

Now Zimbabwe Trust

Research paper

Topic :

Extent of youth participation in policy formulation : A case study of Epworth and Mhondoro Marirangwe Communities , with specific focus on the Indigenization and Empowerment Bill.

Date :01 August -12 August 2011

FROM THE NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR

Now Zimbabwe Trust (NZIT) is always committed to embarking on a fruitful period of effecting maximum youth participation and inclusion in their own development process .The organization is emerging and working with urgency to respond to the changing environment through membership drive, development mobilization, psycho-social support, creative research and publications to foster youth participation in the challenges they face. **NZIT** has an understanding of the communities in which they live which has enabled us to come up with relevant responsive, integrated and highly participatory programmes. Most of our beneficiaries are being trained on human rights, peace, leadership, democracy and development mobilization. From the interaction between **NZIT** and its members confidence building and solidarity has been initiated amongst the youth in their communities. **NZIT** has a fast growing membership in Harare urban, Colleges, Chitungwiza, Chegutu, Marondera, Schools, Mhondoro, Shamva , Bindura ,Mutare , Gweru , Bulawayo and Chinhoyi. Having realized the need for a platform for the youth to express their opinions, views, challenges and grievances without fear, **NZIT** has helped the youth through creating a youth mailbox and social networking. Having mentioned accomplishing our mission, there are challenges which **NZIT** has faced that fortunately can be easily outweighed by what we are achieving.

Obvious Mutizwa

NOW ZIMBABWE TRUST (HARARE)

Implements development mobilization projects. Conducts youth advocacy and training on leadership, peace building and good governance.

OUR IDENTITY

Now Zimbabwe Trust is an immediate response by the youth which works for improving youth leadership and participation in all aspects of development embracing democratic principles towards a sustainable youth development process.

Accountability Advocacy Responsibility Respect for humanity Teamwork, Transparency and Commitment.

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NOW ZIMBABWE TRUST AT A GLANCE

Background

Now Zimbabwe Trust is a non –profit making youth organization which was founded to effectively contribute towards a participatory and inclusive youth development process in Zimbabwe through a process of development mobilization.

Vision

An inclusive development process in Zimbabwe where there is full participation by the youth, where youth rights are recognized and young people are at the centre of their development with respect for humanity.

Mission Statement

To address youth vulnerability and ignorance in order to develop young people of responsibility who appreciate the importance of participation in contributing towards their own development in a bid to reduce marginalization, poverty and curb the further spread of HIV and AIDS.

Foreword

Major changes in the political landscape of Zimbabwe have impacted on the socio- economic conditions. The Government of National Unity has brought fresh hope for recovery. Uncertainty though, still remains the biggest Achilles-heel with major cries such as political violence and a lack of rule of law still clinging on to our bag of challenges.

For the youth who are living in poverty and on the margins of society, the difference between normal life and what outsiders define as a crisis might be marginal. Poverty and exclusion are themselves a kind of chronic emergency. This is to such an extent that even modest changes in their situation may enable the youth to either increase their toe hold on survival, or plunge them into deeper crisis. At present participation by the youth in issues that affect their own development is minimal or to be more accurate next to zero.

Poverty has seen the youth become more and more vulnerable. Sources of livelihood now include humanitarian food assistance, vending and remittances from families in urban areas which are also limited as even those in towns and cities are living below the poverty datum line of USD 509-00. The Zimbabwe Central Statistics Office approximates that about 85% are in informal employment and 83% live on less than USD 2 a day. HIV and AIDS continue to cause havoc amongst the youth threatening the country's human productive assets and thus affecting household food security and income. Estimates suggest that HIV prevalence is around 13.63% (Zimbabwe national HIV and AIDS estimates, 2009, Ministry of Health and Child welfare). Despite their vulnerability, very little external support manages to reach the youth. Based on experience, poverty tends not only to be characterized by material insufficiency but also by the denial of rights. According to the report on the world conference by the United Nations Committee on Economic , Social and Cultural Rights, the fact that 1/5 of the world's population is affected by poverty, hunger , diseases , mortality and insecurity is sufficient ground for concluding that the economic ,social and cultural rights of those persons are being denied on a massive scale.

