The Human Development Bulletin

1. INTRODUCTION

The Civic Forum on Human Development (CFHD), former Civic Forum on Housing, is an apolitical Civil Society Organization (CSO) established in 1995 with expertise in democratic local governance, peace building, human rights protection, advocacy and lobbying skills and capacity building of local CSOs. The organization envisions inclusive and just societies where the rights of citizens are recognized and local institutions are empowered to drive their own development. The CFHD has been operating in four Rural District Councils (RDCs) which are Chipinge, Mutoko, Nyaminyami and Tsholotsho through a participatory action based learning approach involving district, community and private sector stakeholders. The nexus of this briefing paper is an update on how far CFHD has endeavoured to fulfil its mandate as well as its strategic objectives in 2015. The briefing paper will concentrate on two projects under the ambits of the forum, namely the USAID funded Peace for Sustainable Development in Rural Areas of Zimbabwe (PSDAZ) and the conclusion of the EC bankrolled Strengthening Local Governance and Citizen Participation in Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe (LGCPP).

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2. MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS OF 2015

a) PEACE BUILDING PROJECT (Promoting Sustainable Development in Rural Areas of Zimbabwe)

Civic Forum on Human Development has been implementing a USAID funded project titled ''Promoting Sustainable Development in Rural Areas of Zimbabwe '' ,which is now in its third and final year. The project aims to increase local leaders, district and sub-district structures' knowledge on peace building conflict mitigation and reconciliation as the basis for promoting and internalization of democratic values and principles.

Peace Building and Income Generation Groups

In 2015, the organization continued to provide technical support to the peace building and income generation groups that were established in 2014. The support rendered in 2014 included procurement of chicks, stock feeds, school uniforms and the deployment of these inputs to the peace building and income generation groups in Nyaminyami, Tsholotsho and Mutoko. Support to the groups also included responsive capacity building in poultry management to six groups in Mutoko and continued efforts to fundraise more resources to the targeted income generation groups.

Some of the chicks that Chimurenga Ward 25 income generating group in Mutoko bought from their own savings

b) ANNUAL NATIONAL REFLECTION WORKSHOP

The CFHD conducted its national annual reflection workshop on the 19th of March 2015 to share emerging lessons and experiences. The workshop was attended by the project staff from all the implementing partners (CFHD, Centre for Community Development Solutions and Association of Rural District Council), funding partners, District Action Teams (DAT) members from Mutoko, Tsholotsho, Chipinge and Nyaminyami, other potential funding partners, technical partners and member organizations to the Forum. The reflection workshop was the 2nd to be hosted by the CFHD under the support of the peace building project. The purpose of the workshop was to share some of the emerging lessons and experiences emerging from the local governance and peace building programme and to map strategies for scaling up the project. The workshop was attended by more than 55 delegates.

The objectives of the national reflection workshop were:

- To create a National Reflection platform for the Civic Forum on Human Development and key stakeholders to discuss issues, lessons and future priorities of the Local Governance and Peace Building Program in Zimbabwe
- To identify key impacts and best practices in Local Governance Citizen Participation and Peace building for strengthening strategies for scaling up and collaboration linkages.

The four chiefs of Nyaminyami narrating the history of the Batonga people

c) RECONCILIATION MEETINGS

The CFHD managed to conduct reconciliation workshops in Nyaminyami and Mutoko which were key actives under the peace building project. In Nyaminyami a dialogue workshop was held in Karoi to discuss the issue on internally displaced persons of Nyaminyami, the dialogue meeting was attended by the four original chiefs of Nyaminyami (Chief Negande, Chief Nebiri, Chief Musambakaruma and Chief Mola), Nyaminyami Rural District Council officials, Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe Secretary General Mr Rodgers Mozhentiy and other stakeholders. In Mutoko the CFHD held a mining Indaba to discuss the issues of governance of natural resources especially the black granite, the workshop was conducted in collaboration with ZELA and Silveria House.

