

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP FOR RURAL DISTRICT COUNCILS

PROCEEDINGS REPORT

MUZARABANI CLUSTER 15 – 17 SEPTEMBER 2020
GWANDA CLUSTER 15-17 SEPTEMBER 2020
GOKWE NORTH CLUSTER 23 – 25 SEPTEMBER 2020
CHINHOYI CLUSTER 29 SEPTEMBER – 1 OCTOBER



Background

The Municipal Development Partnership (MDP) entered into a partnership with the Roger Federer Foundation (RFF), a non-profit making foundation based in Switzerland, to implement a two-year project titled School Readiness Initiative (SRI) in ten (10) rural district councils in Zimbabwe, namely Buhera, Gwanda, Gokwe North, Mbire, Muzarabani, Mwenezi, Nyaminyami, Tongogara, Rushinga and Zvimba. The Initiative's main objective is to enhance access to quality ECD education so that vulnerable children are ready for primary education. The project seeks to achieve this objective through enhancing the ownership by relevant stakeholders (the Rural District Councils, District Education Officers, local leadership, school development committees, communities and parents) of the children's needs in ECD, to ensure a better learning environment for young learners.

The project has been implemented by a consortium of partners namely MDP, Zimbabwe Network for Early Childhood Development Actors (ZINECDA), Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) and Child Protection Society (CPS). The role of MDP in the consortium is to support actions around enhancing the capacity of the 10 Rural District Councils to create a conducive early learning environment at the local level and to capacitate structures which direct or indirectly interact with issues relating to early childhood education at District level.

Following the conclusion of the baseline in the participating Districts and the subsequent feedback workshop in January 2020, the following capacity gaps were identified as militating against the proper inclusion of ECD in council budgets and plans:

- Poor Resource Mobilization and Planning for ECD
- Weak Stakeholder Engagement and Community Mobilization for ECD
- Lack of Local Policy Development for ECD

The capacity gaps identified prompted the development of training manuals that were used during the clustered Capacity Development Workshops. The workshops aimed to strengthen the capacities of RDCs and other local stakeholders to be able to

prioritize the inclusion of ECD in RDC budgets, strategic plans and local policy development. It is against this background that MDP organised the workshops for all the participating Districts. This report therefore constitutes the proceedings of the workshop.

Introduction

All the 10 participating Districts were trained during the “Capacity Development Workshops”. Districts were divided into 4 clusters. Representation from participants was composed of District Development Coordinators, Council CEOs, Treasurers, Social Services Officers, Traditional Leaders, Councilors, Schools Inspectors, SDC representatives, representatives from the MoPSE Head Office, representatives from the MoLPW Head Office and our consortium partners Zimbabwe Network for Early Childhood Development Actors (ZINECDA), Child Protection Society (CPS) and Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED).

Methodologies

The 10 participating Districts were clustered into 4 as a way of complying with the set COVID 19 Government Regulations and reduce gatherings to a maximum of about 50 people. The four clusters were:

- Gwanda and Mwenenzi
- Muzarabani, Mbire and Rushinga
- Gokwe North, Tongogara and Nyaminyami
- Buhera and Zvimba

The project team was divided into 2, the Harare team trained the Muzarabani and Buhera cluster. The Bulawayo team trained the Gwanda and Gokwe North cluster. The initial plan was to have conduct the trainings concurrently, with the idea of finishing and reporting on time. However, the Buhera cluster cancelled due to some national commitments they had to attend to and the training could not be conducted the same time with the Gokwe North cluster and it was moved to the next week.

These trainings were done using the same manuals and the same programme. The hired experts in the different subjects worked with the MDP staff to come up with a uniform delivery model for the 4 different clusters.

