



**ZIMBABWE
PEACE
PROJECT**

SOCIAL INCLUSION & THE PROMOTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN ZIMBABWE



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trocaire and its consortium partners namely Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR); Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP); Masakhaneni Project Trust (MPT), the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) Zimbabwe; CCJP Masvingo and CCJP Mutare through research sought to assess the extent to which their interventions promoted and upheld social inclusion for the poor and marginalised communities including the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs). The research brought to the fore opportunities as well as gaps to ensure greater social inclusion for the poor and marginalised communities including PWDs. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect data for the research.

The study revealed symptoms of exclusion that are pervasive among people who are poor and persons with disabilities in the target communities. Exclusion manifests in unequal access to resources, unequal participation and denial of opportunities. These symptoms manifest differently and in different intensities for the non-disabled poor communities and persons with disabilities. Consequently, exclusion has resulted in inability to access justice, information, duty bearers, inaccessible services, inability to access the built environment and systemic poverty. The consortium is working to reduce the symptoms of social exclusion as well as promote the rights of persons with disabilities through various interventions in the target areas. The diagram shows the interventions that consortium members are implementing to ensure the rights of the poor and PWDs are protected and promoted.

A disability is a long term physical, mental or sensory impairment which in interaction with the environment hinder the full participation of a person on an equal basis with others

These areas of programming increased social inclusion for poor and marginalised communities including persons with disabilities. While the project is positively impacting social inclusion for non-disabled people, there are challenges for achieving social inclusion for PWDs. Consortium members faced the following challenges in including persons with disabilities; lack of skills and competency to work with and mobilise PWDs, the lack of inclusive budgets to cater for inclusion costs such as sign language interpreters, braille materials and ramps for their premises.

While some consortium members struggled with social inclusion for persons with disabilities, there are others such as the ZPP and ZLHR who were able to include persons with disabilities in their programmes thus reduce exclusion and increase agency and the enjoyment of rights. Best practices for ensuring inclusion of PWDs was a result of building the capacity through training in Disability management, budgeting for disability inclusion, including PWDs in organisational governance structures, employing persons with disabilities and working with Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (ODPs) as well as disability service organisations. ZPP went a step further and included PWDs as human rights monitors in the target communities making the organisation more adept to meeting needs of PWDs. ZLHR undertook strategic litigation cases pre-COVID-19 and during COVID-19 to ensure access to information for persons who are Deaf and those with visual impairment.



INTRODUCTION

The social inclusion of the poor, marginalised and persons with disabilities is key to the Trocaire led consortium and its partners as they implement the second phase of Trace II ““Empowered Citizens and Communities Demanding their Rights and Holding Duty Bearers to Account.” The project seeks to strengthen the ability of communities to demand rights and hold duty bearers accountable using various approaches including monitoring of human rights violations, provision of legal support, improving access to justice, civic education and advocacy. Using research, the consortium sought to find empirical evidence on progress being made in social inclusion of the poor and marginalised communities as well as persons with disabilities. The research objectives were:

1. To gather evidence on the experiences of consortium partners (national) as well as community based organisations on social inclusion¹ and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in their work on Human rights promotion and protection.
2. To produce case studies on social inclusion and promotion of the rights of PWDs, and make necessary recommendations for reform
3. To disseminate findings and recommendations with government, civil society organisations, funding partners and other relevant stakeholders.

This policy brief provides an analysis of the findings and recommendations to enhance the social inclusion of marginalised communities including persons with disabilities.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Data for the research was collected using qualitative and quantitative methods. Data was collected using a survey, document review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

Quantitative data collected from survey was analysed using Kobo software. Documents and key informant interviews will be analysed using narrative analysis. The themes and patterns coming out of the data were clustered together. The researcher looked at how the patterns shed light on the broader research questions. The analysis looked out for deviations in the pattern and sought to explain these differences. Stories were extracted from the data and

¹ To cover and include in our human rights work those often not reached-the neglected, marginalized and poor women, men and youths in the secluded, far and remote villages of Zimbabwe.

importance was given to how these stories help to answer the study questions. The analysis observed how the themes that come out of the data agree with other studies conducted on the area under research.



