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ECONOMIC SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS KEY TO HUMAN DIGNITY

At 55 years of independence, Zambia claims to have made a lot of economic advances both in urban and rural areas. However, these advancements are supposed to translate to the improvement of living standards of the people of Zambia living in both rural and urban areas. It is against this background that JCTR conducted a study in Chishipula community to ascertain the extent to which the people of Chishipula access Economic, social and Cultural Rights with particular attention to Education, Health and Water & Sanitation. The findings however, revealed that Chishipula was far from accessing of these rights. Against these findings, JCTR has for the past six months been engaging the community and the service providers to see how best these rights can be accessed by the people living in Chishipula Community.

This month JCTR has conducted follow up meetings with Local government, Service providers and the community to discuss the improvement made on highlighted challenges and find the way forward. On health it was found that the community still has no clinic and still depends on TAZARA and Namulundu clinics which also have insufficient infrastructure. Through JCTR's sensitisation on the importance of the clinic, Chishipula community has identified land for the construction of the clinic. A group consisting community members and other stakeholders was formed to lobby government and other service providers for the construction of the Clinic in Chishipula community. The construction of the clinic is important because it will provide health care services even to the poorest of the poor living in that community who for now cover a considerable distance to the nearest health centre which sometimes results in people dying on the way before they reach the health centre. The group was also assigned to lobby government to complete the construction of the Maternity ward at TAZARA where pregnant mothers have been deprived of their dignity as they have to deliver from the common room.

Education is considered by many as the only key to success, meaning that if a person is denied access to quality education then their success in life is equally denied. Just about 4km from Kasama post office, is Chishipula community whose people have been denied access to quality education living as if they are hundreds miles away from the central town when actually they are part of the town. By February, the community only had 1*2 functional classroom block. The other 1*2 classroom block which was partly funded by CDF had only gone up to roof level though the council claimed it was complete. After a number of lobbying meetings recently conducted by JCTR, the School has received an additional teacher. The school has also started using one of the classrooms on the uncompleted classroom block just to increase the number of learning hours for pupils. The area Member of Parliament has also been engaged and has pledged to help repair damaged desks once the frames have been sourced from other schools. It is therefore true to say service providers need to move quickly and lift the standards of Chishipula Primary School because if it is left the way it is, a lot of children may be pushed into illicit behaviours.

One of the reasons why people leave rural areas to urban areas is to have access to clean and safe water, use toilets within their houses and wash their bodies using the indoor showers. This is not the case in Chishipula community because the community has no access to piped water and only depend on shallow wells which pose a high risk of water borne diseases. Worse still, with over 950 pupils Chishipula primary School only has on borehole which is also shared with people from the community.

"A JUST ZAMBIAN SOCIETY GUIDED BY FAITH, WHERE EVERYONE ENJOYS FULLNESS OF LIFE"

In addition to this, the school only has 4 toilets with 2 serving teachers while the other 2 serving over 950 pupils. After several engagements with the community and service providers, some hope has started to rise as some stakeholders have started promising to do some contributions with TAZARA being the first one to donate their unused tank to be counted as 40% community contribution. Chambeshi water and Sewerage has also promised to restore piped water to the community once they are ready.

Not until the community gets access to Education, Health care and Water & Sanitation, dignified life can never be seen in that particular community. JCTR will therefore continue to engage the community and service providers so that these essential services can be accessed by the forgotten people of Chishipula community.

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