

Binga: Sensitisation workshop held for local politicians (Councillors) and NGOs

Following the election of new councillors, the RDDC at its meeting of the 22nd August 2008 resolved that the councillors be enlightened on their developmental roles and on the activities of NGOs/CBOs/Trusts operating in Binga District. A workshop was therefore conducted from the 15-17 September 2008 as a follow up to the resolution and it was attended by councillors, heads of government departments and NGO managers. Basilizwi Trust organised the workshop and it was facilitated by United Nations Office of the Commission for Humanitarian Agencies (UNOCHA).

The objectives of the workshop were to:-

- Induct councillors and line ministry heads on humanitarian principles and practises as provided for under the UN guidelines and the international humanitarian community
- sensitise stakeholders on the development work being carried out by various NGOs in the district
- examine the present district humanitarian interventions
- plan for harmonised field operations for the district, spelling out clear lines of reporting, communication, accountability and transparency.

The workshop first looked at the government policy on the operation of the NGOs in humanitarian and developmental assistance of 2003 and later looked at the principles of the code of conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes. Below are the principles that need to be observed and adhered to when carrying out humanitarian and development work in the communities.

1. The humanitarian imperative comes first.
2. Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
3. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
4. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government or foreign policy.
5. We shall respect culture and custom.
6. We shall attempt to build local capacities to respond more effectively to disasters.
7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
8. Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
9. We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
10. In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects.

After deliberating on the code of conduct, Tonga Online and other NGOs operating in the district were given an opportunity to give an outline of their operations to the participants. This gave participants greater insight and appreciation of the NGOs/CBOs/Trusts activities.



Tonga.Online Project Director, making a presentation on the operations of the project.

Presentation focus on:

- ◆ *Developmental goal/aim*
- ◆ *Objectives and activities planned activities*
- ◆ *Planned activities for the last quarter of the year 2008, namely the WLAN, capacity building workshops, preparation for LINZ 2009 among other things.*
- ◆ *Challenges faced by the project*



Other NGOs/CBOs/ Trusts that made some presentations were Save the Children (UK), Ntengwe for Community Development, Binga Trees, SNV, Christian Care, Kulima Mbobumi Training Centre (KMTC), Basilwizi Trust, Binga Craft Centre and Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED).

Emerging Issues.

- ◆ **Lack of an integrated approach to development** - Through the presentations that were made, it was noted that a number of NGOs were implementing similar activities, sometimes in the same area but not aware of that they were implementing similar programmes. Such scenarios resulted in the over concentration of resources in one area while resources should be equitably distributed.
- ◆ **Lack of constant coordination and monitoring mechanism** - The meeting felt that the coordination and monitoring of NGOs activities in the district by RDDC was not adequate. For instance in the first half of 2008, RDDC held only one meeting and this meeting was an adhoc/ special one. Nothing much was discussed concerning development. Also the frequency of their meeting which is once every quarter was deemed insufficient to enhance proper monitoring and coordination. This resulted in suspicions about NGOs activities.
- ◆ **Conflict of roles among the local leaders (Councillors and the Village heads)** - Issues of who was the entry point in the ward and who was the contact person when executing developmental programmes brewed heated debate. The ward development structure or organogram demands that the Chief should be the entry point and the Councillor being the day-to-day contact person. However, due to the political situation in the district, the Councillors were sidelined in all development issues preferring to work with the Village Heads.
- ◆ **Humanitarian assistance not reaching all the wards in the district** - In most cases the NGOs were concentrated along the tarred road (tarmac bias) at the expense of other needy

areas.

- ◆ **Nature of development being carried out was exacerbating the dependency syndrome instead of emancipating people from it** - With the high concentration of NGOs in Binga, the policy makers anticipated a situation where Binga should be self-sustainable in all aspects of development. Instead, Binga is still one of the least developed districts in the country. There was therefore a need for refocussing in the planning process by NGOs to come up with programmes which would liberate people from a dependency syndrome.

Teaching a person to fish rather than giving a person a fish is a principle to be encouraged when carrying out humanitarian and development work .

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