



Ngativawanisei Mukana

INCLUSIVE TIMES

"Be Part of the Community"

SCHOOLS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP SET TO ENHANCE INCLUSION.

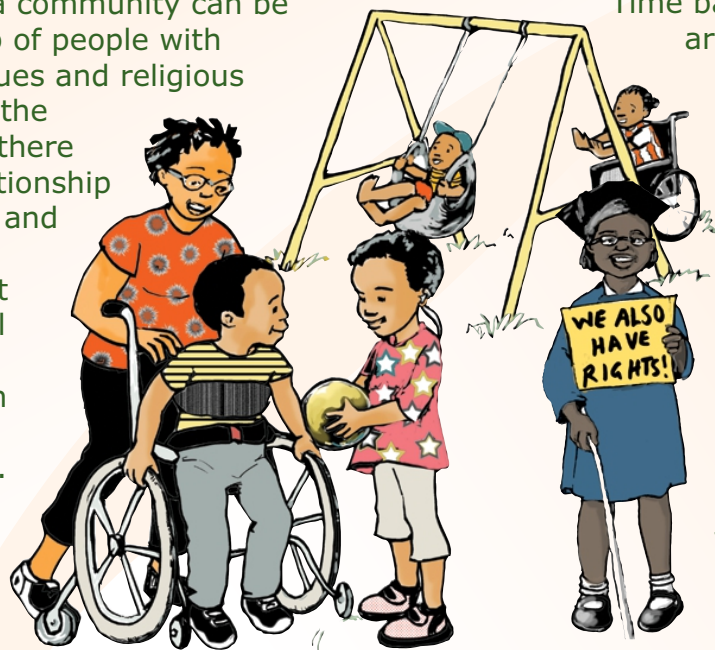
Schools and communities play a pivotal role in enhancing the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities as enshrined in the National Disability Policy of 2021

S. Nyeperayi
Deputy Director – Disability Affairs

In simple terms, a school can be defined as an institution of learning at community levels. Similarly, a community can be defined as a group of people with shared norms, values and religious beliefs. In view of the above statement, there is a symbiotic relationship between a school and community. This paper will highlight some of the school and community structures that can be used to foster disability inclusion. In the case of schools, teachers play an integral part in enhancing disability inclusion of Children With Disabilities since they are influential within the school setup and the community at large. For example, they can mainstream disability by designing School Clubs where disabled and non-disabled Learners jointly participate.

Additionally, the school management should make sure the school environment or facility is accessible to Learners With Disabilities. For instance, they can build ramps and wide toilets to enable Learners who are Wheelchair Users to navigate around the school premises (UNCRPD 2006). As far as the Inclusive Education Policy is concerned, Teachers and other School Staff should ensure the full comprehensive implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy. This statement is in line with the New Dispensation **MANTRA** which categorically states that, **NO ONE AND NO PLACE SHOULD BE LEFT BEHIND.**

Schools can employ Social workers and Specialist Teachers on a full Time or Part Time basis whose responsibility are to cater for the special educational needs of Learners With Disabilities. In the case of the community, there is need to establish Persons With Disabilities Committees at community levels that are meant to champion for the rights and needs of Children With Disabilities. For Example, in the case of the community outreach program currently being spearheaded by the Department of Disability Affairs in Buhera, we discovered



that, there are PWDS Committees at District and Ward levels. However, the Department of Disability Affairs in conjunction with other Development Partners in the Disability fraternity can organise and conduct Capacity Building Training workshops specifically targeting PWDS Management Committees.

There is need to use Community Gatekeepers such as Village heads, Headman, Chiefs and Councillors since they are influential in the community.

In short, there is need to mainstream disability when formulating PWDS COMMITTEES, DDC, WADCO AND VIDCO.

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Welcome to Inclusive Communities Newsletter

WHO ARE WE?, YOU MAY ASK

We are REPSI, (Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative) is a renowned pan African organisation that has been supporting governments and non-governmental organisations to provide holistic psychosocial care and support to children and their families in East and Southern Africa for 20 years now.

Our programs are spread across 13 countries and aim to enhance the psychosocial and mental wellbeing of girls, boys, youth their families and communities to be able to respond to challenges such as HIV and AIDS, conflict, poverty, climate change, environmental disasters and social strife. We also take advantage of opportunities such as education, health services, Sexual and Reproductive health to integrate psychosocial support (PSS). We deliver our programs through partnerships with regional bodies such as SADC (Southern Africa Development Cooperation), EAC (East African Community), AU (African Union) national governments and non-governmental organisations. In Zimbabwe, REPSI is registered with the Government as a Private Voluntary Organization (PVO 10/12).

