

Service Delivery Barometer



Inside Issues

Editors Note	1
Impact of COVID-19 on women/ SRHR	2
Stanmore Youths fix School Furniture	3
Mahole youths step up to develop their community	4
Disadvantaged groups` lives matter	5
Jahunda Township health Crisis	7

Editor's Note

Greetings and welcome to CYDT's 2nd edition of the service delivery barometer. In this edition, we realised the commendable initiatives being done by youths to alleviate their communities.

Rather than keep making excuses, youths have taken it upon themselves to fix various problems affecting their respective communities, for instance Stanmore youths who took the initiative to fix furniture at their local school while youths from Mahole took time to fix their badly damaged bridge.

A society with such determined and energetic youths is imperative for community building. All the significant activities that took place were heavily influenced by the raging Corona Virus.

CYDT also explored the damaging effects of the deadly pandemic towards marginalised groups especially women and the girl the child.

The findings show that a section of women found themselves at the mercy of their abusive male partners during lock-down while others found themselves overworking as a result of the gender stereotypes that usually increase burden on the disadvantaged woman.

CYDT calls out for relevant organisations and the government to step up their help towards these marginalised groups such as donating sanitary pads for free and food packages during the age of COVID 19.

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Impact of COVID-19 on women/ SRHR



While there are staggering numbers of women that have tested positive to Covid-19 and lost their lives due to the epidemic, fatalities alone do not reflect the impact of the deadly pandemic on women. Both men and women have been affected by the virus, no one is immune to the pandemic.

However, the novel has had other negative effects on women. Socially, culturally and traditionally prescribed attitudes, ideologies, norms and beliefs have played, and still play a role in the way in which Covid-19 is affecting the female gender.

From cases of gender based violence to shortages of basic health products, Covid-19 has had detrimental effects towards women. In largely patriarchal communities, being on lock-down, has forced a section of women to be with their abusive husbands for longer hours than usually.

The case of traditional gender roles has left many women vulnerable to the epidemic. Women are the ones who are responsible for cleaning up old people at home, look after those who are sick and fetch water in which many communities are facing water challenges such as Matabeleland South province.

The chances of women getting exposed to Corona virus when carrying out their social constructed gender roles is high. In countries that are struggling economically, like Zimbabwe, hunger has worsened women's predicament. In poverty stricken families, abusive husband might turn violent and release their anger on vulnerable women.

The hegemonic and ideological discourses that often place women under the dominance of men are some of the factors that make the safety of the female gender to be at risk. Therefore,

while the lock-down is a positive move for the prevention of Corona virus, it has placed women to be at the mercy of their abusive husbands who are heavily influenced by toxic masculinity ideologies.

Going to work is often seen as a way of protecting the safety of women because that way they cannot spend the whole day with their male counterparts. Therefore, the pandemic affected many women before lock-down conditions were relaxed in various countries such as Zimbabwe which now allows workers to go to work.

Priority has been given to ailments related to flue or Covid-19 like symptoms, yet sexual and reproductive health has not been prioritised. Women especially the youth fail to access

To page 3

Stanmore Youths fix School Furniture

As much as the mandate of the all Rural District Council offices is to provide services to communities, it is also very important that communities take care of the resources entrusted to them so that they can as well hold the Council accountable to that which has not been provided.

Many a times, Council always shifts the blame for dilapidating infrastructure to communities, some communities such as Stanmore have taken a positive stand to fix broken chairs and desks in their local school.

As part of the service delivery challenge report presented by Stanmore youths to their Councillor during a CYDT facilitated training on social accountability tools and community social accountability forum, the youths have started a positive transformation programme in the community to fix material and resources that are deteriorating.

During workshop it was reported that Stanmore Secondary School, the only secondary school in the entire ward was no longer materially inspiring to both the community and learners.

The buildings were reported to be old and cracked while furniture such as desks and chairs were inadequate for the children to comfortable share. Some students were reportedly sitting on the floor,

thereby affecting their concentration levels and teaching and learning process.

Broken chairs and desks are piled at the back of most classrooms. One of the youths spearheading the program, Mholi Khumalo observed that the situation at the school was very bad and affecting the learning process.

He noted:

"The situation that is there in our local secondary school is pathetic. Students sit down on the floor. Imagine a Form Four girl pupil seated down on the floor writing a test. What are the chances of that student passing the test? That is why at the end of the day students do not even bother in attending classes. As much as this is sad, honestly they have no option."

After learning that the communities also have the responsibility to maintain infrastructure and material in their places of living, the youths undertook to fix the broken chairs and tables in the school so that the students can be comfortable during teaching and learning.

Working on Wednesdays during the month of March, the youths managed to fix the furniture under the watchful eye and help of the teachers and the school headmaster, who hailed CYDT for chal-

lenging these youths to take responsibility of the environment and surroundings.

Speaking to CYDT Projects Officer, The Councillor for Ward 4, Nobukhosi Malila explained and admitted that the Gwanda RDC had turned a blind eye to existing infrastructure of most schools in her area.