For Now Zimbabwe Trust, our work has evolved into a twin track campaign for community organization and pressure for improved public policies. To achieve the implementation of basic rights, subsistence, security and liberty, development and the rights of indigenous and rural people. This entails expanding the possibilities of redress of violation of human rights. It would certainly be salutary, in these circumstances for **NZIT** and other development agencies to drop pretension of being neutral. Our mandate is a more overly political stance on which we try to encourage and support social movements by the youth to enable them to demand their rights, to ensure that it is indeed their voice which is being heard. The gradual increase in our membership has also seen the scaling up on scope of our work to a mutual understanding, led by the youth that **NOW** is the time to demand a stake in the developmental process of our own society.

Aim

An Analysis of youth participation in community development that develops a responsive framework to foster their participation in contributing towards their own development.

OBJECTIVES

- To measure the extend of youth participation in community development by engaging at least 25 youths from Mhondoro Marirangwe community by conducting focus group discussions and interviews on the indigenization and empowerment bill .
- To determine the role of the youth in community development in Zimbabwe by conducting interviews and focus group discussions with at least 25 youths from Epworth community on the indigenization and empowerment bill .
- To foster youth participation towards policy formulation in Zimbabwe by capturing youth initiatives from at least 50 youth from Mhondoro Marirangwe and Epworth communities and circulating 25 copies of the research findings to relevant stakeholders.

It has been stated that prosperity and economic independence of a nation does not rest so much in its existing factories as in its research and development laboratories (Ravetz 1971)

DEFINITIONS

Rights based approach

A more overtly political stance in which Non-Governmental Organizations (**NGOs**) try to encourage and support social movements of the oppressed to enable the poor to demand their rights (**Action Aid**).

Strategy

A co-ordinated set of participatory and continuously improving process of analysis and debate , capacity strengthening, planning and investment which seeks to integrate the short and long term economic, social and environmental objectives of society through mutually supportive approaches wherever possible (**UN Foundation for Sustainable Development**).

Enabling Rights

Rights that empower people to meaningfully engage in their political economy and to use their democratic bodies to defend and secure the means to fulfill needs (**Rights to Information, Infrastructure, Self determination; the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2009**)

Well being

A complex, fuzzy state, whose definition varies across different societies in pursuit of satisfaction and happiness with fundamental requirements for a fulfilling life where needs must be satisfied for everybody, whatever their status and democratic rights and freedom being upheld for all (www.un.org).

Development

By definition about change involves innovation, which is the process of delivering to people the knowledge generated by research in a form that has useful and enduring benefits (**OECD, 1980**).

Participation

The descriptive elements include self strength , control, self power, self reliance, own choice , life of dignity in accordance with one's values , capability of fighting for one's rights , independence , own decision making being free, awakening and capability –just to mention a few (**International Design for All Conference, 2006**)

Empowerment

The expansion of freedom of choice and action, increasing one's authority and control over the resources and decisions that affects one's life (**UN Publications 2003**)

Poverty

A total absence of opportunities accompanied by high levels of malnourishment, hunger ,illiteracy , lack of education, physical and mental ailments, emotional and social instability, unhappiness and hopelessness for the future that is characterized by a chronic shortage of social, economic and political participation, relegating individuals to exclusion as social beings(www.un.org) .

Development should be consistent with human dignity which is hard to preserve in cases of hunger, disease and deprivation, dependency on others. The most important thread running in this is that the people of all nations have the right to determine their own development path (Hopper 19)

Justification

“Everyone is entitled to the rights set forth in this declaration without distinction of any kind such as race, colour , sex, language, religion, political and other opinion, national, social origin, property , birth or other status”(Article number 2 of the UN declaration of Human Rights) . Self determination is in itself a right enshrined in the bill of rights and as the above statement clearly states, youth in Zimbabwe are so entitled. There is need for closer attention to the links between democracy, development and satisfaction of basic needs, with special attention to the most disadvantaged sectors of the community such as women, children, youth and disabled persons. The youth in Zimbabwe constitute 70% of the entire population. It is by no means a secret that these youths are made vulnerable by poverty, unemployment, HIV and AIDS, fear and insecurity, and lack basic amenities such as water and sanitation.

Yet this is so, when important matters that affect them, such as the drafting of policies like the indigenization and empowerment bill, they are totally left out of the picture. They are subjected to manipulation and marginalization by those that perceive themselves to be the majority. Youth are often the perpetrators and victims of politically motivated disturbances. This does not go to say that the youth do not know the future they want. The fulfillment of basic rights, a conducive environment where there is no fear or discrimination and a stake in decisions that impact on their wellbeing is certainly on the agenda of every youth in Zimbabwe .The platform to create confidence and solidarity when being confronted by formidable forces of torture, terror and violence is what the youth need to catapult themselves from the desperate situation.

