

THE DANCHURCHAID ZIMBABWE

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Oracle



100 Years of Restoring Dignity

ACHIEVING INCLUSION



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Patience Ukama

Editors Corner

When I set out to put this edition together, it was agreed in principle that it would run under the theme People with Disabilities, to align with our work on the European Union Humanitarian funded Urban Multi-Purpose Cash Project that ended in June 2022. Hence the number of case studies within.

But very quickly: it became clear that to limit inclusion to PWDs was folly. We met so many women with disabilities, it didn't make sense to ignore gender. Then within gender the question of men arose- what to do about them? This became more stark when a [male] colleague in one of our reflection meetings questioned – "Is DCA reducing gender to women? No! (my immediate mental response)

But the dilemma remained, how do you deal with all the aspects of inclusion in one edition, is that even possible? No! (my immediate mental response)

On a project monitoring visit, a representative from the Local Authority narrated the challenge of youth from the authorities perspective. The domain where this took place is one where DCA is implementing projects that should in the grand scheme of things empower youth. Again, are they[youth] not a category thus part of the Inclusion dialogue?

I thought I would be guided by DCA global policy, to ascertain DCA's position on these issues. Alas that too is work in progress, so I had no choice but to venture into the unknown without a compass or a guide.

Granted many a scholarly paper exists, many of which respond to global events such as the signing of the UN Declaration on People with Disabilities, the 1995 Fourth UN Conference on Women in Beijing, and the Arab Spring of 2010/11.

While all groundbreaking in their own right. They all seem to fan the flame for a moment, and then the tide passes and its back to business as usual. Those with disabilities go back to being excluded.

Ironically, the Constitution of Zimbabwe places an obligation on the state, all its institutions and agencies to recognise rights of persons with disabilities (Section 3(2)(i)(ii), as well as prohibiting torture, cruelty, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

I digress,...as I was saying women continue to be without any real power and representation, and youth remain the step-children of development - there but not really included.

We have the Humanitarian Standards - to guide our conduct, the Grand Bargain to ensure localisation, the Human Rights Based Approach, then some very broad and general thoughts on inclusion of vulnerable groups of the people we serve, but really only as a donor requirement.

Thank you ECHO for pushing us to do better!

If the world is to become a better place and all the world's people are to live in dignity then it is not just a requirement but it is in fact an obligation to strive to achieve holistic inclusion.

HAPPY READING!

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UNDERSTANDING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



Disabled Emmelda utilising her ECHO cash voucher to buy basic groceries



Gas vendor interacting in sign language with a deaf customer

The principle of Do No Harm, often came to mind as we listened to their sometimes heart wrenching tales of neglect, loss of dignity, and isolation.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was defined as one of the most important treaties ever negotiated. Zimbabwe is among the 177 countries that signed and ratified the UN Convention with over 30 Articles on the various rights and obligations to level the playing field. Yet, so many people in this category still feel excluded, and without hope.

The tentacles of exclusion extend to the highest legislative body of government. There are no PWDs in the national assembly and only two PWDs in Senate - nominated to fulfill a quota by the President. Legislation is therefore not likely to be reflective of their needs.

In 2020, in a radio interview, Harare City Council trumpeted its inclusion of PWDs in budget processes. Council was firmly reminded that while this was a first time achievement for them, PWDs had always been part of the community and therefore their admission was in fact embarrassing.

Such levels of oblivion demonstrate the blinkers worn by society to the needs of this category of people. It is therefore possible that the bias and burden of inclusion sits with the able-bodied and not the disabled.



Oak Foundation CEO meeting DCA beneficiaries

By categorising people in broad strokes, we lose the intrinsic richness of the individual human beings. Indeed, we can better mask our fears, cultural beliefs, myths, and superstition when confronted by a different category of people if we do not have to deal with them as individuals.

However, a glimpse into the lives of a few "individuals" with disabilities will show that they are in fact only human.

It was clear to us that people with disabilities want the same things that everyone wants, they deal with the same issues but are weighed down by the categorisation of "them" as people with disabilities.



Christine Amos with her disabled son Lesley in their

As society aspires towards disability inclusion, it bears reflection that people with disability (PWDs) are grouped together as if they are a homogeneous fraternity, they are not.

This in the same way we refer to tall and short people, African, Asian, European, as if this covers the full spectrum of whom these people are within those groupings. It does not.

