2. City of Harare
3. Municipality of Chitungwiza
4. Epworth Local Board
5. Department of Social Services
6. Local Schools
7. Local Councilor
8. Churches
9. Child Parliamentarians
10. Members of Parliament

4.0 ZPHCA Harare Provincial Executive Meeting

During the period in question, ZPHCA hosted its Quarterly Board Meeting in line with the Constitution and good Governance Practices. The Board Meeting was attended by 10 Board Members and 1 Board Advisor. The major Objective of the Quarterly Board Meeting was to familiarize and update the Board Members on the current Forum Syd Project. The Senior Management made a presentation on the aims and objectives of the Project, Activities to be Implemented, the roles of ZPHCA Management, SCAZ and the ZPHCA Board. The ZPHCA Provincial Executive Committee expressed gratitude to Headway Africa and Forum Syd for once again showing confidence in ZPHCA's grassroots implementing capacity. The Board noted the following:

- That the activities needs to be carried out and reported timely in line with the time frames set out by Headway Africa to avoid inconveniences.
- The Board promised to support the Management in ensuring the successful implementation of the Project in spite of the ongoing cash shortages leading to long winding queues in Zimbabwe.
- Three fathers from the Support Groups where were seconded into the ZPHCA Harare Provincial Executive Board as Committee Members.
- The Board passed a Resolution in relation to the cordial working relationship with SCAZ. The Board Noted that SCAZ has been receiving money from Headway Africa through ZPHCA for Forum Syd Projects however with the current cash shortages and bank transaction limits imports by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, it is nor longer convenient to maintain the status quo.
- In this respect the ZPHCA Board in agreement with SCAZ passed a Resolution to recommend Headway Africa to deposit SCAZ Funding direct into their Accounts for convenience's sake. The
- Board recommended that Project Funds should be disbursed on a Quarterly basis for easier and timely implementation and not small disbursements e.g two thousand dollars not enough for project implementation.
- The Board recommended that if possible the funds be disbursed in advance so that our Accounts remain active in view of the new Banking Regulations in Zimbabwe.

5.0 Successes Achieved

- ✓ The major success achieved during the Implementation period was the ability of ZPHCA to engage with parents of children living with disability and their disabled children laying the road map for the new Forum Syd Funded Project
- ✓ ZPHCA managed to implement the targeted activities timely in line with established time frame.
- ✓ ZPHCA managed to ensure that the current phase of the Project is responsive to the needs and aspirations of children living with disabilities and their families through the Mapping exercise.

6.0 Challenges Faced

- ✓ The major challenge was noted during the Mapping process and remains the food insecurity and severe poverty persons living with disabilities are subjected to in the wake of the current socio-economic hardships in Zimbabwe.
- ✓ Children living with disabilities continue to miss out on Social Grants from the department of Social Services while other disadvantaged children (able bodied children) continue to receive government assistance through the Basic Education Assistance Model.
- ✓ The high cost of school fees, medication and health services requirement by disabled children continue to drain the scarcely family resources hence such families risk being entrenched in vicious circles of poverty, rights abuse and exposure to violence.

7.0 Lessons Learnt

- ✓ The major lesson learnt during the period in question was that given the right platform, persons living with disabilities can identify the training and developmental needs.
- ✓ ZPHCA also learnt that given the continuous engagement with support groups will bring in new ideas, information and innovativeness.



Fig 1: ZPHCA Harare Provincial Executive Members attending a Board Meeting at SCAZ Board Room.



Fig 2: ZPHCA Harare Provincial Executive Members Follow Proceedings During the Board Meeting.



Fig 3: SCAZ Facilitating during the ZPHCA Board Meeting.



Fig 4: Parents of the Disabled Children Contributing during the Planning and Consultative Meeting in Epworth.