

ZIMBABWE AHEAD PROJECT ASSESSMENT REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

I was very delighted to have the opportunity to have a tour of your project in Makoni. One word that still rings in my head up is sustainability. Your project is a good case study of projects in the country where villagers are empowered holistically and begin to live a life of the fundamental principals of the project. Kindly accept my assessment of your project. I have also tried to discuss a few areas I think I would be interested in working on when I join your organisation. The issues are discussed not in any particular order. I hope this will help revive the dream of making Zimbabwe Ahead an organization which will improve the livelihood of most Zimbabweans. I have discussed different issues under distinct sub headings.

ADMINISTRATION

The Administration of an organization forms the overall governing body of any organization. It gives the tone of the organization. It manages material resources and human resources so that we achieve the desired goals of the project. The administration is accountable to the donor and is responsible for writing reports and collectively accounting for the resources and activities of the organization. This may start from simply recording visitors coming to the organization and their purpose of visit to recording the use of fuel and facilitating organizational audits. This seems lacking at Z. A. (Zimbabwe

Ahead). This could have resulted in partial collapse of the organization. There was no one on the site to talk total control of the organization. Depending of the availability of funds I hope to set up an Administration that will actively and jealously guard the goals of the organization. A proper organogram needs to be established so that reporting channels are mapped out to minimize duplication of roles. A simple job evaluation and audit will be necessary to organize all employees in anticipation for growth that can be encountered in the country. Incentives will be given to staff so as to retain them by all means. Once we are back on our feet again we do not want to drop down again. I was also happy to note that the organization is legally registered and that will make operations easier in the politically volatile climate.

STRATEGIC PALANNING

Strategic planning is very important if we are to reach out to the many people we want to serve. Strategic planning involves communicating to partners and beneficiaries the direction the organization wants to take. This is done in consultation so that we do not end up perceiving our own solution to perceived problems. Strategic planning will include forecasting on the past, present and future economic and political climate of the organization so that strategies are mapped on how the organization will be able to survive in those time. Startegic planning does not only involve reacting to problems but anticipating problems and taking action before hand. Starategic planning also involves getting the right people for the different jobs that may arise and giving people induction training so that they fit well in the job. A probation period will be set to try and confirm the suitability of the candidate. Performance based assessment can be instituted so that people perform. All this structures are put in place not to victimize people but to ensure that not only organizational goals are met but also individual goals are met as well. Keeping in pace with the demands of programming is key in social work. Latest technologies and practices should be incorporated so that our survival is guaranteed. Regular meeting for feedbacks and continuous training is fundamental to ensure that field officers continue to

meet the organizational needs. This will help them get the latest information on areas of interest.

POLICIES

It is my plan to come and introduce key organizational policies. This will help support our work in the light of the different requirements of donors. Here are some of the policies that we could establish and enforce.

1. Human Resource Policy – Job evaluation, remuneration, promotion, demotion etc.
2. Transport Policy - transport allowances, vehicle upkeep, mileages, fuel, log books, servicing etc.
3. Code of Conduct – ethics, rules, regulations, dress code, relations with others.
4. Disciplinary Procedures – disciplinary measures, dismissal, warnings etc.
5. HIV/AIDS workplace Policy – attempt to support our staff on issues of HIV, work place prevention activities etc.
6. Gender Policy – gender sensitivity
7. Induction Training Policy

These policies are not meant to enslave people but to protect them and enable them to work in a conducive atmosphere. This will help us manage our staff as the organization grows to cover many different communities in the country

STRATEGY FOR FUNDRAISING

This is a very important area in the operation of most NGOs. Fundraising includes knowing who the donors available for different programmes are. This requires someone who is alert, checks in the press, constantly browses the net and is willing to make networks with other organizations so as to get adequate funds to get the organization on the road. A lot of work is needed in this area. It

is crucial to note that it is not only fundraising that is important but fulfilling all the donor requirements is key in retaining donors. Performance at the office and in the field will not only help us to achieve our goals but also help us to attract more donors. I intend to make sure that interim, narrative, financial and audit reporting is done and done timeously to the different donors and to the Director of the organization.

Constant communication and dialogue with donors is important so that all the effort put in the project

will help the beneficiaries. It is important to reiterate that a strategy to make sure that more resources filter down to the beneficiaries is crucial.