To understand who they are, how they want and need to be supported, DCA visited several households around the country and encountered some of the most happy-go-lucky, full of life people we have ever met. And indeed, some of the most broken and tortured souls on God's green earth.

The mother of a 12-year-old mentally challenged boy talked about how she struggled to the point where she herself now feels disabled. A 28-year-old victim of a crocodile attack, pleaded for help to seek further medical assistance for severe pain, having had her arm amputated in 2014.

And a deaf 30-year-old mother of a bouncing baby girl lamented at her struggle to find a job so she can give her daughter a good foundation for a better life.

LUCIA- WHEN DIGNITY IS NO LONGER AN OPTION

"I had to ask passers-by to carry me onto the toilet because I could not manoeuvre my wheelchair in there, and then lift myself off the chair, to do my business. You forget about dignity because where will that get you. I am a widow. I live with my son." said Lucia Revai.

This meant dealing with going to the bathroom once a day and asking perfect strangers for help to get to the toilet. Sometimes they would stop and assist, other times they would not. This is Lucia Revai's story.

We find Lucia sitting on her bed, surrounded by a sample of crocheted mats, that she sells to meet her medical and household costs. Her son has since married, so she lives with him, her daughter-in-law, and granddaughter in her small accommodations.

She does not own the incomplete structure in which she has a room, use of the kitchen, and bathroom. The rest of the house is yet to be built. Her room is packed from wall to wall with the clutter of accumulated years of living.

She points out the deflated tyres on her wheelchair, which she has failed to get repaired because of the cost of new tyres (US\$10 each). None-the-less, her dear-old-faithful (wheelchair) still gets her to town and to the hospital when in need.

"I pay full price on the bus despite being unable to walk. Only the blind are exempt from paying. Where they think I get the money from, I honestly do not know." says Lucia

She explains how other patrons often complain when people like her take the bus. "They think we will delay them because someone has to help me out of the chair onto a seat, then pack the chair away and do the same again at my stop." She is grateful that she has never been abused when getting transport.

"At the hospital, the nurses are rude, and do not allow us to go to the front of the queue because they accuse us of getting to



Lucia being interviewed by the DCA team during the process of collecting stories for The Oracle



Lucia sitting on her bed in front of her wheelchair working on the mats she sells, as her daughter in law walks past after collecting water from open well outside

the hospital late intentionally." ('Munoz-viitisa imi', meaning you are not serious). However, when Lucia gets off the bus, she still has to get across town to the hospital in her wheelchair with its deflated tyres.

"But I suppose it is not every day." says Lucia She was born disabled and raised by an aunt to avoid bringing shame to the family. She is raising her disabled nephew with the little means she has, as he was disowned by the family too.

She was never married.

Lucia was a beneficiary of the Dan-ChurchAid- European Union Urban Cash Assistance Programme, where she received a monthly cash contribution of US\$12 per person, in her household which she used to buy food and medication.

The programme ended on 30 June 2022.

MAI-BERNARD: NO GREATER FAITH HAS A MOTHER IN HER SON



Margaret Ndawanda in her house in Harare-South where she lives with two of her children. Bernard only comes home over the holidays as he is in boarding school.

Mai-Bernard (Margaret Ndawanda) limps out of her house, where she greets us with a welcoming smile. Petit in stature, a widow with three children, Margaret (40) is an active, cheerful, strong-willed lady, and has no problem stating her mind.

Margaret is a beneficiary of the DanChurchAid- European Union Urban Cash Assistance Programme, where she receives cash contribution of US\$12 per person, per month in her household.

Margaret has lived a hard life. Born disabled, as a child she would crawl to get around and only learnt to walk when she was already at school. There she aspired to one day, grow up and become a teacher.

“My wish is for my children to go to school,” says Margaret. Her eldest child Bernard is 16 and completing his Ordinary Levels.

Margaret refers to him as “almost an Engineer.” She says that once he has finished his studies, he will build her a big house and take care of her, as the man of the house, since his father passed away. She believes one day Bernard will give her everything her heart desires.

The other two children are 14 and four years old, one of whom is also disabled. They live in one of Harare’s many urban sprawls, (Ushewokunze) that sprouted on the outskirts of the city, in the early 2000s. As such, there is no infrastructure and no services such as running water.

Like many widows, Margaret has no rights to the partially complete house in which she is living. She is merely a long-term temporary caretaker at the mercy of the owner- her late mother’s friend, for whom she provides security for her investment.

