

ZIMAHEAD: Ambuya neMuzukuru Enriched Play Centre

Project Final Report

Date of Report: 10 October 2009

Project Title: Ambuya neMuzukuru Enriched Play centre

Project Location: Zimbabwe-Manicaland Province- Makoni District -Wards 5 and 20

Project Start Date: 05 July 2009

Project End Date: 10 October 2009 (4 months)

Project Budget: USD 7106.00 (received)

Project Budget Spend: USD 7106.00

Balance: USD 000.00

Background

The Ambuya neMuzukuru (Grandmother and Grandfather) Concept: reducing dependency load on households with Orphans

Although the high mortality rate (18.1%) from HIV/AIDS is decreasing slowly, the fallout from death of breadwinners in the past decade is an exceptionally high number of orphans dependent on grandparents, 1.3 million in Zimbabwe (UNAIDS, 2006), mainly in the rural areas. This dependency load on the elderly has been identified as a major challenge particularly in the current economic crisis recovering from an estimated 7000% inflation, and food shortage. This has significantly worsened the plight of the elderly and their dependents as they have limited access to social services, family labour for food production and disposable income.

The key functions of the play centres are:

1. **Cultural:** Traditional values transferred to orphans and other vulnerable children, through participation of elderly with storytelling and teaching of traditional song and dance at play schools.
2. **Protection:** Daily attendance provides protection for orphans who may be exposed to physical, sexual or emotional abuse which can be monitored by trained supervisors.
3. **Early learning:** providing a stimulating environment and supervised play facilities for children under 5, enabling them to have a good start at school.
4. **Growth monitoring:** Monitoring the growth and development, physically and mentally of each child.

5. **Support to guardians:** Prevention of ‘burn-out’ of guardians (grandparents) by reducing the dependency load with supplementary feeding and supervision which every morning allowing carers free time.

The aim is that each centre should consist of the following construction: VIP toilets, swings and playground, toys and equipment, nutrition garden, water source, and permanent shelter in case of bad weather. Secondly we aim to supply supplementary feeding at each playschool consisting of a nutritional meal at lunch (corn soya blend, Mahewu drink, vegetables (from the nutrition garden).

It was against the above background that NZAID partnered ZimAHEAD by giving a grant towards the running of the project. Three of the centres are in Ward 5 –Chiendambuya, Makoni North about 75 kilometres from Rusape and the other three are in Ward 20- Dumbamwe/Sangano area- Makoni East about 30 kilometres out of the district town (Rusape).

School where play centre is located	Ward	Children Enrolment under the age of 5 years
Muondozi	5	134
Mupururu	5	72
Chiendambuya	5	57
Dumbamwe centre	20	54
Nyahukwe	20	76
Mangunda	20	72
Total		465

Construction of Shelter and outdoor play equipment

ZimAHEAD with the respective communities’ participation constructed six outdoor play centre equipment which comprised of swings, see-saw, balancing beams, sand pits and floating bridges.

Three of the ECDs were each assisted with the construction of Shelter in the form of a 9m X 5m building under thatch. The communities contributed bricks, poles, thatch and labour while ZimAHEAD provided them with cement, tying wire, thatching twine, various coloured paints and steel nails. It was a marvel to see the communities galvanised by the long relationship with Muondozi, Chiendambuya, Mupururu, Mangunda, Nganganga and Nyahukwe Community Health Clubs (CHCs) springing into action and the common unity and oneness of purpose that showed was a clear indicator of the strength and culture inculcated by CHCs in the community even though ZimAHEAD was last active in this community about 4 years ago.

Training

ZimAHEAD in liaison with Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture District Education Officer mobilised for a Training of Early childhood Development (ECD) Tutors workshop given that the ECDs were being manned by untrained tutors and that was an undesirable position given the risk of child abuse where children are gathered in a big group.