Knowledge management is an integral part of REPSI's program approach. To this end, REPSI has over the years applied our lived experience and practice in the field of child care and support to develop locally relevant curriculum and training material. As a result, REPSI has over the years been recognised as a leading provider of technical assistance in the MHPSS field. Our materials have been widely used globally in HIV and AIDS work, disability inclusion, post conflict programming and support to orphans and vulnerable children.

This Newsletter seeks to amplify the voices that are calling for disability inclusion. We are inviting partners and government department that wish to contribute to the next edition to freely reach out.

Enjoy our second edition!!!

From page 1

SCHOOLS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP SET TO ENHANCE INCLUSION.

It is disheartening to note that, over 50 Percent of Children with Disabilities in Buhera District, Manicaland Province are barred from going to school due to lack of assessments by Educational Psychologists who are based at Provincial levels.

In fact, lack of assessments of these children is a barrier since barrier plus Impairment causes disability. Therefore, there is need to deploy Educational Psychologists at District levels or alternatively train District Remedial Therapists to conduct assessments in their respective districts (BUHERA DISTRICT, COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM 2022).

The above mentioned Community Outreach Program further indicates that, over 90 Percent of School Teachers in Buhera District are not trained in special Needs education. The situation is also exacerbated by the fact that, there is a disequilibrium between the total number of

Children with Disabilities and the available teachers who are trained in special needs education.

In view of the above circumstances, the Department of Disability Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and other Development Partners should come up with a robust training program in Special Needs Education specifically targeting school Teachers in Buhera District.

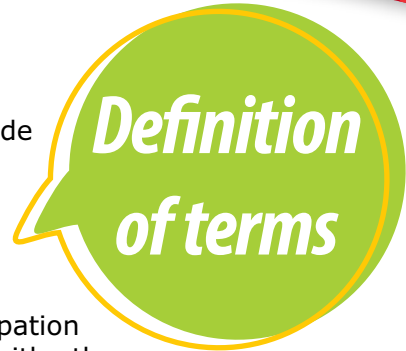
In a nutshell, there is a strong symbiotic relationship between a school and community since both entities play an integral role in fostering disability inclusion at community levels.

However, the implementation of disability inclusion should be informed by national and international regulations such as; the National Disability Policy (2021), 2013 CONSTITUTION OF ZIMBABWE, NDS 1 (2021/2025), uncord of 2006 and the PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES BILL CURRENTLY IN THE PROCESS OF BEING ENACTED.

exclude the disabled. This automatically translates to stigmatisation. Inclusiveness is the basis of economical empowerment for our people and should be considered at whatever level of society. "Our members cry that they need start up but once people see that they are disabled, they often give excuses which frustrate our constituency. Economic empowerment should be for everyone," said Godo. The Inclusive communities project has managed to train 40 Village Savings and Loans Associations facilitators in disability inclusion. The training was to enable them start the formation of Village Savings and Loans Associations of person with disabilities or their care givers. The project made this deliberate decision after the realization that persons with disabilities were being left out. The facilitators were drawn main from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development.

Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) are thought to play a critical role in bringing financial services to rural areas of developing countries, where access to formal financial services is typically very limited. Overall, the promotion of the groups led to an improvement in financial inclusion, household business outcomes, and women's empowerment. There is also evidence of improved resilience: in villages affected by drought, households experienced improved food security and income.

Therefore, the project is confident that this investment will yield the desired results for people with disabilities and culminate in economic inclusion.



PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, art. 1)

DISABILITY INCLUSION

The meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion of their rights and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

MAINSTREAMING DISABILITY INCLUSION

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CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES COMPLIANT

The meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion of their rights and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

MAINSTREAMING DISABILITY INCLUSION

The meaningful participation of persons with disabilities in all their diversity, the promotion of their rights and the consideration of disability-related perspectives, in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES-COMPLIANT

Policies and practices that follow the general principles and obligations underlined in the Convention, as well as the standards of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in their interpretation of the Convention

ACCESSIBILITY

Ensuring that persons with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas (Convention, art. 9)

DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability that has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation (Convention, art. 2)

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

Necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms (Convention, art. 2)

ORGANIZATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Organizations comprising a majority of persons with disabilities—at least half of their membership – and governed, led and directed by persons with disabilities (CRPD/C/11/2, annex II, para. 3). Such organizations should be rooted in, committed to and fully respectful of the principles and rights recognized in the Convention (CRPD/C/GC/7, para. 11)

The disabled happy with inclusivity
... It's the basis of economic development

By Mendy Mandirahwe & Clever Ndanga

MEETING Mr Tapiwa Godo is one of the refreshing experiences I have had. Giant as his posture is, one would think that Mr Godo is one of those hard characters in life. But he proved everyone wrong. We sit down together on a pavement overlooking the damaged environment of Ngangu high density of Chimanimani which was destroyed by Tropical Cyclone Idai in March 2019.