Margaret was practically a nomad until she was asked her to look after this house.

In May 2022, in the evening while relaxing with her family, the roof of the house collapsed due to a strong gust of wind, landing on a kitchen unit that fell on Margaret. Luckily, she did not sustain any injuries.

A few of the handful of worldly possession she owns were damaged, but she is just grateful to be alive to help Bernard further his dreams.



Margaret showing the DCA team the furniture that fell on her when the roof was blown off her house.



Margaret Ndawanda conversing with the DCA ECHO Project Manager, Olwin Manyanye outside her house

EQUITABLE GENDER REPRESENTATION

One of the key barriers to women's influence is the fact that they are under-represented in political, economic, social and policy decision-making processes. Limited influence is demonstrated by a lack of meaningful support for women by way of gendered policies that protect the rights of women and promote their participation in governance and economic processes.

It is a step back from the global gains of the landmark Beijing Declaration adopted unanimously by 189 countries, in 1995 which saw gender parity in primary schools largely achieved, a drop in deaths during and after pregnancy and more women being elected to parliament and to leadership positions in government and business.

In Zimbabwe there is only 35% representation of women in Parliament. Local Authorities have about 15% women Councilors and business has even less.

The costs of gender inequality have been found to lead to reductions in agricultural productivity and economic losses (FAO, 2011), greater food insecurity (Agarwal, 2018), and reduced effectiveness of environmental management interventions (e.g. marine protected areas) (Kleiber et al., 2018).

The COVID-19 pandemic brought harmful gender norms and inequalities to the fore, including prevalence of gender-based violence, child marriage and abuse. When these intersect with disparities in access to natural resources, such as forests, water, and energy, as well as gendered vulnerability to climate instability and disasters the consequences are dire. Hence the need for equitable representation to promote and instill a culture of gender responsiveness.



Mrs Ndlovu in her house in Bulawayo after purchasing basic groceries with her e-voucher

Research has shown that gender equality is a mainstream principle of good environmental governance and sustainable development. Surely, this should therefore be something to strive to attain.

Be that as it may, society is weighted down by cultural, religious, colonial and other invisible ties that make it difficult to simply walk away from the status quo. Patriarchy is defined as a system of relationships, beliefs, and values embedded in political, social, and economic systems that structure gender inequality between men and women.

Attributes seen as "feminine" or pertaining to women are undervalued, while attributes regarded as "masculine" or pertaining to men are privileged. Is it any wonder that women are under-represented?

While it is generally agreed that human rights apply to all human beings, women's fundamental rights

and freedom have been limited by patriarchal practices and traditions.

The situation is worse in many African societies where colonial legacies and patriarchal culture assign superior roles to men and subordinate roles to women. In Zimbabwe this extends to chieftainship, where objections have been raised to women chiefs, resulting in disputes being taken as far as the High Court.

All this because the idea of a woman leading men is still taboo. Women in rural areas are hardest hit by poor access to basic services such as food, health, transport, water and sanitation, but according to the SADC, women constitute less than 30 percent of the decision-makers in Zimbabwe, including those who decide how to improve access to services and how to allocate resources.

MEN AND THE QUESTION OF GENDER

The global COVID-19 pandemic turned the world as we have known it upside down.

One of the trends identified was an increase in male suicide and cases of mental health issues. Some have claimed that these cases are because men are more intentional in their approach to suicide adopting more violent measures like strangulation, whereas women tend to stick to pills and poisons and other less violent measures.

But given that Zimbabwe has experienced a protracted economic crisis, why is this more prominent now?

Even global research shows that in economic downturns, including the large recession of 2008–2009, the employment of male workers was usually affected more strongly than the employment of female workers. Due to gender specific employment numbers and the nature of work among other factors.

In typical recessions, sectors such as manufacturing and residential construction are much more severely affected compared to, say, education and health care. In short, men's employment is on average more concentrated in sectors with a high cyclical exposure, whereas women are highly represented in sectors with relatively stable employment over the cycle.

Socialisation could be the obvious response. The lock-downs not only limited economic activity, they also impacted on social interactions and behaviours. Men, like women were more isolated and therefore void of established coping mechanisms



Mr Ngwenya watching proceedings leaning on his bicycle at the ZRBF-Sizimele Mbembeswana Livestock Centre in Matobo district

It is easier for society to focus on the alarming reports of violence against women and children, than on the self inflicted violence of men.