Highlighting her joy at the success of this youth led initiative, she further explained how community members in the Ward also built an extra class in the school because the council did not provide budgetary funding even after the community had made submission to that regard.

"I am quite happy with this initiative that youths have taken up. It shows that a culture has been inculcated, that of being involved and participating in the development of their community. This may seem as a little job the youths have done, but to the community and the students, the youths have done us proud," Malila said.

While CYDT continues to empower and raise awareness of the importance of social responsibility within communities, it calls on all relevant stakeholders and stockholders to support communities and deliver on their mandate, towards the development of communities.

Impact of COVID-19 on women/ SRHR

....From page 2

adequate health services during the lock-down period that could spike in unwanted pregnancies. Failure to access modern contraceptives and reproductive health could possible reverse the gains that have been attained in terms of reducing early or unwanted pregnancies.

With restrictions at health centres, access to family planning pills and free condoms has been curtailed leaving large numbers of people exposed.

This could result in a further burdening on the already suffering communities with the rate of unwanted pregnancies, STIs and new HIV infections projected to rise after the lock-down.

While the government has placed preventive measures within health service centres, basic health products that are required by women can be distributed for free through open counters in supermarkets that are operational within communities and city centres.

Access to contraceptives and immunisation has been a huge challenge in Matabeleland South province. Some women walked long distances to get these health facilities only to be turned back by the nurses.

This is a huge service delivery challenge as a section of women have failed to get the assistance they needed hence being exposed to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

Mahole youths step up to develop their community

A Community with responsible and hardworking youths is a community likely to develop socially and economically. Mahole youths from Insiza South in ward 2 seem to be those youths that are committed to alleviate their marginalized society. Mahole youths recently renovated a road and a bridge that was in bad shape after they had promised to do so in a meeting that was organised by the Community Youth Development Trust. Not to be outdone, traditional leaders and the councilor also stepped up their efforts by teaming up with the youths in the process.

The youths argued that a collective approach was required for the community to improve.

"We now understand that service delivery is a twofold issue, where we as community members, we have to pitch in and help council where it is failing. As youths we notice that the RDC is incapacitated therefore we have come together as youths so as to fix the bridge and the road," said Morgan Ndlovu, a youth who was part of the initiative.

The condition of Zimbabwe's roads has been declining due to insufficient maintenance and rehabilitation. Year on year, budget allocations have compared unfavorably with funding considered adequate to maintain highway networks and conduct modest construction work. The situation is worse in rural areas where there are no tarred roads. Buses no longer ply rural area routes especially in Matabeleland South as it has become costly as bus operators constantly maintain and service vehicles.

Travelling has become expensive and out of reach for many and Rural district councils are turning a blind eye to the demise of its people. Beginning of 2019, Government reintroduced ZUPCO buses in its commitment to build a safe and reliable transport system in the country. Ever since the reintroduction of ZUPCO buses, especially in urban



Taking Responsibility: Young people from Mahole village busy fixing the road.

centres, operators have been forced to reduce their fares since they were losing customers to ZUPCO, which is charging low fares.

However, for Mahole community, there are no ZUPCO buses and operators plying the route are taking advantage of that by charging exorbitant fares.

"We have a problem with bus and kombi operators who are charging too much for their transport. We hear that in other areas there are ZUPCO buses that are affordable. We would also want to have these buses plying our route," said Thandiwe Ngulube at a CYDT community social accountability forum meeting.

The councilor of the ward, Lupia Mtonga concurred with Ngulube that bus operators are taking advantage of travellers. However, he notified the meeting that he has personally approached officials at the ZUPCO office to ask for a

bus to ply the route, he was advised that the roads are not conducive for the new ZUPCO buses.

"I understand the demise you are in. I personally went to ZUPCO offices to ask for a bus to ply our route, however I was told that our road and bridges are not good enough for the buses, therefore it is up to us now to do something seeing that we are the ones who will benefit if there is a ZUPCO bus that plies our route," Mtonga said.

Local authorities in Zimbabwe are designated as autonomous road authorities under the road act. They have autonomy in the management of infrastructure services in their jurisdiction, but they are subject to policy directives from central government. However, local authorities have failed to do so and because of that citizens have challenges when it comes to travelling.

Disadvantaged groups' lives matter



AS the world is currently engaged in a fierce battle with racism that has tortured and brutally killed many black lives, it is significant to closely focus on the lives of marginalised groups especially during the era of Corona virus.

The lives of disadvantaged groups like women, the girl child and the working class matter; their basic human rights must be respected, protected and fulfilled.

The age of Corona virus has left many marginalised groups who survived on the informal sector in a dire situation. While the government tried to distribute food to various marginalised groups at the beginning of the lockdown in Zimbabwe, that process was far from satisfying the needs of these groups.

Recently, the president of Zimbabwe Emerson Mnangagwa announced that people who were involved in the informal sector were required to register so they can be allowed to operate again.