The training was run for a week from 05/10/09 to 10/10/09 and was facilitated by the District ECD Coordinator, Ms Shiella Mabambe from the Ministry of Education and a Consultant Mrs Josephine Mutandiro, who as Co-ordinator for ZimAHEAD in Makoni, was instrumental in initiating the Ambuya neMuzukuru, when the Project was first started. The training comprised of:

12 tutors from the 6 ECD centres were trained and we would like to give them follow-up support visits if we had the funding.

The course content included the following;

- The historical development of early childhood education in Zimbabwe
- Psycho-social development of children
- Physical development of children
- Lesson planning-the daily weekly and monthly programme of early childhood education
- Toy /equipment making and learning through play
- Child health and welfare-*growth monitoring*
- Immunisation-identification and management of the un-well child at the play centre
- Child protection and safety
- The roles of the ECD tutor (administrative and professional)

Achievements

The hired Ministry of Education Coordinator and the consultant took the 12 tutors through the paces of ECD as outlined above and the training was a success given the enthusiasm and participation displayed by the Tutors during the workshop. Both facilitators were so charismatic that the moral during training was kept very high. At the end of the training it was noticed that friendships and new tutor networks had been forged within the tutors as they exchanged souvenirs and contact details. All this will be beneficial for ECD monitoring and backstopping support. The District ECD Coordinator pledged to offer support and supervision services to the 6 play centres if and when transport to these areas was available.

By the end of the workshop the tutors were exhibiting very high knowledge levels around their work with children.

The District ECD coordinator was overwhelmingly excited about being afforded an opportunity to engage with ECD tutors from the distant rural areas in a time when the Education sector has experienced a massive breakdown in service provision.

Challenges

Funding was not enough to cover training of Child Protection Committees which was budgeted for initially. However, we managed to construct the 6 outdoor play equipment and 3 shelter structures and the training of 12 Early Childhood Development (ECD) tutors.

When the grant of US\$7,000 was received in October 2007, the country was in a complete state of disarray with melt down of the economy was running at a hyper inflation which within the year had reached million% inflation with prices changing on a daily basis. ZimAHEAD was severely incapacitated without transport in Makoni District, whilst enough funding had not been sufficient to rent a vehicle, and the coordinator for Makoni was taken ill. In addition due to political instability during election run up, it was unsafe for the project officers to move around the areas, which made mobilisation more difficult. Electricity was more often cut than functional resulting in lack of telephone to arrange meetings. For these many reasons the macro environment was not conducive to implementation and the project was delayed until in June 2009. By then, the use of US\$ in the country controlled inflation and made budgeting once again possible. ZimAHEAD was able to resume business and projects began slowly to revive. It is therefore regretful that this project has been delayed by over 8 months, but has now been completed and all commitments fully realised.

Lessons Learnt

Communities if adequately mobilised, are a resource on their own. The shelter construction was taken up by the community and the very high level of cooperation displayed can only be seen where they **own** the processes of their own development. Even though the NGO ZimAHEAD had not been supporting CHCs for about 4 years, the people remained united and active. Communities develop better with development triggers and not wholesome donations.

Recommendations

Now that the shelter has been put in place as well as the outdoor play equipment, the community has been triggered to think about producing supplementary nutrition for the children at the play centres through community gardens. The idea is being pushed by the

trained tutors and the guardians of the children with support from the school headmasters from local schools. It is hoped that the pilot project is executed meticulously such that other schools can emulate as this proves to be a boost for the welfare of orphaned and vulnerable children.

Already feeding has taken up with support from a local benefactor: Christian Community Partnership Trust (CCPT) but plans for ECD community nutrition gardens are underway so that the community produces supplementary food for the ECD.

Appreciation

ZimAHEAD appreciates the support consistently given by NZAID over the past decade, and wish to apply for refunding for continued and scale up support of these and other vulnerable communities as there is great need for ECD programmes in Makoni district.

We are also very grateful to the communities that in consultation with ZimAHEAD, proposed the project in the first place and their tireless efforts during outdoor play equipment and the shelter construction. We would not have accomplished such a feat without the support of the local Environmental Health Technicians, the clinic nurses at Weya and Nyahukwe clinics and the headmasters of the 5 primary schools mention elsewhere in the document.

Financial Report (Attached)

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