After all, unlike women girls and boys, they have no historic Beijing Declaration to fall back on. It has in any case long been established that men that are the perpetrators of violence in society. Something conversations and approaches to gender may need to address, as all men are lumped in this violent frame.

Another social norm that was turned upside down by COVID-19 was domestic care work. Traditionally in Zimbabwe this is the sole preserve of women with the exception of a few rare men. All of a sudden the COVID-19 pandemic made it a collective preserve.

Worldwide, more than 1.5 billion children were out of school dramatically increased the need and obligation on parents for childcare. In addition, social distancing measures made sharing childcare with neighbors and friends nearly impossible. Thus families had no choice but to watch their kids themselves.

The reality is however, is that based on the existing distribution of child care duties in most families, mothers were still more likely to be more affected than fathers.

Ultimately the trade off will not be achieved by comparing time spent on care work. Gender programming needs to go beyond mainstreaming in addressing the challenges to ensure equality.

EMMELDA – THE STORY OF A WOMAN WHO GAVE UP

We arrived to find Emmelda Dewe sitting by the door of her rented room for which she pays US\$10 per month. She explains that she is often unable to raise the rent and lives with the constant threat of being thrown out on the streets with her children.

The downcast, 37-year-old widow has visibly experienced a hard life and looks about ready to give up. Her husband died in 2020. He was murdered.

She sold everything she had to survive, but with two young children, she was forced to move to the city in search of work and a better life. What she found, was not better. It was just a different set of (urban) problems, in place of her old (rural) problems.

Today, she takes on whatever casual work she can find to keep a roof over her children's heads, and to put food on the table.

Her daughter is enrolled at a 'private school' which means a 'school' which is privately run by a private individual, who provides education to a small group of children for a small but significant fee to parents in the area. These establishments are not always formerly registered or recognised by authorities, and very rarely are they designated as academic tuition sites.

Emmelda is a beneficiary of the DanChurchAid- European Union Urban Cash Assistance Programme, where she receives a monthly cash contribution of



Emmelda sitting outside her one roomed house waiting for her children to return from school

US\$12 per person, in her household.

She was raised as an only child. She lost her right arm in an accident. Her arm was badly burnt in the blankets in which she slept, after a candle fell over during the night. She had to have it amputated at a young age. Her life however, proceeded as normal with the support of the family, until her parents passed away. Her family, as they are for many disabled individuals, were her support system and without them, she has had to adjust. Unfortunately for Emmelda, like many other beneficiaries of the ECHO programme, without the cash voucher this appears to be a losing battle.



Emmelda spending her monthly entitlement using her DCA/ECHO e-voucher to purchase basic groceries



THE REAL CHALLENGE OF BEING DEAF

A stunningly beautiful Christina greets us at the gate in sign language, with her gorgeous bouncing baby girl, Nobuhle, on her arm.

The interpreter from the Ministry of Women Affairs and PWDs does her best to facilitate the conversation.

Christina is the second wife to a volunteer at the Association for the Deaf with whom she has one child. He has other children from his previous marriage.

Christina was orphaned later in life, after her parents put her through school up to Cambridge Ordinary Level. Her mother was a nurse, and as such was able to send her hearing-impaired daughter to the then prestigious Emerald Hills School for the Deaf in the capital city, Harare.

Her parents divorced, but all three siblings continued to enjoy the support of both their parents while they were alive. She is the only disabled child in the family.

Christina and her husband have struggled to find employment, more so because of their specific handicaps.

The family is currently living in a house that belongs to Christina's mother-in-law. They are quite anxious to secure a source of income that will enable them to get their own place.



Christina has experience with poultry and is keen to kick-start such a project so she can provide for her family.

Christina describes the hardest part about being deaf as being judged by a different standard. "I went to school and I have an education but when I try to look for work no one can understand me, therefore its impossible for me to get the job." Christina believes government should set aside jobs where being hearing impaired doesn't count against you.

Top & Bottom: Christina with her daughter talking to the DCA team with the help of an interpreter



Text from the interview transcript below.

Interviewer: Where did you grow up and how many were you in your family?
Christina: We were three children. We grew up in Harare. It was a happy childhood, we were altogether until my father left.

Interviewer: When you were younger, what did you aspire to be?
Christina: I wanted to be an ambassador for the deaf

Interviewer: What are your aspirations for your children?
Christina: I want my daughter to go to university and become a doctor.