The workshops were delivered focusing on the following topics:

- ECD policy framework in Zimbabwe
- Resources mobilization
- Stakeholder engagement
- Community mobilization
- Planning for ECD development

Modules were delivered with the goal of having a simplified and practical way of developing ECD in the Districts

Objectives of Workshops

The specific objectives of the workshops were:

- a. To identify potential sources of funding from council for improving the ECD learning environment
- b. To identify potential partnerships for funding ECD at district level
- c. To raise awareness amongst RDC boundary partners on the need for including ECD in RDC budgets and strategic plans
- d. To capacitate the RDCs with skills and tools to be able to conduct stakeholder mapping for those involved in the improvement of the ECD learning environment
- e. To Impart to RDCs skills and tools for coordination and collaboration with other stakeholders involved in the improvement of the ECD learning environment
- f. To expose the RDCs and their stakeholders to existing policies on ECD in Zimbabwe and the region
- g. To identify opportunities for developing local ECD policies

Specific Outputs

The workshops were aiming for the following outputs:

1. RDCs will have identified other local sources of funding for ECD
2. RDCs will be in a position to identify partners and possible areas for ECD funding
3. RDCs will start incorporating ECD in their annual plans and report.
4. A stakeholder register for ECD will be created by the RDC
5. Improved stakeholder collaboration on ECD at RDC level in improving the ECD learning environment
6. RDCs with improved knowledge in ECD policies in Zimbabwe
7. RDCs will be able to localize ECD policies in some of their existing policies.

DAY 1

1. Policy Environment presentations by:

Presenter	Cluster	Date
Tendai Nyamajiwa	Muzarabani	15 September 2020
Naison Bhunu	Gwanda	15 September 2020
Marceline Kahlari	Gokwe North	23 September 2020
Tendai Nyamajiwa	Chinhoyi	29 September 2020

Presentations on the Policy Environment module were done on the first day of the workshops. Discussions were mainly around localizing the national policies and making them more practical for RDCs. Amongst some of the take home action plans that were developed towards the end of the workshop, one of them was to mobilize District stakeholders and have a consensus on how they were to localize the National Policy on ECD to suit RDC contexts. In Muzarabani, the topical question was around the status of ECDs in the Districts. Most of the issues that were discussed were around Paraprofessionals teaching ECD learners at most centers, the supervisory role of the Teacher In Charge (TICs) in most satellite centers and issues around the teacher – pupil ratio which is worrisome especially taking into consideration the COVID 19 regulations which are enforcing social distancing. In Gokwe North, participants had questions on the ECD draft policy and how it impacts their management of ECDs as

owners of these centers. The National Constitution was also discussed with a focus on children’s rights. The other enabling legal instruments such as the Rural District Councils Act were also discussed as they give RDCs powers to monitor and develop schools. RDCs have powers to come up with their own by-laws which can address the ECD subject.

Planning and Resources Mobilization

Presenter	Cluster	Date
Shingirayi Mushamba	Muzarabani	15 -16 September 2020
Takawira Mubvami	Gwanda	15 - September 2020
Takawira Mubvami	Gokwe North	23 - 24 September 2020
Shingirayi Mushamba	Chinhoyi	29 – 30 September 2020

The planning and resources mobilization for ECD A and B module was presented by Takawira Mubvami in Gwanda and in Gokwe North, Shingirayi Mushamba delivered the same module in Muzarabani and Chinhoyi. The presentations started on day one with a focus on planning then continued on day two in all the 4 clusters with the last part on resources mobilization for ECD A and B. Part of the first sessions focused on the power of RDCs to plan, execute and mobilize resources as enshrined in the Rural District Councils Act. The other legal instruments that guide the planning processes of RDCs when they focus on the development of schools and monitoring as part of their mandate including the Environmental Management Act, Regional Town and Country Planning Act.

Some of the developmental and planning functions in this context planning for ECDs as stated by the RDC Act are as follows:

RDC Act Section 74 – Developmental functions:

- ✓ Promote development of the council area
- ✓ Formulate policies – long term and short term for the council
- ✓ Prepare annual development plans and other plans for the council area
- ✓ Monitor the implementation of development plans and policies in the council area
- ✓ Exercise any other function in relation development

Discussions were around systems and procedures of planning in RDCs and compliance to the directives from the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works (MoLGPW).

At any given time, each District should have an operational plan.