Fundraising requires someone who sensitive to the needs of the donor, this includes meeting deadline and proper accountability of work in the field and at the office. A reputation needs to be build so that our organization becomes marketable nationally and internationally.

INTERNET SERVICES

I noticed and realized that the organization's email and internet services are either not functioning or poorly functioning. Further investigations needs to be made and a solution proposed to end the problem. It will be very difficult for the Programme Manager to start fund raising without the services of the email or the internet. I also recommend that all communication be directed straight to the office and then the office will work on decisions in consultation of the director and the Board.

FOREIGN CURRENCY ACCOUNT

A foreign currency account for the organization is important as this helps the organization to make some purchases in forex and that will become cheaper at the end of the day. A foreign currency account will help us to give our staff their salaries in forex. This will help us to retain our staff and ensure that we do not regularly adjust salaries. Adequate consultation will be done with the

relevant authorities to ensure that all legal channel and procedures are followed.

FIELD WORK

One of the major strengths of Z.A. is its field work. I was very impressed with what I saw. People are truly empowered with life skills so that they are able to continue with life despite the current economic and political challenges. People are taught different life skills which include bee keeping, farming, herbal gardens, oil pressing just to mention a few. Even if Z.A. is to close the community can continue with these projects.

One interesting aspect of these projects is that they are community based and they were implemented after consultation with the community. The project on Health Clubs is brilliant. A visit to one of the home stead showed a high level of cleanliness. I was surprised that at the age of about sixty five the old lady had time to read a few books on hygiene and good health practices. She explained how the herbal project helped supplement their diet and help people suffering from HIV.

I was also mesmerized to note that the people had built a community training centre with very little help from Z.A. This only shows that with more resources the people can do more. I learnt that it is possible to mobilize the community to get them to do projects that benefit them without necessarily splashing a lot of resources to them. What is probably lacking is trying to organize those activities so that they are properly recorded and monitored. Follow up to such activities is now lacking and it is the duty of the organization to give information, skills and best practices on different projects. This will help to keep the spirit.

REPORTING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

I noticed that a lot could be done on reporting. Reporting basically involves giving an accurate account of organizational activities. This involves field work, net working and financial operations. The world will not know what we are doing if that is not reported. Staff should be well trained on the best methods of reporting so that documentation meets the needs of the donors. Good data collection and reporting makes it easier for monitoring and evaluation. We should have evidence to show that the project is progressing. This will help us to ascertain the suitability and reliability of the chosen intervention tools. With this research can be instituted effectively. Again research will help us to stay abreast of time. Our communities are dynamic and in order to be able to help them we should be able to move ahead of them.

MARKETING

We need to market our organization and its products. A lot of work is being done in the field but is not known. A lot of people are taking advantage of this to poach our work. We need to market our products nationally and internationally. We need to pack our products using the latest packaging that is attractive. We need to develop a label and make it known to the rest of the world. This will help us market our products and that of our beneficiaries. We want to try and maximize the benefit that our people will get from this endeavor. The dream is that one day Z.A. will be able to take care of its self without necessarily relying on the donors. Because donors are not there to stay for ever. I know of an organization in Gweru that now meets most of its needs from its produce. It is important to organize exchange visits with such organizations so that we learn from them.

We could work out arrangements with leading supermarkets and pharmacies so that we could supply them with garden or herbal produce.

THE OFFICE

I was very encouraged when I saw the effort made in securing a decent house for an office. This is most welcome but as time goes on it will work for our advantage if we increase our office space by encouraging staff to source alternative accommodation. This is a process, due care will be taken. When adequate funds are availed our staff will be happy because a housing allowance that meets the needs of the day will be paid. When we have enough funds to grow it might be better to locate our office in Mutare for so many reasons. We will however leave the Rusape office operational. If we double efforts to source funds we should be able to buy a house in Mutare for our headquarters. I think this is possible if we work hard. I know this sound more like a dream but if we keep the dream alive we will get there.

PUBLICITY

Over and above what I have said already we need to complement our marketing effort with publicity activities. People should know what we are doing so that they are able to support us nationally and internationally. Some of the events we could exhibit include the Mutare and the Harare Agricultural show, the Bulawayo trade fair and some regional exhibitions. Because of such efforts we could take Z.A nationally. The idea is not to spread fame and boost ourselves around but we need to help as many families in the country as possibly in the spirit of social work. Weather we like it or not it is also a way of being Disciples of Christ.