Interviewer: Were you born disabled or did this disability come about later in life?
Christina: I was born deaf

Interviewer: what challenges did you encounter in life as a disabled person, ?
Christina: When I was younger, I was okay but now it is really difficult because few people can understand me.

LESLEY – THE CHILD NO ONE WANTED

A steady flow of fresh tears streams silently down her face, as a visibly distraught mai-Lesley (Christine Amos) narrates her life story to the DCA-ZW team, who are on a monitoring visit. Alarming she hints at having occasional suicidal thoughts.

She speaks of the poverty that characterised her youth, and anguish at losing her mother at thirteen. How she and six siblings (two girls, four boys) found themselves unwanted by their new step-mother, and with no financial support abandoned their schooling.

“We had to learn to fend for ourselves. I initially thought my brothers would take care of me, but they took wives and could not manage. I imagined that if I too were to meet someone, then marriage would be my way out of a life of misery and want”, said Christine.

It is Wednesday. A bright, beautiful winter morning. In the background is the modest family home, whose door is wrapped in plastic to guard the flimsy wooden structure against the elements.

The little quintette is sitting under the shade of the single tree in the small family garden. Two DCA staff are on the floor next to Christine, and two on simple handmade thrift chairs. She tucks her son, Lesley’s cleft hand under the arm of the wheelchair, to prevent him from injuring himself against the steel structure as he repeatedly hits his arm against the frame.

“Being the mother of a disabled child is hard. As things are now. I

am also disabled. He must always be by my side. Every time I lift my son in and out of his wheelchair, I start to menstruate because it is hard work. My back is constantly painful”, said Lesley’s mother.

The birds are chirping. Save for the silent tears flowing down Christine’s face, it appears to passers-by like a normal day where that donor (DCA-ECHO) that is assisting the family with the disabled child living at the corner, have stopped by again.

She often cries, so the neighbours have stopped paying too much attention to her. And if not her tears, then it is the wails and moans of her disabled child that frequently fill their yard. The only willing audience for her pain, of raising a mentally challenged child is the church, and one neighbour twice removed who helps out where she can.

Apart from the regular visits from DCA, as part of the EU funded Urban Social Assistance Programme, the neighbour is the only other visitor to their house.

“There was a time before the DCA(ECHO) programme, where I fed my son porridge made from salt. We had no food in the house, and he needed to eat to take his medication.

My neighbour took money from her own paycheck to assist us to buy his medication, I could not ask her to buy us food as well. But then DCA came with this food assistance and that really helped.”

Christine was born in Banket in 1982. Originally, called Banket-

Junction, the town grew out of an agriculture market settlement, and is located 95kms north-west of Harare. Christine, went to school there, then tried her hand at various domestic jobs, cleaning, sweeping and washing.

She recalls with a smile how she met her husband, who was a farm hand at the time. How he swept her off her feet and before long they were expecting their first child. They were blessed with a happy, healthy baby boy who today is 18 years old.

At this point, her face resets into a picture of misery as she talks of the difficulties the young couple faced establishing their young family. Six years later she was pregnant again, this time however, they begot a brain-damaged baby boy, with a captivating smile, named Lesley.

“I carry him on my back and walk for hours to the nearest clinic whenever he is sick. It was fine when he was smaller, I could carry him. He is now twelve and getting too heavy for me to carry on my own. But when he is sick, I have no choice. His younger sister does her best to console me”

But the dark clouds gathered long before Lesley arrived and continued to perspire since. Her husband was frustrated with their economic situation, and difficult to live with. He blamed Christine for getting pregnant. The fights were vicious and constant, rendering the pregnancy itself a battle. Without any peace of mind, poor diet, and medical care, Christine made the best of a bad situation to deliver her baby. Her husband by then had moved to Ha-

rare - where there were bound to be better prospects to make a living.

“His relatives told him to leave me because no one in their family had any history of mental issues. For a long time, I lived in a room with my aunt because I had nowhere to go. After counselling from the hospital, he eventually came around and we were once again a family. But things are still hard because he is a casual worker and does not always find work.”

After giving birth at a local government hospital, Christine was discharged and sent home only to discover within days that her child was not behaving normally.

None of the staff informed her that her baby was brain damaged despite the hippocratic oath taken by medical staff, which states first and

foremost, to Do No Harm (in Latin “primum non nocere”).

All they did was place a red sticker on baby Lesley’s clinic card, so only they would know his condition when brought to the clinic for check-ups.