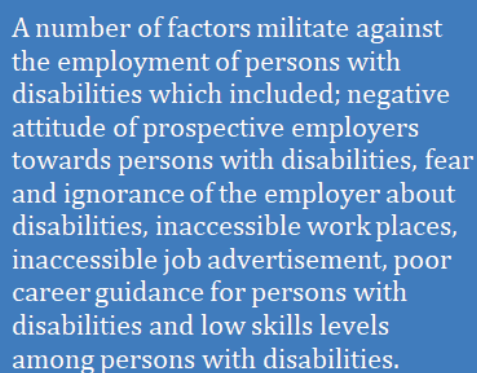
Data collection was negatively impacted by COVID- 19, which led to significant adjustment to methods. Face to face interaction was minimised and virtual or on line methods were adopted. These presented challenges of response rates and delays. In addition some key government departments and independent commissions were not forthcoming to participate in the research on virtual platforms.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The research revealed that consortium partners were making progress in promoting the social inclusion of marginalised communities that they were working with. As part of social inclusion, ZLHR deliberately took up strategic litigation cases aimed at promoting the rights of the underprivileged. This includes students denied access to their public examination results due to non-payment of schools fees. At the onset of COVID 19, ZLHR successfully secured a court order that compelled the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Information to provide information on COVID 19 to PWDs either through its print or electronic media. Consortium members such made progress in ensuring social inclusion for hard to reach communities. ZPP managed to reach out to both Binga and Chiredzi minority communities. In both Chiredzi, and Binga there are communities who are socially excluded due to being linguistic and cultural minorities. The exclusion is due to their limited access to information in their mother languages.

However, there are challenges in the social inclusion of persons with disabilities in the consortium's interventions. Two members of the consortium namely the ZPP and ZLHR were making progress in the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their human rights protection programmes. This was achieved as a result of including persons with disabilities as monitors for ZPP and taking on cases that protected the rights of persons with disabilities for the ZLHR.

Findings revealed challenges that most consortium members had challenges with the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their interventions. It is important to note that this exclusion was not intentional rather a result of the lack of technical competency on how to include with persons with disabilities.



A number of factors militate against the employment of persons with disabilities which included; negative attitude of prospective employers towards persons with disabilities, fear and ignorance of the employer about disabilities, inaccessible work places, inaccessible job advertisement, poor career guidance for persons with disabilities and low skills levels among persons with disabilities.

Challenges were faced in mobilising persons with disabilities to participate in programme activities. Persons with disabilities form 10-15 per cent in any community. It is important to note that persons with disabilities are a hard to reach group and this is a result of the stigma and discrimination that comes with disability. PWDs in most communities have not been given much value as persons with rights and as such can be easily forgotten and left out. Mobilisation for interventions is mostly done by community mobilisers who may also not have knowledge of how to mobilise and include persons with disabilities in their programmes. This lack of knowledge results in the exclusion of persons with disabilities. This makes it important for organisations to specifically target persons with disabilities in the recruitment of participants for activities.

Challenges for the social inclusion of persons with disabilities :

1. Inability to mobilise persons with disabilities
2. Lack of inclusive budgets to cater for the needs of persons with disabilities
3. Lack of technical competencies to include persons with disabilities in programmes
4. Negative societal attitudes
5. Not working with organisations for persons with disabilities
6. Lack of reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities
7. Lack of disability policies

Consortium members had challenges providing diverse support as persons with disabilities are not a homogenous group and have different needs for them to be included effectively. In most cases there was a lack of knowledge and awareness of the specific accommodations that were needed to be inclusive. These accommodations may include sign language interpreters, ramps, accessible facilities, information in simplified formats, large print, audio and braille as needed. While persons without disabilities are easier to reach as they can access information orally and are able to attend programmes, persons with disabilities require specific accommodations for them to be able to participate in events.

It was noted from the research that most organisations except the ZPP had not budgeted for disability inclusion. Inclusion has financial implications such as sign language interpreters' costs, modification of buildings to provide ramps and accessible restrooms, producing information in accessible formats such as large print, braille and audio formats costs money. In most cases when these needs arose organisations, did not have the resources to ensure that they could effectively provide for persons with disabilities. It was also noted that there were additional costs such as assistants' costs that were also not provided for. The lack of resources for inclusion reduced the preparedness of consortium members to include persons with disabilities.