PREVENTION OF HIV ACTIVITIES

One of the Millenuim goals is to prevent the further spread of HIV and promote care and support to those infected already. Though a little bit is being done by Zimbabwe Ahead I think more needs to be done in the integration or mainstreaming of HIV AIDS programmes in all the activities. Activities should include Behavior Change workshops, club activities, support groups and

festivals. Due to the ravaging effects of this deadly disease it is now paramount that all families are equipped with life skills of prevention, care and support. With consented effort we should try and Get some funds from National Aids Council. It is difficult but I did it in Mutare and was successful so it is worth trying. HIV activities again will help us to get more funding to step up our income generating activities. While a lot of effort is being done in the field at the moment a lot more needs to be done to step up the magnitude of all projects i.e. bigger herbal gardens, improving supply of water, more bee hives, more oil from the pressing machines, more income from products through rigorous marketing strategies.

YOUTHS PROGRAMMES

There are virtually no Youth activities in Z.A. at the moment, that needs to be worked on. The younger generation is the future. They need to be equipped with all survival skills from HIV prevention to income generating activities. All in school and out of school Youths should be targeted using various means. Arrangements can be made with the Ministry of Education and regular activities on HIV and Hygiene could be incorporated. A lot of donors are ready to help organizations who are doing Youth programmes.

RESOURCE MATERIALS

There is need to step up efforts on care of resources already owned by the organization. This will help us to source more resources. Those way donors will be glad to give us because they will be convinced that these will be left in safe hands. A comprehensive Asset Register will be required to ensure that all assets are audited regularly alongside the financial records of the organization. Much attention will be required to ensure that the office meets the ever changing demands of social work.

STREAMLINING PROGRAMMES

Somehow the organization should be prepared to streamline its activities. We cannot do everything in the country. Some activities will have to be left for other organization. We will be able to do a variety of things if we have adequate donor funds to support all the other activities. But even though it is import for different activities to operate independently so that it is easy to monitor and evaluate them. In that case different departments will have to be established in the organization. I have noted that the organization has this capacity already but a little bit of planning is required.

GROWTH AND EXPANSION

Z.A. has a capacity of expanding but this has to be done with careful planning and coordination of all activities. All the activities we do at the end of the day are meant to complement one another in an attempt of improving the life of ordinary Zimbabweans. It will be a nice thing to take such initiatives to other countries so that mankind can benefit from such activities.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Rigorous selection procedures should be instituted so that we have the best caliber of people. People who are hard working and have their heart in social work. Professional people who will understand the ups and down of NGO life. People who are contended with a fair salary and not people who will disrupt the activities of the organization by unnecessary industrial action. Good person specification and job description accompanied by thorough selection procedures will help us reach our targets. We need people we can rely on and people who will identify with the organization and stand by its core values.

PROJECT PROPOSAL (USAID)

I tried to do all investigations and noted that there is a lot of traveling that is required to Nyanga and Harare in the process of applying for grants until the

forms are submitted. I am trying to get in touch with Andrew so that they help me by traveling to go and collect the forms in Nyanga before they are submitted in Harare. At the moment with the salary I am getting here it will be very difficult for me to do all that traveling using my personal funds. My heart is willing but I do not have the resources. So maybe through your kindness you could avail funds to me to do that and I will be grateful. The forms should be submitted around the 10th of January. People were supposed to come to ask questions on the forms but those days have passed already. I still feel that we stand a good chance so it will be worth trying.

It will be very difficult to judge my performance on these proposals because I have not been fully capacitated to do that job because of lack of resources. I will however try my best. I think it will also be good for me to know if I will get this job so that I start making plans. There are a lot of resources, addresses etc that I will have to start copying so that we will be able to use especially for donors and for income generating and for HIV/AIDS activities. I know I may not start the job till later because of funds that is no problem I am prepared to wait but I need to know if I will have the job after both of you make the necessary assessments. With the coming year I need to know in which boat I will be sailing. All I can tell you is that I have fallen in love with the project. Even if I am not there to work for it I will always live with it in spirit. I will always wish you well. I liked the interview and field visit it helps possible candidates to see and accept what they are putting themselves into.

CONCLUSION

I think this is a good project and should be supported by all possible means. I hope I make it to the post. I wait patiently for a favourable reply