“Because of his condition, Lesley’s spine is not straight but curved which presents challenges as he can only sit or lie down. The doctors say his testicles are raised and this makes it painful when he urinates, so he cries a lot. I can’t help but wonder, if I die who will take care of him? If one day you come by here, and I am not here. Just know I did my very best before God for my son and all my children.”

The silent tears continue to fall.....



NB: Christine is receiving counselling and support from her local church group. She also participates in local disability groups



Christine Amos with her son Lesley sitting on her lap outside their family home in Harare-South

Top: Christine carrying Lesley outside for some fresh air. In March 2022 a family who lost their disabled daughter donated her wheelchair to Lesley. This has lifted the burden on Christine to carry Lesley who is getting bigger and too heavy for Christine to carry

THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTH EXCLUSION

If ever the case was made for youth inclusion, it was made in 18-days through a series of protests that burst forth across the Arab world, starting on 18 December 2010, in Tunisia, ending in Egypt in January 2011.

Forever etched in history as the “Arab springs” this should have been a global defining moment for youth inclusion. A decade later it could easily be mistaken as ‘much ado about nothing’ like many other anticipated moments in history.

Much like Sri Lanka’s current crisis, the spring focused on civic grievances related to equal rights to access economic, social, cultural and political resources. The differentiating caveat being the neglect of young people’s grievances.

The consequences of the spring brought forth a flurry of policy amendments including the revision of the Egyptian Constitution adopted in 2014. According to Article 82 of the 2014 Egyptian Constitution, the provision of care of youth and young people shall endeavour to discover their talents, develop their cultural, scientific, psychological, physical and creative abilities, encourage their engagement in group and volunteer activities and enable them to participate in public life. Article 180 specifies that one quarter of the seats in the local administration would be allocated to youth under 35 years of age, while Article 244 states that “[t]he State shall endeavor that youth, Christians, persons with disability and Egyptians living abroad be appropriately represented in the first House of Representatives, as regulated by law”

(Egypt 2014). To this day, the rhetoric on youth inclusion remains high however, many scholars argue that there has been no evidence of long-term strategies targeted toward youth, and the extent to which there is any real commitment to youth inclusion policies remains unclear. This, 10 years after the spring.

In most policy outlooks, and in decisions concerning political participation, youth in particular are perceived as an “excluded” social category whether in housing, employment, or in political participation.

Youth have the highest unemployment levels in most countries. Youth exhibit low levels of participation, both as contestants and as voters. The highest regional and international migration patterns are among youth. If there is so much happening with the youth, why then is there so little commitment to their welfare? Simple – the youth are disruptive to the status quo.

On the one hand, young people are perceived as a force for development and positive change. While on the other hand they are perceived as a threat.

In the case of Egypt, scholars have summed it up as follows: First there was a clear bias toward urban educated youth, even though the rhetoric purported the inclusion of rural youth. This can be traced to the fact that the unemployment problem was a phenomenon among educated urban youth. Second, there was also a clear bias against young women. Women were and are not targeted as a special group according to the

2007 Youth Council declaration.

While the declaration discussed the importance of addressing unemployment, it did not address women as being the primary target for these policies, even though educated young women have the highest unemployment rates in Egypt, with unemployment rates reaching 76 percent amongst young women with secondary level education and 46.9 percent for young women with university level education in 2013 (Barsoum et al. 2014:29).

Last but certainly not least, the marginalization of the poor was evidenced in addressing “youth” experiencing by referencing only the life experiences of middle-class youth, rather than poor youth.

We have two options as it relates to youth inclusion:

1. Wait for the next spring to respond to the grievances and issues affecting youth or,
2. Adopt an intentional strategy for youth inclusion in all programming that gives all classes of youth a voice in their future and empowers them to exercise their rights.



Children pose for a picture on their way home from school

AN UNREGISTERED YOUTH

There is an African proverb that states: A village without the elderly is like a well without water. Notwithstanding the sentiment, the value of the old is known, but what is the value of the young?

In economic terms the question of the youth population is reduced to a question of youth dividend. The proposition being one of future gains on current investment. But as with the markets, trades can be easily swayed by various factors impacting negatively or positively on future value. In Zimbabwe, the dividends of youth is particularly precarious.

As we drove from one DCA project site to the next, Mr. Musoro of the Epworth Local Board initially shook his head and refused to engage on the topic of youth as it represents a mammoth minefield to the local authority, later explained the reality to the DCA team.