Participants were encouraged to consider the following topics when planning for ECDs in rural Zimbabwe:

- ✓ Caregiving (social welfare)
- ✓ Furniture
- ✓ Nutrition
- ✓ Health
- ✓ Water and sanitation
- ✓ Play centers
- ✓ Land
- ✓ Resources (operations and maintenance)
- ✓ Infrastructure (classrooms, teachers)

DAY 2

Planning and Resources Mobilization

In Muzarabani, day 2 started with reflections on day 1 presentations and comments from Rushinga RDCs were on community based centres and the need to improve them. Unfunded mandates from the MoLGPW which puts pressure on RDCs although they will have produced good plans. The other point that was noted was high staff turn over therefore it results in RDCs requesting for capacity building trainings from time to time. Muzarabani RDC has made efforts to include ECD in their (2019-20211) Strategic plan and this came as a result of some of the SRI activities which includes baseline surveys and peer to peer learning workshop that was organized for all the start-up 7 SRI Districts. Local planning processes for Muzarabani and Centenary were underway during the time of the workshop and one of the priorities was to include ECD. Mbire reported that they have a land use plan and currently they were working towards the regularization of ECD centers within their Districts.

Resources mobilization

1. Resources Mobilisation

What are the local resources for?

Accountability, simple statement and expenditure

External resources

Funding partners

Bills of quantities

To what extent do we ask for resources?

What outside the box materials can we use? (Use of old tyres etc and traditional rods)

There is need to use models that work.

- Old students associations in schools. Are we using them to reconnect?

Comments from participants

- It is important to include councilors when planning for ECDs because they are closer to the people in the communities.
- There is poor governance in schools, lack of auditing.
- Well-wishers who want to assist sometimes are said to be buying votes and they end up neglecting all development initiatives in the District.
- Use of locally available resources was tried and tested in Mbire, they made dolls from used cloths that were donated by parents.
- There is need to nominate ECD champions (ambassadors) at village levels
- When asking for resources the cycle of accountability must be completed, resources must be accounted for.
- Reason why sometimes schools fail to fully account for resources is because of the lack of coherence between RDCs (school owners) and the MoPSE (they own teachers).

2. Stakeholder/ Citizen engagement

Presenter	Cluster	Date
Tapiwa Nyamukapa	Muzarabani	16 September 2020
David Matimbike	Gwanda	16 September 2020
David Matimbike	Gokwe North	24 September 2020
Tapiwa Nyamukapa	Chinhoyi	30 September 2020

Stakeholder engagement was one of the topics that participants in Muzarabani and Chinhoyi found to be interesting because of the way the topic was demystified in a simple and practical manner by Tapiwa Nyamukapa. The same manual was used in Gokwe North and in Gwanda. Some of the questions that were addressed during the presentations and discussions were around the following topics:

- Definition of a stakeholder
- Who are the stakeholders?
- Roles and responsibilities of every stakeholder
- How to systematically engage stakeholder

Contributions from participants:

- Definition of a stakeholder
- ✓ Anyone with an interest
- ✓ Anyone affected
- ✓ Anyone with an influence
- ✓ Anyone with control

Presenters defined a stakeholder as individuals, groups or persons who can positively or negatively affect the ECD programme. They are both internal and external. They can be both positive and negative influencers of the goal. Stakeholder engagement is a process, it has outcomes. Section 13 of the constitution provides from different administrative levels of engagement

Stakeholder engagement processes involves:

- Stakeholder identification
 - ✓ Stakeholder identification register

- Stakeholder analysis
 - ✓ Create a power and interest grid and keep everyone satisfied
 - ✓ Less power and less effort – there is need to monitor them
 - ✓ High interest and less power – these ones must be kept informed

Engagement Strategies

- How are you going to keep people informed?
- What system and performance gap have you identified in your stakeholder engagement process?
- What are you going to change in the way you engage stakeholders?
- What support will you require if you are to adopt these changes?

Presenters emphasized the need to move away from expert management. They also presented on the need to institutionalize the process; an output documents should be submitted after each process and this helps to provide feedback. One of the important points that was noted during the discussions was the need to monitor stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement is not a once off activity, it's a process hence things can change any time therefore there is need for continuous monitoring and adjustment of strategies

Day 3

Day 3 of the workshop was mainly characterized by presentations on take home action plans. This was done by all the four clusters. The Muzarabani cluster specifically requested for a discussion around reopening of schools in line with the COVID 19 safety regulations and the preparedness of RDCs to safely manage the young learners during the pandemic.

