

Inclusive school systems rolled-out in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe – Leonard Cheshire Zimbabwe Trust

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

This project aims to support nearly 3,000 children with disabilities to go to school in rural Mashonaland West Province, in Zimbabwe. It also equips schools with accessible facilities, teacher training, and awareness raising for Inclusive Education within the local communities. Results should also influence Inclusive Education policies and practices across Zimbabwe.

“Enabling children with disabilities to develop beyond their impairments through Inclusive Education.”

— Dr. Tsitsi Chataika, Project Consultant

FACTS & FIGURES

- The project is benefitting 308 schools in the Mashonaland West Province of Zimbabwe.
- Over the past three years, the project has trained 951 teachers.
- 2,932 children have been enrolled in the 308 schools over the past three years.

PROBLEMS TARGETED

According to official data, over 30% of children with disabilities across Zimbabwe are not in school. Prior to the intervention, Mashonaland West province had one of the lowest rates of enrolment of children with disabilities, with only 1,480 children with disabilities enrolled in school out of a total of at least 16,000 in the four districts that this project operates. Thus, only 0.1% of enrolled children in the four project districts were children with disabilities. Thus, children with disabilities were usually the last to enrol in school, but often the first to drop out. Notably, 43% of male and 57% of female people with disabilities in Zimbabwe have never been employed.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

People with disabilities were involved at all stages in the shaping and monitoring of the project, including in community awareness-raising, infrastructure adaptation, transport solutions, and assistive devices, as well as in the monitoring of school attendance of enrolled children with disabilities.

The solution is based on:

1. Improved quality & accessibility of primary education:

- Support children with disabilities and their families to access assistive devices/technologies.
- Provide transport solutions to children with mobility challenges.
- Facilitate adaptations to school buildings and provide inclusive materials.
- Establish and equip resource centres.
- Train teachers in inclusive, gender-sensitive, and child-centred teaching methods.
- Train teachers, education officials, and parents in sign language and Braille.
- Organize learning workshops and school exchanges to share learning and enhance delivery.

2. Parents, community members & organizations have better understanding of disability:

- Sensitize parents and community members on the rights and potential of children with disabilities.
- Establish and support parents' groups, including training on advocacy and lobbying for implementation of legislation.
- Establish small income-generation projects to support the enrolment and retention of children with disabilities in schools.

3. Improved institutional commitment to education:

- Train local NGOs and organizations of disabled persons.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

The practice can be adopted or adapted by other organizations and government departments as it is run on the lines of Community-based rehabilitation (CRB) programmes. It is also cost effective as it is community driven. The project is expanding as Save the Children International has asked Leonard Cheshire Zimbabwe Trust to implement the programme on their behalf in eight districts of Zimbabwe. As a result of

this collaboration with the government, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is becoming more responsive to the education of learners with disabilities.

Photo: Yes

Copyright: Leonard Cheshire Zimbabwe Trust

CONTACT

Mr. Innocent CHIMONYO

Leonard Cheshire Zimbabwe Trust

P.O. Box 11, Kambuzuma, Harare, Zimbabwe

+ 263772461047

ichimonyo@leonardcheshire.org.zw

www.leonardcheshire.org.zw

Nominated by: Dr. Tsitsi CHATAIKA, Leonard Cheshire Zimbabwe Trust

tags: education, rural areas, low-income and middle-income countries context