Organisations reported lack of technical competencies to include persons with disabilities. Consortium members expressed a desire to work and include persons with disabilities however they lacked the technical skills to be inclusive. This is understandable given that disabilities are varied and they come with diverse needs. The lack of training in disability inclusion resulted in the inability to be inclusive.

Policies guide organisational practice, findings show that none of the members of the consortium had a disability inclusion policy. While there are policies for gender, safeguarding etc., the lack of disability policies meant that organisations did not have guidelines to support inclusion in programming. They lacked the parameters for mainstreaming disability to redress the disparities and inequalities between PWDs and non-disabled people.

LESSONS LEARNT AND BEST PRACTICES

Community based partners [CCJP Mutare, CCJP Masvingo and Masakhaneni Project Trust) successfully worked with the traditional leaders in their operation areas to deal with issues of women and children's rights. Winning the support of the village heads, headmen and chiefs as the traditional custodians of culture have been key to the successful roll out of human rights programmes.

A reasonable accommodation is the modification or adjustment to a process, the work environment or the way things are usually done.

Reasonable accommodations are not special treatment.

These include:

Physical changes:

1. Installing ramps or modifying restrooms

Accessible and assistive technologies

1. Computer software that is accessible
2. Screen reader software

Accessible communications

1. Sign language interpreters
2. Captions
3. Braille
4. Large print

From the research a number of important lessons and best practices were drawn that will support the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The provision of reasonable accommodations is key to ensuring social inclusion for persons with disabilities.

ZPP has provided reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities through the provision of sign language interpreters and making provisions for assistants as needed as well as accessible documents for those who need audio convertible documents.

Increased social inclusion was enhanced by having programmes that specifically targeted persons with disabilities. Consortium members that were successful at the inclusion of persons with disabilities were intentional about inclusion. They did not just desire to include persons with disabilities but they took the necessary steps to ensure that persons with disabilities participated in their programmes. They had to make the necessary adjustments to be inclusive. For example ZPP recruited 48 human rights monitors. This was intentional and targeted hence they were able to mobilise, train and deploy them.

Training the board and secretariat of implementing organisations in disability inclusion made the difference for the inclusion of PWDs. ZPP received disability inclusion training which equipped them with the requisite skills to make reasonable accommodations and include persons with disabilities in their programming.

ZLHR and ZPP worked with organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs). This made it possible to understand their priorities and meet them. Working with OPDs enabled ZLHR to successfully litigate against the violations of the rights of persons with disabilities. Working with lawyers who are visually impaired, ZLHR successfully litigated for the right to secret ballot for persons with visual impairment. Working with Deaf Zimbabwe Trust and the Centre for Disability Rights, ZLHR successfully sued the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Services and the Ministry of Health and Childcare for failure to provide COVID 19 information in accessible formats.

Success in social inclusion of marginalised communities and PWDs was a result of budgeting for inclusion. It is important to provide resources that will support inclusion. Organisations that successfully included persons with disabilities were those whom from the onset provided resources for the reasonable accommodations to be provided. These included budgeting for sign language interpreters, accessible formats, and providing for assistants. This increased the preparedness and capacity of ZPP to include persons with disabilities in their programmes. As a result inclusion was not an afterthought as resources had been budgeted for.

Employing persons with disabilities provided the practical experience of persons with disabilities for organisations which enhanced the inclusion of persons with disabilities. ZLHR has employed a person with a disability. Employing a PWD enhanced inclusion for the organisation as accommodations were adopted. This also increased knowledge of disability within the organisation. The PWD also acted as the conscience of the organisation to ensure that their interventions were inclusive.

ZPP included in their board a person with a disability as a board member. This has increased the voice of PWDs at the policy making level of the organisation. Consequently, issues of persons with disabilities are prioritized in programme design and planning processes that would otherwise not be taken into account. ZPP has conducted a number of dialogues at the national level on issues that affected persons with disabilities such as the right to transport and the lockdown.

