

CHITOWNNEWS BULLETIN

Issue No. 1 of 2013

15 February

A citizen reporting platform for Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe

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Editorial

We welcome you into 2013, hoping that you had a fruitful festive season.

We apologise for the delay in publication of your favourite citizen reporting bulletin from Chitungwiza, Musha mukuru. We have been experiencing some in house developments within the organization (CCDN) as we strive to improve the delivery of timeous news and information regarding developments taking place in Chitungwiza.

The bulletin was rebranded and named Chitownnews Bulletin to complement our on line citizen reporting platform www.chitownnews.com, which we have recently launched. The platform uses the concept of crowd sourced /citizen journalism which is based on ordinary citizens taking an active role in the processes of collecting, reporting, disseminating news and information for consumption by other individuals.

We hope that the platform is going to break the information barrier that exists in Chitungwiza between citizens, policy/decision makers and the other relevant stakeholders like the diaspora. The aim of the project is to promote the unheard brilliant ideas that marginalized people have regarding developmental issues taking place in their communities.

Apart from providing news and information on issues taking place in Chitungwiza, the platform will also provide the community of Chitungwiza with an opportunity to embrace e-commerce among consumers and providers of goods and services.

Entrepreneurs practicing various trades in the informal economy in Chitungwiza will have the opportunity to advertise their products and services on the website.

We hope that citizens of Chitungwiza and other stakeholders will embrace the platform as we strive to build better communities that are characterized by the enjoyment of people's rights by all.

The announcement of the referendum date must not trigger a fresh wave of political violence among individuals and communities. Zimbabweans must show political maturity and shun of all forms of political violence. The nation and our communities do not deserve to witness another wave of violence like the one that took place in 2008.

We urge political players in our communities who thrive on violence and abuse of people's rights to desist from such heinous activities. Let the people speak. It's their rights to freely participate in selecting their leadership without undue influence.

We continue to urge the young and the old, the employed and the unemployed to freely participate in the upcoming constitutional referendum and the subsequent general elections. Every person who is 18 years and above should make sure to register as a voter and inspect their name on the voters role at any of the Registrar's offices in their area.

We should all get a copy of the constitution, read and understand it. Participation in civic education activities on the draft constitution that will be done by various players including the government and civil society is also a must.

To who have not yet registered, you should take your national identification document together with your proof of residence and head straight to the registrar general's offices in your community.

Remember it's your right to participate. Your vote is your secret!

Regards,

Chitownnews team.

Chitownnews conducts a citizen reporting training workshop

By Blessing Pasango



Trained citizen reporters pose for a group photo after the training workshop.

Seke, Chitungwiza - Chitownnews conducted a citizen reporting training workshop on the 6th and 7th of February 2013. The workshop was attended by twenty young women and men of Chitungwiza from various backgrounds within the town. The aim of the workshop was to educate the participants on the basics of news gathering, reporting, fact verification, photography, risks and use of social media sites in promoting citizen reporting.

The participants are expected to feed news and information regarding issues taking place in their communities on the online www.chitownnews.com. "The aim of the project is promote freedom of expression, information and communication among the marginalized residents of Chitungwiza who are not consulted in decision and policy making processes", said Mutakiwa Shayanowako, the founding project editor and coordinator.

"We want to provide a platform for debate and interaction among citizens, policy and decision makers in solving developmental challenges prevailing in the third largest and fastest growing urban area in Zimbabwe", continued Mutakiwa Shayanowako.

Citizen reporting/journalism is a fairly new concept that started in the 1980's and has continued to grow. The concept entails private individuals playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting and disseminating news and information for consumption by other individuals.

When news and events take place, they are mostly witnessed by the citizens who will then inform the media and the which will then broadcasts the information back to the citizens. The rapid developments in the information communication technology industry has aided the growth and practice of citizen reporting worldwide over the last decade.

The website will also provide a platform for entrepreneurs plying various trades in the informal economy to advertise and market their products at no costs so as to improve their livelihoods situation in a country where unemployment is more than 80%.

"We also aim to improve the way which entrepreneurs in the informal economy and consumers conduct their business", said Shayanowako.

"It is essential that we enable young people to see themselves as participants in one of the most exciting eras in history, and to have a sense of purpose in relation to it." ~ Nelson Rockefeller

Municipality fails to seduce residents

By Farai Dauramanzi



Chitungwiza municipality poster at Makoni shopping centre recently.

Chitungwiza – The municipality of Chitungwiza’s 100% promotion which was launched in December last year in an effort to entice residents to pay their outstanding water bills and outstanding levies has so far grossed in US 1,2 million , a paltry figure from the US 40 million owed to council by the residents . In a recent interview the town clerk for Chitungwiza, Mr George Makunde attributed failure of the promotion to prevailing economic hardships and the ailing economy.

“So far we have managed to recover 3% of the debt owed by residents. The poor flow is due to the fact that most people are struggling to cope in this throttled economy,” said Mr Makunde.

However some residents such as Rosemary Mangwiro of Unit L are of the view that council should improve its service delivery to the residents before they can expect residents to pay.

“What money do they need, they (council) should repair these roads not to concentrate on filling up pot-holes with sand in a rainy season like now and expect residents to give them money,” said a fuming Mangwiro.

Another resident identified as Nathan (26) of Zengeza 1 said council should show residents that they are putting some effort towards improving service delivery before residents can pay their bills.

“How do they expect residents to give them money when they are not showing any efforts of improving service delivery?” probed Nathan.

On the other hand some residents believe that residents should try to support the municipality if services are to improve. Gogo Chabuda, a 63 year old widow from Unit D said if she had the money she would have taken advantage of the promotion.

