

Our Services Our People

NEWSROOM, NEWSTIPS, FUNCTION COVERAGE, PRESS RELEASES

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The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) has engaged another gear to sensitise communities as well as workers in the Shire Valley Transformation Programme (SVTP) to refrain from perpetrating Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The initiative comes after noting that in some cases civil works can escalate gender-based violence. Our reporter LLOYD CHITSULO caught up with CCJP projects coordinator (Chikwawa), LEWIS MSIYADUNGU to find out what the organisation is really doing in the Lower Shire districts. Excerpts;

Q1 Why are you implementing a GBV initiative and what is it all about?

A1 Basically, we are striving to reduce the risks for the occurrence of gender-based violence, violence against children sexual exploitation and abuse which could be associated with the multi-billion-kwacha Shire Valley Transformation Programme [SVTP]. So we are implementing a GBV Service Provision component under the project.

Our understanding is that major civil works like the SVTP have the potential of escalating gender-based violence, violence against children, sexual exploitation cases in the impact areas. So we are trying to avoid these adverse potentialities.

Q2 How are you doing this?

A2 Chiefly, we are working to accelerate gender-based violence, violence against children, sexual exploitation sensitisation in SVTP-impacted communities, as well as construction workers. We also enhance collaboration with district stakeholders and structures that respond to gender-based violence cases.

An example is our continued support to the district one stop centre, a facility to which all sexual and physical abuse cases are reported for examination, treatment and post remedial counselling and care.

We are also dedicated to strengthening coordination among district stakeholders such as police, district health office and the social welfare, which are crucial in providing response to gender-based violence, violence against children, sexual exploitation cases. In short we are taking both participatory and holistic approach in intensifying prevention, surveillance, case reporting and mitigation.

Q3 What motivated CCJP-Chikwawa to embark on this initiative?

SIX QUESTIONS

LEWIS MSIYADUNGU, CCJP projects coordinator, Chikwawa

'Civil works could escalate GBV in project sites'



PHOTOGRAPH: LLOYD CHITSULO

Msiyadungu: We take any issues of rights violations seriously

A3 We were identified as a GBV service provider by the SVTP. This came in line with our organisational areas of interest, including child protection and human rights. We take SVTP as a significant programme that will change the face of Chikwawa.

Apart from that, there are a number of social-economic benefits that the people of Chikwawa will enjoy. But we don't want to believe there is no gender-based violence, violence against children, sexual exploitation risks, especially with a surge of labour influx to the impact area. So we are pulling no punches in making sure that we reduce any associated risks.

Q4 What has been the impact so far?

A4 We have managed to establish various

of the Diocese of Chikwawa, also provides free Para-legal Services to all the people in Chikwawa and Nsanje. In this initiative, we provide amicable resolutions to various conflicts, cases of injustices and rights violations which arise from the communities. Nevertheless, this is a non-funded initiative and we are still on the look-out for funding.

Secondly, we also promote good governance through another initiative termed, 'Enhancing Citizen Participation in reducing Political Corruption and promoting Social accountability' which comes with support from Osisa. We have also been supported by Misereor for another project termed 'Free and Fair Elections', through which we promote free and fair elections and promote development as well as peaceful coexistence in post elections.

Q6 How will you ensure that this initiative is sustained in the long-term?

A6 By raising sensitizations we are also focusing on attitude and behaviour change. Also critical is mind-set change; how people perceive or react to issues of gender-based violence, violence against children, sexual exploitation.

Believable, our impact will be a long-term one if not permanent. In addition, we have enhanced coordination and capacitated community and district stakeholders, especially on reporting and addressing related cases. The skills gained and coordinated links among these players are likely to be sustainable.

Let me conclude by saying, we take any issues of rights violations seriously. We will continue to strengthen mechanisms that prevent the occurrence of GBV and promote the reportage of arising cases. We thank SVTP secretariat as well as our district stakeholders for the unwavering support throughout the implementation of this initiative.

mechanisms through which communities can report arising cases. These include placement of suggestion boxes in strategic places, and working with 96 GBV champions, who were trained and given mobile phones to be used for reporting cases.

So far, we have not registered any sexual exploitation and abuse cases involving SVTP workers and members of the surrounding communities. On the other hand, we have managed to fully revamp the district one stop centre which is attending to various cases reported outside the priority area of this initiative.

Q5 Apart from this initiative, which other initiatives are you focusing on?

A5 CCJP Chikwawa, as a commission of the Social Services Directorate