Mr Musoro explained how many Epworth youth have been lost to drugs, alcohol, and sex-trade. But that the problem doesn't start or end there.

For many of these youth, the story begins at birth, coming into families that for up to three maybe four generations have not been registered on the national database, for one or other reason.

These families can therefore not formally register the birth of this new addition to the family. The connotations for the future value of investment are varied. One being that the child is likely to attend a "private" informal unregistered school, where



Rudo minding her little sister as their mother works in the garden

there is no demand on the parents to provide a birth certificate. These schools are burgeoning throughout Zimbabwe's informal and high-density settlements.

By grade 7, at 13 years of age, the dividends of youth begin to dwindle eventually diminishing because the child must drop out of school, as he/she is illegible to write and be graded for higher education through the national examination process, which requires a birth certificate or an identity number.

Ergo the youth turn to drugs and other vices to fill their days and take up their time. In another scenario, Mr Musoro says: "For those who can see the importance of registering the birth, it's a long and arduous battle of next of kin tracing through the national registry. One where it's easy to give up. But, for those who stay the course it has its rewards, including a better life and more opportunities for the newborn.

To many this case study will sound like a microcosm of the country. However, as Mr. Musoro explained, Epworth houses the third largest population in the country after Harare and Chitungwiza, being largely a young population. The process is a

long and arduous battle of tracing next of kin. This completely changes the complexion of youth inclusion and what it means. For many of us the first notion when faced with youth inclusion is job creation, followed closely by further education.

In Epworth, the current notion is youth centres. Finding a way to separate the youth from these vices and resuscitate any potential dividends that may still remain.

In response to the youth conundrum in both Harare South and Epworth, DCA donated four desktop computers to community youth centres there in July 2022.

Mr Musoro pointed out a potential site for the construction of a youth centre in Ward 6. The Ward is infamous for being the sex trade hub in Epworth. Some of Zimbabwe's most prominent men are said to be long standing patrons of Epworth's Ward 6 sex trade.

If a village without the elderly is like a well without water. What is a village without its youth?

DISABILITY AND THE CONSTITUTION

If celebrity status alone improved lives, then Mr & Mrs David Nkala would be well on their way to the good-life. Indulging us for their third or fourth donor (and stakeholder) visit in a month, the Nkala's are poised and ready for questions and photographs. Lights, camera, action!

With very little prompting David, tells us about his life and challenges. As well as, how much the Urban Social Assistance programme has helped them, by making the burden of living more bearable.

He explains how before DCA (ECHO) the last time they received support was in the late 1990s, back in the days of Jairos Jiri. "If we had, we wouldn't be worried about [you] donors coming and going." (At this point he bursts out laughing)

David Nkala is wheelchair bound. He lives in a four (4) roomed house in Cowdray Park, Mzilikazi, Bulawayo. His wife is also wheelchair bound, they live with an able bodied child who assists with household chores. The household was identified to participate in the ECHO Urban Multi-Cash Programme during the DCA/ ECHO baseline survey in September 2021.

The family was adversely affected by the COVID-19 lock-downs which restricted movement for non-essential services, ironically essential for a household earning a living from selling tomatoes, and indoor floor mats.

Mrs Nkala is the creative force behind the floor mat business having acquired the skill at a young age, both to pass the time and to earn a living. She indicated that sales were slow and that business had not really recovered from the COVID-19 lockdowns although they had improved somewhat.



Mr and Mrs Nkala in their living room, welcoming the DCA team to their home.



Street view of the Nkala's yard, in Cowdray Park, Ward 28



Mrs Nkala working on a mat order for a new client. DCA engaged the Ministry of Social Welfare to refurbish and condition her wheelchair, given its dilapidated state. In its absence Mrs Nkala can only move around on her hands and knees.



Mr Nkala arriving at the supermarket to purchase groceries at Ok Supermarket in Cowdray Park, in October 2021. Their basic groceries mainly consist of mealie-meal, flour, sugar, salt, cooking oil and hygiene products.

Looking to the future Mr & Mrs Nkala are skeptically optimistic that with the assistance received from DCA, they will be able to forge ahead and make ends meet. “We will try whatever we can. We cannot say that we will die. We will live, but life will be very hard without DCA.”