Mr Godo is the Chairperson for People living with Disabilities in Chimanimani and is happy with some gestures which local institutions have embarked on to the assistance of the physically challenged. He says that inclusivity is the basis of economic empowerment. "We often see situation whereby some empowerment programs

Inclusion should begin at school

By Clever Ndanga

NURSERY songs such as "Baa Baa Black Sheep" and "Old MacDonald" are still vivid in our memories as if we learnt them yesterday. To people of my age, those songs were taught to us more than forty years ago.

There is no magic in remembering such songs word by word, verse by verse. The truth is that we learnt those rhymes at a tender age when our minds were still innocent and not filled with trash. If you look closely, most people who received education before the year 2000 went to school after attaining 7 years of age. But still at that age, the mind was still fresh and innocent.

These years, schooling begins at 3 years when a kid joins what is called Play Group. Even if the term Play Group suggests that most of the time the kids will be having fun, it is not as such. The group really acquires education. From the Play Group, one proceeds to Early Childhood Development (ECD) A then ECD B. After that, a kid qualifies for junior classes starting with Grade 1.

The school curriculum for the young minds might be lacking inclusivity education. When children in Play Group up to those in Grade 7 are taught everything else save for the inclusivity of the disabled, it means that there is a huge void in addressing the concerns of the disabled. When one grows up without being taught about inclusivity, how do we expect him/her to change when he/she grows up? If a school which one learns at doesn't have toilets and sporting facilities which are inclusive for the disabled, how can a kid learn to be inclusive?

We can't blame anyone if our kids grow ignoring the concerns of the disabled because we would have prepared them from young age that inclusivity is nothing important.

We can't expect a miracle to happen that people who were not taught inclusivity at a tender and innocent age become champions of inclusivity. We need to introduce inclusivity in our school curriculum and it's not too late to do so. If what a kid is taught in school is not forgotten by the child when we grow up, what not start today to teach the children about inclusivity?

Schools should be centres of teaching inclusivity. The project is investing in school's structures for them to be inclusive and in teachers for them to mainstream disability inclusion in their classrooms. Schools being community centres they play a pivotal role to ensure that inclusion is preached everywhere in the community. Again, the project realized that teachers command vast amount of respect within communities that why the project positioned them to co-facilitate community dialogues on disability inclusion.

The project also hind to the numerous calls to actively support children with disabilities that are in schools with materials. There was an acknowledgment that the government is supporting them with fees and with food stuff where necessary by there was a gap when it came to dignity kits for adolescent girls with disability. The project through the trained teachers and various schools development committees is set to start assisting learners with these materials
Schools are in did set to be centres of INCLUSION!

10 POINT PLAN TO ESTABLISH IN-COUNTRY SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

S. Nyeperayi
Deputy Director – Disability Affairs

- 1 To ensure the establishment of Disability Networking Forums at national, provincial and District levels.
- 2 To establish PWDS COMMITTEES AT Provincial, District and Ward levels.
- 3 Encourage the formulation of Disabled Persons Organisations that cater for the plight of different categories of PWDS.
- 4 Encourage the establishment of Disability Movements that will address the special needs of vulnerable populations within the disability sector such as; Older Persons With Disabilities, Youth With Disabilities, Children With Disabilities and Women With Disabilities as enshrined in the AFRICAN PROTOCOL ON HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES OF 2016.
- 5 Ensure there is Mainstreaming of Disability when designing and implementing the COVID19 RESPONSE PLAN STRATEGIES.
- 6 Ensure there is mainstreaming of Disability when designing District Development Committees, Ward Development Committees and Village Development Committees.
- 7 Ensure that there is mainstreaming of Disability when formulating BEAM COMMITTEES at community levels.
- 8 Ensure that Employees With Disabilities fully exercise their Trade Union Rights.
- 9 Ensure that PWDS residing in rural areas voluntarily join Farmers' Associations of their choice.
- 10 Encourage PWDS to participate in national and International Disability Forums in order to forge strategic partnerships and solidarity among PWDS.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

10-19 February 2022

58th Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD58) on "Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness"

20 February 2022

World Day of Social Justice

21 March 2022

World Down Syndrome Day

2 April 2022

World Autism Awareness Day

6 April 2022

International Day of Sport for Development and Peace

15 May 2022

International Day of Families

10-12 June 2022

13th session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD

13 June 2022

International Albinism Awareness Day

15 June 2022

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

12 August 2022

International Youth Day

21 September 2022

United Nations will mark its 75th anniversary

21 September 2022

International Day of Peace

23 September 2022

International Day of Sign Languages

10 October 2022

World Mental Health Day

17 October 2022

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

31 October 2022

World Cities Day

10 December 2022

Human Rights Day

3 December 2022

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

20 December 2022

International Human Solidarity Day

DISABILITY INCLUSION, MEANINGFUL INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

By Clever Ndanga

The subject of disability inclusion is a complex topic, which incorporates different facets and societal issues that needs to be addressed.