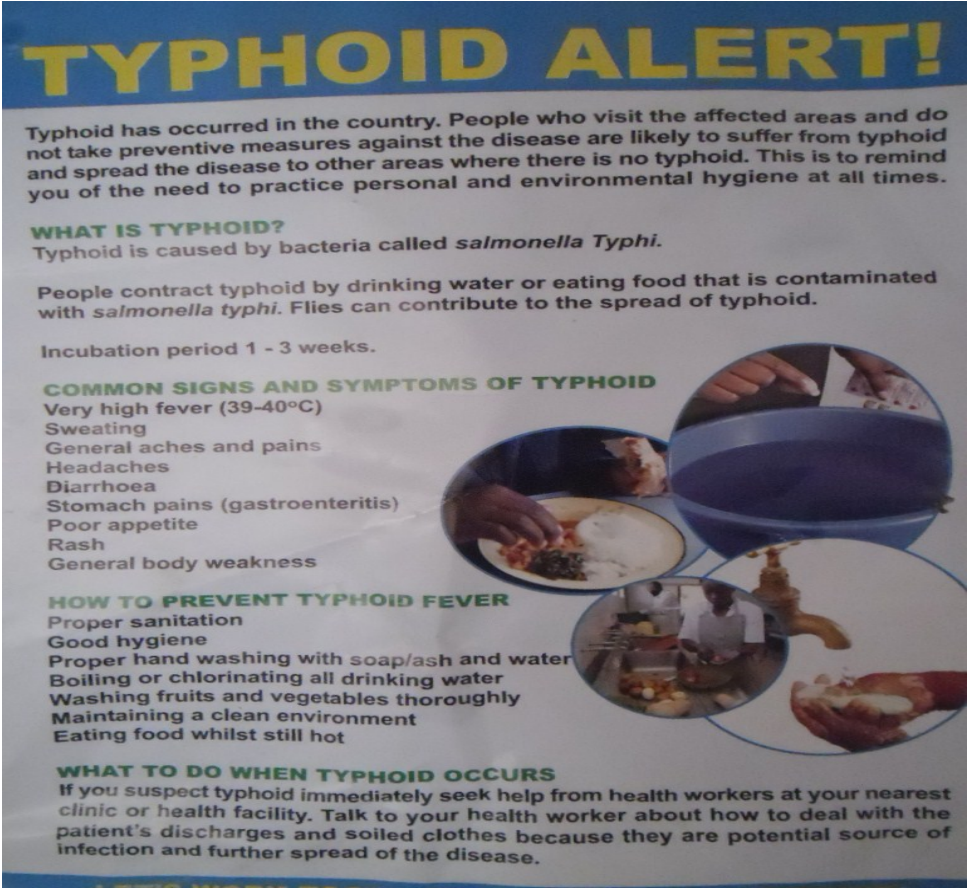
“If I had the money I would have paid because it’s a noble idea which can go a long way in helping widows like me to cope with the debts,” said Gogo Chabuda.

The Council is said to owe the City of Harare more US15 million in water charges and is failing to settle its debts. The City of Harare is threatening to cut off the Municipality of Chitungwiza completely from its supply network.

The Chitungwiza Municipality is failing to provide its residents with proper and consistent service delivery. The service delivery system is on life support as the town management is struggling to convince residents of their capabilities. On average each household is said to owe council more than US 500 in water and services delivery charges according to a council source.

Suspected typhoid outbreak in Chitungwiza

By Citizen Reporter



Typhoid alert fliers that were distributed in Chitungwiza recently.

Chitungwiza- Typhoid related illnesses have been reported in Chitungwiza’s Zengeza and St Marys suburbs. An average of 5 people were being admitted to Chitungwiza General Hospital daily in the past week suffering from the deadly disease, according to a source (name supplied) who was admitted at the general hospital suffering from the disease last week for 3 days.

“I was admitted at Chitungwiza general hospital for three days and was discharged on the 8th of February”, said the source. Residents are concerned about the silence that is surrounding this new outbreak, particularly from the health department when you consider how lethal this disease can be.

Though the exact sources of these reported cases cannot be determined, typhoid is generally caused by unhygienic environments which allow the bacteria salmonella Typhoid to thrive. Flies can also contribute to the spread of typhoid.

Common signs of typhoid include very high fevers, sweating, general headaches, diarrhoea, stomach pains, poor appetite, rash and general body weakness according to a Ministry of Health and Child Welfare (Health Promotion Unit) information pamphlet.

The continuous unavailability of water in most of the Chitungwiza’s neighbourhoods is forcing residents to resort to unsafe drinking water sources which include shallow ponds and wells thereby exposing them to the risk of catching typhoid.

Inconsistent refuse collection by the municipality in most neighbourhoods is leaving residents and business operators with no option but to dump their garbage in public places, again risking their own lives to such diseases. The absence of sanitary facilities in most public spaces has resulted in residents relieving themselves in open spaces threatening the health of the whole community.

The rainy season is known to be a time when such water borne diseases such as typhoid wreck havoc on the populace.

Efforts to get a comment from the city’s health authorities proved fruitless.

“People become really quite remarkable when they start thinking that they can do things. When they believe in themselves they have the first secret of success.” ~ Norman Vincent Pale

Around Chitungwiza in pictures



Five people were killed and three houses were completely destroyed when a “mysterious blast occurred in Zengeza 2 suburb in early January.



Tents that were provided to the affected families by Red Cross Society.



Chitownews citizen reporters during the citizen reporting training workshop in Unit G, Seke.



This part of corner Rufaro road and Hombarume Drive has been an eyesore to commuters and the general public in Zengeza 1 and St Mary’s.



The poor state of Chitungwiza’s road network in most suburbs.



Munyaradzi Makombe (in green t-shirt) being helped by relatives to cut his 20th birthday cake in CA, St Mary’s recently.