The table below shows a summary of the Action plans that were presented by each District. Preparedness for re-opening of ECD centres in light of COVID 19

District Action Plans

GOKWE NORTH CLUSTER

NYAMINYAMI			
Activity	Objective	Timeframe	Responsibility
Sensitisation of policy makers and other key stakeholders	To fully inform all stakeholders about ECD	2 weeks (first weeks of October)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CEO ➤ Mayor ➤ DDC
Community consultations	To get community input on ECDs	End of October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CEO ➤ Councillors ➤ Local Leaders (Chiefs/Headmen)
Policy formulation	To legalise ECD framework (Local)	November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council
Resource mobilization	To gather resources to construct and capacitate ECDs To construct a standard ECD centre	On- going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council ➤ Community leaders ➤ All key stakeholders
➤			
TONGOGARA			
Activity	Objective	Timeframe	Responsibility
Needs Assessment	To identify gaps in ECD programming	One month (31 October)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council ➤ MoPSE ➤ MDP
Action Plan	To draw up activities to be done	Mid November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ MoPSE ➤ Social Services Committee
Budgeting	To come up with a cost for planned activities	End of November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Social Services department ➤ Finance department ➤ MoPSE
Implementation	To cover the gaps identified	January 2021 going forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council ➤ MoPSE ➤ Finance ➤ Partners ➤ Community
M&E	To check progress and lessons learnt	On going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council ➤ Local Government ➤ MoPSE
GOKWE NORTH			
Activity	Objective	Timeframe	Responsibility
Policy formulation	To regulate the use of public funds To guide the operation of business of ECD facilities	2 – 3 months (January 2021 – March 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EO Social Services
Raising funds	To construct ECD blocks	1 April to December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council (EO Finance; CEO) ➤ DDC
Awareness raising	Sensitise parents and communities	1 January 2021 – December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Councillors ➤ Village Heads

	Prioritise ECD		➤ SDCs
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MUZARABANI CLUSTER

MUZARABANI	RUSHINGA	MBIRE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stakeholder engagement ➤ Planning ➤ Baseline ➤ Community mobilisation and source for community contributions ➤ Baseline and stakeholder engagement for 29wards to be covered by 3 teams ➤ Each team to cover 3 wards per day ➤ To have a District level meeting by the 30th of September ➤ A one-thousand-dollar budget can cover for fuel, food and T&S 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Stakeholder engagement ➤ Baseline on ECD through councillors ➤ Come up with a local ECD policy ➤ Stakeholder engagement on policy ➤ Council refresher training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Baseline and gap assessment ➤ Stakeholder analysis ➤ Training of ECD teachers ➤ Assess preparedness for reopening and plan for safe reopening

ZVIMBA CLUSTER

ZVIMBA RDC		
Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Future (12+ months)
Identification of sites for ECD establishment	Resources mobilisation ongoing	Project implementation and monitoring
Stakeholder engagement and prioritisation of ECD	Resource allocation	Commissioning
Budgeting	Plan approval	Evaluation
		Assessment of operations
BUHERA RDC		
Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Future (12+ months)
Stakeholder identification, mapping & analysis. Compilation of registers by 31 December 2020	Community mobilisation on ward development planning inclusive of ECD February 2021	Establishment of facilities
Stakeholder sensitisation e.g School Heads, traditional leaders by 31 December 2020	Consolidation of RDD plans ensuring that ECD is included by 31 August 2021	Annual planning and budgeting including budget reviews
Budgeting by 31 December 2020	Resources mobilisation (classroom construction)	District to come up with its local ECD policy

Are RDCs ready for the re- opening of schools?

Discussions were premised around 3 questions:

- Are we prepared for reopening, if not what do we do?

- If prepared, on what level?
- What preparatory procedures are we looking at?