The four chiefs of Nyaminyami narrating the history of the Batonga people

3. Local Governance Project (Strengthening Local Governance and Citizen Participation) LGCPP

a) Inter-district Exchange Visits

A one day inter-district exchange workshop was conducted in Mutoko on 05 March 2015. The workshop was attended by 45 participants which included CFHD staff members, Centre for Community Development Solutions (CCDS), the Association of Rural District Council of Zimbabwe (ARDCZ), and District Action Teams (DAT) representatives from Chipinge, Nyaminyami and Tsholotsho, traditional leaders, Ministry of Local Government, representatives from Mutoko income generation group, representatives of other NGOs and Donors. The District Action Team (DAT) members from the targeted districts made presentations which highlighted their lessons and experiences on the Strengthening Local Governance and Peace Building Project (LGCPP) and suggested recommendations for improvement on the project. According to the participants of the workshop the project has managed to demonstrate the effectiveness of participatory local governance approaches and decentralized planning approaches in strengthening the supply and demand side of local governance accountability. The participants had an opportunity to visit some of the peace building and income generation projects being implemented in Mutoko district.

Outcomes of the Inter-district Exchange Visit

- There was an increased demand for the LGCPP to be extended in all the participating RDCs and other surrounding districts.

- The inter-district exchange visits managed to get the attention of the media with reports on the workshops being published in the following newspapers: NewsDay (Villagers pay rates with grain: 07 March 2015) and The Zimbabwean (Poultry Projects give women status: 18 March 2015). The workshop managed to receive media coverage due to the CFHD partnership with the Humanitarian Information Facilitation (HIFC) which work with media houses.

End of Project Evaluation

An external consultant, Professor Joseph Kamuzhanje was engaged to conduct an end of project evaluation. According to the evaluation report the LGCPP was able to successfully test and demonstrate the applicability, effectiveness, and impact of a locally driven institutional capacity building methodology and process to promote democratic, effective, transparent and accountable local governance in rural district councils in Zimbabwe. The CFHD managed to use some of the recommendations and emerging stories of change from the LGCPP to develop a successful proposal on Social Accountability to the EU.

4. IMPORTANT COLLABORATIONS

a) Partnering with PSAM and Rhodes University on issues of Social Accountability

The partnership between CFHD and the Public Service Social Accountability Monitor (PSAM) continued to grow in 2015. The two organizations collaborated in the development of a successful proposal to EU on Social Accountability. One CFHD member of staff managed to attend training in Social Accountability at Rhodes University. PSAM also facilitated for CFHD members of staff to attend regional workshops in Tanzania and Zambia on Social Accountability which were very key in providing a learning platform to learn the key experiences and challenges being faced by other civic actors implementing projects in social accountability in the region. The CFHD and PSAM have also organised localized trainings on CBOs and CSOs in Mutare and Masvingo.

Regional attendees posing for a photo during the PSAM training for Social Accountability at Rhodes University in South Africa.

Other collaborations

In 2015 the CFHD engaged and collaborated with other institutions like Practical Action, Island Hospice, SPWSNET, HIVOS, Progressio, CCDS and ARDC in fundraising initiatives. A proposal on Securing Water for Food failed to sail through after having qualified for the final round in a bidding process that was highly competitive. The experience of CFHD in proposal development was a reflection of the capability of the organization in resource mobilization initiatives.

b) UN Habitat Country Report Workshop

The CFHD collaborated with Practical Action to provide resources and technical assistance to the Ministry of Local Government, National Housing and Public Works for the development of the UN Habitat Country Report workshop. The process for the development of the UN Habitat Country Report was informed by around the table workshop comprising of various stakeholders, institutions and actors who researched and made presentations on relevant topics, and these included; Building Societies, Environmental Management Agency (EMA), CFHD, Practical Action for Southern Africa, University of Zimbabwe (Department of Rural and Urban Planning) and Community Based Organizations represented by the Zimbabwean Homeless People Federation. The CFHD participated in the development of the report on behalf of all the stakeholders together with an external consultant and a representative from the Ministry of Local Government Public Works and National Housing.

5. FUTURE PRIORITIES FOR THE CFHD

The Civic Forum on Human Development (CFHD) conducted a 3 day strategic review and planning meeting at Steven Margolis Resort. The purpose of the workshop was to review the CFHD strategic plan (2014-2018) against the ever changing operational context and to develop an action plan for mapped priorities. During the strategic review and planning meeting the Forum decided to focus on the following themes;

- Governance of natural resources for Sustainable Livelihoods
- Participatory Local Governance and Peace building
- Civil Society, Capacity and Transformation (Enabling our members to publish their stories through our human development voice platform)
- Social Accountability (The CFHD secured funding for a Social Accountability project and the aim of the organisation is become a centre of excellence for Social Accountability.)
- Policy Dialogue Facilitation and Influencing

The CFHD staff and Board members listening attentively during the Strategic Review workshop

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