The lack of disability inclusive budgets meant partners were not ready to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Adopting the twin track approach to disability inclusion will ensure that persons with disabilities are included in development programmes. A twin track approach that supports disability mainstreaming and disability specific interventions to ensure that no one is left behind thus achieve full inclusion and participation of PWDs.

From the findings of the research, the following recommendations have been made to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities:

Recommendations for CSOs

- Organisations need to budget for inclusion. Budgeting for inclusion means anticipating costs that are associated with inclusion such as sign language interpreters, braille, assistants where they are needed and ramps and other necessary reasonable accommodations.
- Organisations need to embark on an inclusion audit to assess the extent to which they are inclusive and the changes they need to make to be able to include excluded communities

- Training in disability management is important to provide organisations with the skills and competencies needed to mobilise, recruit and support social inclusion of PWDs in programmes.
- Reasonable accommodations needs to be provided for inclusion to be genuine and not token or lip service
- Organisations need to include persons with disabilities in their governance structures to ensure that issues of inclusion are prioritised
- Consortium members need to work with organisations of persons with disabilities so that their interventions are in sync with the needs and the realities of the target group.
- Employing persons with disabilities will improve social inclusion as PWDs are provided equal opportunities and organisations will lead by example making inclusion real not lip service.
- Organisations need to develop inclusion policies, these will provide guidelines for mainstreaming disability in the organisation, facilitate the provision of services for PWD and provide guidance on how to address social barriers in interventions

Recommendations for Donors

For disability inclusion to be a reality, funding partners need to do the following:

- Provide funding for disability mainstreaming in interventions. Funding for disability mainstreaming will ensure that PWDs are included in mainstream civil society. These include allowing funding for sign language interpreters, training in inclusion and other reasonable accommodations that will ensure inclusion. Interacting with persons with disabilities by organisations can support changing attitudes and removing stigma.
- Provide funding for disability specific interventions to ensure greater inclusion for PWDs through programmes that are done by Organisations for persons with disabilities or Disability Service organisations. This will ensure that persons with disabilities are part of the change agents and drive the inclusion.
- Support the development of disability inclusion policies and disability management training in development cooperation.
- Create quotas for funding that supports persons with disabilities in planning for development cooperation.
- Appoint disability champions in their organisations
- Involving persons with disabilities in decision making processes as advisors to ensure

issues of persons with disabilities are included throughout the programme design process.

- Support research such as baseline studies, situational analysis and the disaggregation of data for persons with disabilities to ensure they are part of programmes and have the necessary support they need.

Recommendations for the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ)

The government of Zimbabwe has an obligation to ensure that persons with disabilities participate and develop at the same level as others removing the barriers to participation. This can be done through a number of ways including:

- Aligning the Disabled Persons Act to the constitution. The Disabled Persons Act that Zimbabwe is using was promulgated in 1992 and has become out-dated and out of touch with the current realities. It is urgent that the Government of Zimbabwe develops legislation that is current and in touch with the realities and needs of persons with disabilities.
- The government of Zimbabwe need to domesticate the Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities which was ratified in 2013.
- Collection of disability specific data is a priority and the GoZ has the mandate to collect demographic information on citizens. The GoZ should ensure the collection and provision of disability disaggregated data which makes it possible for development programmes and services to target persons with disabilities more accurately.
- All ministries should mainstream disabilities in their programming as well as introduce Disability focal persons to ensure accountability and the genuine inclusion of PWDs in government programmes.
- Embark on awareness campaigns to change attitudes towards persons with disabilities and reduce stigma
- Walk the talk on inclusion through employing persons with disabilities to increase opportunities for engagement between PWDs and Non-disabled persons promoting genuine inclusive development.
- Ensure adequate resources are allocated in the national budget to reflect the priorities of PWDs through allocation of resources towards assistive devices, education and training for PWDs and Non-Disabled people.
- Ensure that experienced and qualified persons with disabilities are represented in all boards, commissions and decision making positions.

OUR PARTNERS



THE CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR
JUSTICE AND PEACE IN ZIMBABWE
DIOCESE OF MASVINGO



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