This move is a subject of debate as it means that all small scale earners like vendors are now required to register their small businesses so they can be taxed.

To add more salt to the wound, the inflation rate continues to sky rocket in Zimbabwe, putting these small scale earners in a difficult situation. The prices of basic commodities are unbearable. Some commodities like mealie meal, rice, soap, cooking oil, sugar and salt are being sold in houses.

However, these products are being sold in Rands or US\$ which makes it

difficult for these marginalised groups to access them.

A group of women from Gwanda told CYDT that people who are finding it easy to survive are those who can access foreign currency.

“Those who can access foreign currency are the ones who are thriving. Some of our neighbors sale mealie meal, rice and cooking oil but they only accept foreign currency. The prices of goods are reasonable with foreign currency rather than in the Zimbabwean dollar,” commented one elderly woman.

To page 6...

...From page 6

Local Currency has been a letdown to the vendors too.

"The money I got from selling Amacimbi was worthless. I should have only accepted foreign currency. At home we now eat twice a day, breakfast and supper. Things are getting tougher by the day," another woman said while showing so much emotions.

These comments show the challenges these marginalised groups are facing in Mat-South Province and in Zimbabwe in general.

While the World Bank has already played its part in helping out Zimbabwe, more relief programs and donations from relevant stakeholders are required to look out for marginalised groups who are facing food shortages. Having food is a basic need that people require to survive. It is essential that the government prioritises the lives of people living in rural areas and high density suburbs who are the most vulnerable and most affected by the Corona virus outbreak.

It is not only food that these disadvantaged groups want, for instance, the girl child requires sanitary pads. Many female rural youths are struggling to access or buy sanitary pads as the prices of these are now soaring. The parents of these girls are incapacitated as most of them are vendors who have been on lock-down and not allowed to officially operate.

Items like sanitary pads are things which the girl child needs to access for free especially during Corona virus. Sanitary pads are not luxury, but a fundamental material required by the girl child. Just like condoms which are displayed in hospitals or clinics for free, sanitary pads need to be readily accessible for the girl child.

Some women are subjected to gender based violence while other women reportedly gave birth in quarantine centres. These are the challenges that require movements against the oppression of marginalised groups.

Women are not punching bags or balls to be kicked out by men whenever they feel like it. Being on lock-down is not a

crime committed by females; men must be in battle with Corona virus not their female counterparts.

Abusive men should not blame lock-down as an excuse for beating their wives. A crime is a crime; human rights need to continue encouraging women to speak out whenever they are subjected to any form of abuse. Despite being on lock-down, human rights activists can use their powerful social media accounts to encourage women to speak out since it has been reported that many women from patriarchal setups have accepted their domination to an extent that they do not report when their male partners violate them.

Zimbabwe universities are carrying out online teaching while other universities reportedly urged students to finish their dissertations on time despite being on lock-down. Many students from disadvantaged groups do not have laptops and



internet bundles to carry on with their work online. These youthful students survived on school learning materials. Therefore, many of them have been left behind as a result of these shortfalls.

While eLearning must be embraced, before its implementation, students from disadvantaged groups need to be taken into consideration. Failing to own a laptop, computer, or smart phones is not a choice. Therefore, students from marginalised groups need to be included in policy making processes before putting certain decisions into practice. Their voices extensively matter.

The lives of the disadvantaged groups matter; their human rights must be protected and observed during this period of the deadly Corona virus pandemic.

Jahunda Township health Crisis



Faced with shortages of water, overcrowded rooms, hand washing facilities and sharing a dilapidated public toilet, the disadvantaged groups of Jahunda are faced with a health dilemma.

Such conditions are not conducive enough to fight COVID 19, a disease that has shredded the global economy, imprisoned majority of people in their own homes and downheartedly, killed hundreds of thousands people.

With a disease like that at hand, it's heartbreaking that people from Jahunda township find themselves facing a health crisis that could enable the virus to rapidly spread, putting people's lives on the line.

Despite calls by residents from one of the oldest townships in Gwanda to

renovate the public toilet and improve water supply, the authorities have seemingly not done enough to ensure their safety.

For people to bend but not break when fighting this deadly pandemic, their environment must be well taken care of. This is not the case with Ward 4 as it is faced with a multi-layered health crisis.

One of these public toilets is reportedly experiencing regular blockage challenges which signify that a health crisis bomb is ticking.

"Sewer always flows from the toilet, across the yards and our children are always playing near the toilet. We are very concerned and worried on why the local authority has

been dragging for years to upgrade the public toilet system," a concerned resident said.

The flashing system in the public toilet is not functioning. Yet this is a facility that is supposed to service the already overcrowded population.

The Municipality of Gwanda has reportedly not lived up to their promise of installing a Jojo tank adjacent to the public toilet. This is putting the lives of Jahunda residents at risk and a sign of failure to deliver by the Municipality.

As the popular maxim goes "water is life", it is imperative that local authorities ensure that residents access clean water, a creative foundation in the fight against Corona virus.