Sources of Funds

The funds for the research were made possible by **Now Zimbabwe Trust Fund**. The **NZIT** fund is based on its ongoing membership programme. This goes to say that this research paper was made possible by the youth and for the youth.

Universal Human requirements for wellbeing – the right to live and enjoy a productive, diverse and fully functioning biosphere (UN Publication 2001).

TARGET GROUP

- Vulnerable youth (Age between 16-30)
- Mainly young females

Communities targeted

- Mhondoro Marirangwe- a semi-rural farming community 36 km from Harare. The community is adversely affected by the effects of climate change and similarly plunged by challenges such as HIV/AIDS, poverty, hunger and are lacking in basic services.
- Epworth – a peri- urban community 17km from Harare characterized by slum dwellings and an overdependence on Humanitarian Aid. Poverty, hunger, unemployment and HIV/AIDS are some of the major challenges crippling this community.

Sampling Frame

At least 25 research participants were selected randomly from each of the respective communities.

The way to avoid dependency is to maximize the area within which people are able to make decisions for themselves (Turton, 1993)

Methodology

Social methods of research were mainly employed to develop research findings.

- Focus group discussions – the participants were involved in discussion of at least five individuals per group and stimulated to debate on the research topic.
- Interviewing – Questionnaires were developed and administered by the research team to capture information from the participants.

- Recording.

Some key topics for debate included:

- What is your opinion on the indigenization and empowerment bill?
- Did you manage to participate in the crafting of the bill?
- Do you think youth participation in policy formulation is a fundamental for community development?
- What do you think should be done to foster youth participation in Zimbabwe?

NB: topics were simplified for easy understanding of the research participants.

Learning about human rights is in itself a right, imposed ignorance is a violation of human rights
(REFLECT, 2003)

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Highlights

Activities done	Target reached	Comments
Focus group discussion	54	-Led to a spirit of confidence and Solidarity amongst these youth.
Interviewing (Questionnaires)	55	-85% of questionnaires managed to create useful data to relate to the topic.
Political conscientisation	54	Genuine interests in influencing policy Formulation and deciding for their Own development process.
Human Rights Training	54	This was done to dissolve the state of

broken consciousness.

Membership drive	105	More women were encouraged to become part of the network that demands an immediate response to the fulfillment of rights.
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Interview with the Ministry Of youth development and Economic empowerment	0	Efforts to get audience with the Ministry were fruitless.
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Communication should be a right in itself. The right of people to inform and to express themselves

Without restraint (UN Publications 2001)

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RESULTS

- 15 % of the youth know the contents of the indigenization and empowerment bill.
- 89 % claimed to have heard about the bill.
- None of the participants acknowledged having contributed towards the formulation of the bill.

- At least 120 leaflets containing basic human rights were distributed amongst the target population.
- 105 youth from the two selected communities joined the gradually increasing group of members of NZIT.
- Consciousness on the importance of youth participation in community development initiatives was created.

Expand for human rights educators and activists to draw upon existing information, support and extent these networks (OECD development centre)

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Limitations

- Limited outreach due to fear of politically motivated violence and discrimination.
- Resource constraints were a major set back as more could have been done to disseminate relevant information on participation as a fundamental human right.

Lessons Learnt

- Most of the youths especially in rural and semi-rural settings lack awareness of their basic human rights.
- It is not that the youth are apathetic to their situation but that they lack cohesion, confidence, solidarity and strong leadership that can organize them into a force that can demand their rights.
- Most youths have been robbed of their dignity and worth by especially poverty, unemployment and HIV/AIDS and end up vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation to acts of political violence.
- Need to source more external support for youth activism.

HIV is widely regarded among the main obstacles preventing Africa from attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

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Emerging Gaps/Recommendations

- Youth development programmes.
- Data/ information gap.
- Private sector partnership.
- Revision and implementation of national youth policy through full participation.

- Absence of a multi-sectoral platform for youth involvement.
- Opportunities for more political advocacy and capacity building of young people.
- Funding to smaller organizations as it is directed to larger organizations that have more visibility and marketing abilities.

IMPLEMENT NOW OR !

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Acknowledgements

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