	For reopening	Issues to consider before reopening
1	We should learn to live with the pandemic and try to find safe way to manage kids as they continue learning.	Infection of young learners can be disastrous
2	Right to education	Water & sanitation not adequate
3	Opening of schools allows children to grow in a conducive environment	Not all schools have buckets and sanitizers
4	Pupils & teachers are ready for reopening	Shortage of PPEs
5	Child abuse is on the increase in the villages	Safety of kids to & from school where they are not monitored by teachers is a challenge
6	MoHCC already have facilities in place for the young learners to attend school	It's difficult to enforce social distancing because of lack of furniture and facilities
7	Homemade PPEs are available	COVID 19 infection rate is still on the increase
8	Regulations & guidelines are already in place	Teacher to pupil ratio is not balanced
9	There is sufficient food for the kids (beans, maize, chunks)	Few classrooms and it will be difficult to monitor kids outside
10		Communities are hesitant to send kids back to school
11		No training of teachers on how to handle kids during the pandemic

Presentations on Seed Funds

Tatenda Munetsi gave presentations on seed funds in Muzarabani, Gokwe North and Chinhoi. The main objective was to update the Districts on the status of the proposals evaluation and disbursement process. For the sake of the 3 additional Districts, the objectives of having a seed fund for the project were also shared. Participants did not have much to comment on these funds except to question the exact time to expect the funds in their Districts.

Closing remarks

Zvimba District Development Coordinator, Madam Muzulu gave the closing remarks and thanks all participants for attending and participating during the workshop. She also emphasized the importance of taking home all the contributions that were made during the 2 and half days workshop for the development of ECDs in the Districts.

Chief Nembudziya as the Gokwe North host Chief gave the workshop closing remarks for the Gokwe North cluster. He first thanked Chief Nhema for coming all the way from the Midlands province to attend the workshop then he went on to thank MDP for organizing the learning sessions and discussions and thanked all participants for

making ECD a priority by deciding to dedicate 2 and half days on their busy schedules to come and develop their capacities in ECD issues.

The Muzarabani facilitator gave all participants a chance to give a few closing remarks. The participants gave the following remarks:

- Happy to be part of the Muzarabani team (MoHCC Muzarabani)
- Thanked the Chief of Muzarabani for hosting the workshop well (Tendai ZINECDA)
- Thanked MDP and partners for bringing RDCs together. Reminded RDCs to aim on delivering on their education mandate. (Murongazvombo - Ministry of Local Government)
- Workshop helped for them to see where they must work with council in improving the welfare of learners. The workshop was practical all modules were delivered in a simplified way. (Department of Social Welfare – Muzarabani)
- Preparedness on reopening of ECD centers, she quoted the bible, there is need to stick to the set regulations for the safety of the young learners. (DDC Rushinga)
- Thanked MDP for funding the workshop and hiring facilitators who delivered the modules in a simplified way. (DDC Mbire)
- Thanked MDP and all the RDCs who attended the workshop. Commended the consultants for a job well done. (DDC Muzarabani)
- Thanked MDP and all RDCs who attended, learnt a lot from the works. She went on to say “iron sharpens iron” because she had the chance to meet with experts from other Districts. Thanked Rushinga RDC for not forgetting their DSI. (DSI Rushinga)
- Thanked MDP for discussing COVID situation in a simplified way. Committed to support all activities (DSI Mbire)
- Thanked MDP for bringing partners together. When she was invited she even wondered what she was going to learn. She testified to learning a lot than expected and promised to execute her roles exceptionally well. Thanked the Chief for supporting education development. Thanked facilitators and stated how amazed she was to learn a lot about ECD policy framework from a young

and vibrant facilitator from ZINECDA. Went on to thank God for the protection. (DSI Muzarabani)

- Thanked Chief Chiweshe for attending the workshop and participating. Stated that she now understands that RDCs are pressure plates, nerve center of all District development activities. Appreciated the way stakeholder engagement was simplified. (CEO Muzarabani RDC)
- Thanked MDP for organizing the workshop. (Vice President of ARDCZ – Mbire councilor)
- Learnt a lot and pledged paint for 1 classroom block in Rushinga. (SDC Chairperson Rushinga)
- Thanked MDP for fulfilling their promises. Recommended that the project should take Muzarabani as the sample District for ECD initiatives.

PICTURES

**Dr Chibvongodze
(CEO Buhera)
contributing.
Chinhoyi cluster**



**Participants at
Mavuradonha
Guest Lodge
(Muzarabani
cluster)**