Since joining the DCA Multi-Purpose Cash Programme, the Nkala’s have renovated their home, surfaced the outside of their house to make it wheelchair friendly no matter the weather. They built a perimeter wall for security, and connected their electricity making it easier for them to manage basic daily chores.

David explains how PWDs struggle to find and secure accommodation. Ward 28, the area where they live was initially designated as residential land for people with disabilities. “When we came here, we were told that this land had been set aside for people with disabilities. But when we applied we were told the stands were sold out, and yet very few disabled people were allocated stands here.”

The Nkala’s situation is no different from the majority of people living with disabilities. Most of the PWDs that DCA visited indicated some form of challenges with accommodation.

The Zimbabwe Womens Lawyers Association (ZWLA) says that failure by persons living with disabilities to access accommodation is a discriminatory practice.

They quote the provisions of the Constitution of Zimbabwe under Section 56(4)(a) which states that a person is treated in a discriminatory manner if they are subjected directly or indirectly to a condition, restriction or disability to which other people are not subjected to.



Mr & Mrs Nkala pointing out the direction of the place where they get public transport from Mzilikazi to town

The Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) references the need for ‘reasonable accommodation for PWDs in order to promote full participation and access to perform essential functions

ZWLA states that the CRPD compels public authorities, employers, providers of goods and services to take “reasonable steps to adjust their policies, practices and premises in order to remove disabling barrier which lie in the path of relevant individuals.”



A smiling Mrs Nkala sharing a joke with her husband

BRINGING THE PLIGHT OF RURAL YOUTH TO THE FORE

Central to the development agenda, are rural communities. Most of what has come to be referred to as development work has been conducted in rural areas on account of a perceived historic need.

These areas were easily identifiable, with neglected communities coming to the fore of the development agenda due to historical constructs and systems.

With more than 50% of our work focused on rural areas, it would be assumed that we would have a greater appreciation of what the inclusion of youth looks like for rural youth.

An inclusionary approach would require the opinion of rural youth on issues relevant to them through platforms that are sensible to the challenges they face to participate.

Second, capitalising rural youth and their organisations, improving their financial assets but also working in character skills and intergenerational partnerships that let them break the status quo.

Third, articulating youth with new institutions, organisations, and territories through new links supported by diversification of the urban-rural continuum and new information technologies. There is clearly still much to be done to achieve youth inclusion.



Petronella Kazinga separating the wheat from chaff in Lupane

INCLUSION OF CONSERVANCY COMMUNITIES

IN CLIMATE DIALOGUE

There's a new category of inclusion that has come to the fore through the work of the DCA Zimbabwe Country Programme on biodiversity and climate adaptation.

It is the inclusion of communities living on conservancy boundaries. It is true, that these communities already fit into the traditional categories of vulnerable (rural, PWDs, youth, women....)so why create another category for inclusion? Precisely because they are in fact excluded.

Excluded from national and climate specific policy formulation and implementation. Excluded from the custodianship of natural resources in their immediate surrounds and their stewardship.

In the same way development historically focused on rural communities, it is time to amend those inclusions from a blanket characterisation of rural and urban to more specific and targeted delineation to deliver specific solutions and address an inherent conflict in the implementation of the SDGs focusing on a separation between human development SDGs and conservation goals.



This programme seeks to harmonize these goals and create a meaningful dialogue among players from the different spectrum.

In November, DCA-ZW is launching the Utariri Community Stewardship Programme, to mark its centenary celebrations and to launch this new phase of development programming together with the community in the middle Zambezi Valley.

In keeping with the call to leave no one behind, DCA will strive to ensure that community is not just at the table but are part of the deal. It's not only an exciting new phase in development but a great way to commence the journey into the next 100 years.



Photo captions:

Top: Siltation in Hurungwe Ward 8

Middle: A majestic baobab tree in Gachegache village in, Kariba

Bottom: Women from Dewe village in Mashonaland West, participating in the SIDA donor visit engagement

ACKNOWLEDGING THE TEAM

Through-out this edition, reference was made to the DCA-ZW team that participated in these household visits and collecting beneficiary information. In addition to the Editor, the following programme staff from the recently ended ECHO Multi-Purpose Urban Cash Project were instrumental in synthesizing these stories:

Right: Beauty Ncube and Zimazile Ncube.

Below: Msodzi Muzinda and Olwin Manyanye



Below: Loveness Philani Giyane.

Bottom Left: Gabriel Ncube and Mbongeleni Ndlovu



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**THANK YOU!
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