Disability inclusion encompasses matters to do with education, accessibility and universal design, employment, observance of human rights and creation of equal opportunities inter alia other important spheres of development.

According to the United Nations Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) state parties should facilitate inclusion of persons with disabilities in all spheres of life and also uphold the observance of their rights. However, although countries ratified the convention, inclusion is on paper but in practice little is done to provide and facilitate full inclusion of persons with disabilities. This therefore explains why persons with disabilities still remain excluded and marginalized from all facets of life thus putting to question is inclusion of persons with disability in practice or only done on paper.

Persons with disabilities are supposed to enjoy equal opportunities as those without disabilities and services that are offered to the public should cater for them also. However in most African countries such as Zimbabwe on paper inclusion is said to be done but in reality it is a different scenario. Focusing on employment, only a quarter of persons with disability are employed within the formal sector and the rest make a living in informal sector where they partake in vending and begging.

Constitutionally, companies and employers are expected to employ individuals on the basis of qualifications not physical stature, however it is a different tune, reality is that most employers do not employ persons with disabilities and they are perceived as a burden.

In the education domain, although there is inclusive education few schools are open to the idea of having children with special needs in their vicinity. Some open their arms to them but the facilities within the

area are not disability friendly. There is absence of ramps and special needs teachers, most of the children end up in



special classes where little is done to enhance the education of the child. The schools that are designated for special needs are expensive which therefore means that those from underprivileged backgrounds cannot afford therefore they fail to attain an education. Additionally these schools are centralized in urban areas which means those in rural areas are left out. In tertiary institutions, only a few of students with disabilities are enrolled and some institutions do not have facilities that cater for their needs. Having this in mind, one can therefore question that have we done enough justice on disability inclusion or inclusion is only done to a few privileged segment of the entire population.

In Zimbabwe, amongst persons with disabilities, those with mental and intellectual disabilities are not fully recognized. There are few schools that accommodate children with intellectual disabilities such as autism. Those that recognize them are privately owned and they are costly which means those with money can afford to send their children there and the majority cannot and they stay at home. Those in rural areas where schools are far away do not attend school at all but rather they are left at home for entirely at their life.

The UNCRPD (2006) which is one of the international framework which advocates for full inclusion of persons with disabilities also states accessibility or universal design as part of inclusion. The article requires state parties to identify and eliminate obstacles and barriers to accessibility inter alia to buildings, roads transportation, and other indoor and outdoor facilities including schools, housing, medical facilities, and workplaces, (United Nations Convention on

the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). The article also advocates for accessibility in information, communication, and other services including electronic services and emergency services. In addition, the article urges state parties to develop and monitor the implementation of minimum national standards for the accessibility of facilities and services open or provided to the public. State parties are also required to take measures to ensure that private entities that offer facilities and services that are open or provided to the public take into account all aspects of accessibility. However most of the facilities are not built with the idea of persons with disabilities in mind.

Public building, most of them do not have ramps, tactile floors sliding doors that can fit wheelchairs and disability friendly ablution facilities. The transport sector it is another nightmare for persons with disabilities. Buses and cars are not structured in a way that wheelchair users can fit and for them to move around they have to pay an extra fare to maneuver around. Adding on, the fact that they cannot move around means that they have to be dependent on other individuals thus undermining their independence and increases their vulnerability. Moreover, within the political sector, few persons with disabilities engage within political activities. Within the Zimbabwean parliament, there are no members of parliament who have disabilities. This means that their views and needs are represented by people without disabilities. Although there is the Disabled Persons Act, most of the members do not have a disability and some of their views may not stem from a disability standpoint of view.

In sexual reproductive health, people with disabilities are not fully catered and in most circumstances their voices are not heard but matters do to with their sexuality are dictated upon them. They cannot state what they feel about their bodies and sexual needs are not seen as a priority for them. Rather they are viewed as human beings without sexual desires. Although, there are programs that are put in place to try and put persons with disabilities on the map such as Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) which is expected to help persons with disabilities to attend school without paying fees. The program only cater for a small fraction of children with disabilities which means the majority are left out. Adding on, children in rural areas are not fully covered by the program. More so there is means testing where one has to go through assessments for them to be eligible for a scheme or program which means those perceived to be in needy are taken and others are exempted. The Assisted Medical Treatment

