

**YOUTH RIGHTS INFORMATION CENTRE (YRIC)
PROJECT
AT MINDOLO ECUMENICAL FOUNDATION (MEF)**

MIDTERM REVIEW REPORT

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1. Purpose

The purpose of the review was to assess the project, to review the plan and the budget for the remaining project time up to the end of 2007 and to discuss the possibilities to create a continuation of the project beyond 2007.

2. Background

The project under study was the YRIC project between 2006 and 2007. This project is a continuation of the YRIC project 2005, which is reported elsewhere (*Final Report 200502096.doc*)

The review took place at the MEF campus between 06-10-24 and 06-11-04.

3. Method

The planned method for the study

- To talk individually with the project committee members
- To follow up and discuss the project in project meetings
- To study existing documents – minutes, memos, reports
- To participate in some project activities, especially to meet the youth in the Youth Club.

I had talks with the following committee members and the project sponsor

- Charley Thomas – Director and project sponsor
- Michael Mwanachongo – Dean and project chairperson
- June Muleya-Kangwa – Acting registrar and lecturer
- Linda M Simbeye – Librarian and project secretary
- Aruni Jayewardene – Project coordinator assistant
- Tyson Mumbi – Accountant
- Anna Tyllström – SweZam volunteer and Youth Club organizer

During my stay at MEF we had three project meetings. I was also invited as a guest to attend the MEF Board of Governors Meeting, which gave a very good insight in the current situation and plans of MEF and also gave a perspective how the YRIC project relates to other running projects at MEF (all-in-all 18 projects).

I attended four meetings with the Youth Club and was impressed by the energy they showed and the interest to learn more about human rights, gender and HIV/AIDS and to share that knowledge with other youths.

Together with some project committee and youth club members I had the privilege to attend two performances of the Bwacha theatre group at two different locations in the Kitwe outskirts market places.

4. Findings and experiences

4.1. Introduction

The project committee had had 11 meetings during 2006 including the three I attended. I have received minutes from all of them. Available on request.

A narrative report covering 2006 up till mid November has been produced and distributed to the Swedish-Zambian Association board (SweZam). See annex 1.

The first transfer of funds to MEF for the YRIC 2006-2007 project was executed end of May. The reason for the late date was that the final report for the YRIC 2005 project could not be finalized until mid May when the official audit report from MEF was made available to SweZam. The submission of the final report to Forum Syd was a prerequisite for the release of new money. As an unfortunate consequence the planned project activities could not start until mid June. Another incident, which caused delays in the implementation of planned activities, was that SweZam funds were borrowed to cover costs outside the project. The institutions giving grants to the students being late with their payments caused the bad cash flow of MEF. Today (07-01-10) that has been rectified.

The Youth Rights Information Centre, in connection to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, was officially opened on the 29th June by MEF Director Charley Thomas and the SweZam representative Paula Mauritz. Since it's opening the centre has been used actively in activities regarding Human Rights, Gender and HIV/AIDS information dissemination to the main target group, the youth and to the surrounding community. Books, videos, office stationeries and a computer connected to Internet have been procured for the centre.

4.2. Activities

4.2.1. *The Youth Club*

A Youth Club has been established with students from secondary schools in the Kitwe area. Today there are 15 students, 7 boys and 8 girls, in the age 17-20 years, from three different government schools in the club, who meet twice a week under the supervision of the youth club organizer, at present the SweZam volunteer Anna Tyllström. They study and discuss issues regarding the rights of the youth including gender aspects, how to behave and adept a life style safeguarding them from HIV/AIDS, etc. Another important issue they deal with is how to organize themselves in a democratic way and to secure a positive development of the club. External experts have been invited to lecture about HIV/AIDS, leadership, study techniques etc.

A three-day computer literacy workshop was organized end October for the youth club members. The purpose was to give an introduction to computer usage and Internet skills. The workshop was very well received and participants said, "the workshop surpassed even the highest expectations".

The Youth Club was given a small budget of US\$300 to be used for an activity of their own choice. They finally arrived at organizing a trip to the Dag Hammarskjöld Crash Site, which was carried through the 11th November. The Crash Site caretaker Mr

Nasilele presented a brief historical background of the site and its significance. They also discussed UN, its mission and its structure.

4.2.2. Theme Days

Two theme days had been carried out:

Heroes and Unity Day 4th July. Eleven youths from target schools (5 boys and 6 girls) attended the workshop. They listened to a presentation on the legacy of Dag Hammarskjöld and the African heroes. Later they watched and discussed a video on "Amandla – a South African struggle for independence or rather for freedom"

African Freedom Day 15th July. Fifteen youths (7 boys and 8 girls) attended the workshop. The workshop was focused on human rights. The presentation was spiced by the “adopted” Bwacha drama group who presented a dramatic play on the rights of the child. The participants were overwhelmed by the information acquired and hailed the drama group for the excellent performance and pledged to share the information with other youths

4.2.3. Library Orientation for Teacher

A one-day workshop was conducted 23rd September. Fourteen teachers attended with a balanced gender ratio. The workshop focused on the importance and management of libraries. The teachers appreciated the initiative and requested for more workshops aimed at capacity building.

4.2.4. Boosting children's reading habits

The YRIC dedicated a one-day workshop 30th September for children to compliment the efforts of their teachers. Twenty pupils (9 boys and 11) girls) attended from both private and governments' primary schools. The workshop focused on developing good reading habits in children.

4.2.5. HIV/Aids through theatre

Bwacha Cultural Ensemble conducted 2nd November an awareness outreach programme on HIV/Aids through theatre to Luangwa and Mulenga markets. The outreach aimed at sensitizing the communities on VCT (Voluntary Counselling and Testing) and use of condoms. The attendance in both shows was overwhelming as the numbers were approximately 500 (women, men, children and youths). The show reached a mass population across the country through the Zambia National Cooperation Broadcasting (ZNBC) 5mins T.V.

4.3. SweZam volunteer Anna Tyllström

The volunteer was contracted to work at MEF from 1st September to 31st December 2006 with the purpose to help MEF develop its organization to respond to the changing conditions with a special focus on the YRIC project, youth participation, and gender. To achieve this the plan was to carry out the following activities:

1. to support MEF to introduce and implement policies for HIV/Aids and gender
2. to help analyse the previously developed SWOT and suggest organizational improvements
3. to support the MEF management in relation to development partners and contributors
4. to develop routines for project development
5. to assist the development of the YRIC project and communication with SweZam

Achievements so far:

1. an HIV/AIDS policy had already been developed. Anna participates in the implementation work. The development of a gender policy has started
2. there has not been a structured activity addressing the problems in the SWOT analysis but nevertheless some of the issues have been addressed for instance "...more clearly defined working policies" with the development of HIV/AIDS and Gender policies and also "...to address issues affecting mankind like HIV/AIDS" with the YRIC project especially the Youth Club.
3. Anna has been frequently assisting MEF with contacts with Diakonia, the Swedish Embassy, Forum Syd, Irish Aid, Chep and others.
4. Anna has been working part time in the project office in close cooperation with Aruni, assistant project manager, structuring and organizing the procedures
5. Anna has put in a lot of energy and initiatives in the YRIC project especially when it comes to the build up of the Youth Club. She, functioning as the organizer, has won the hearts and minds of the youth and has established a fruitful relationship built on mutual respect.

Director Charley Thomas described Anna as a breath of fresh air; seeing things from another perspective, and that she is result oriented and gets things done.

4.4. The financial system

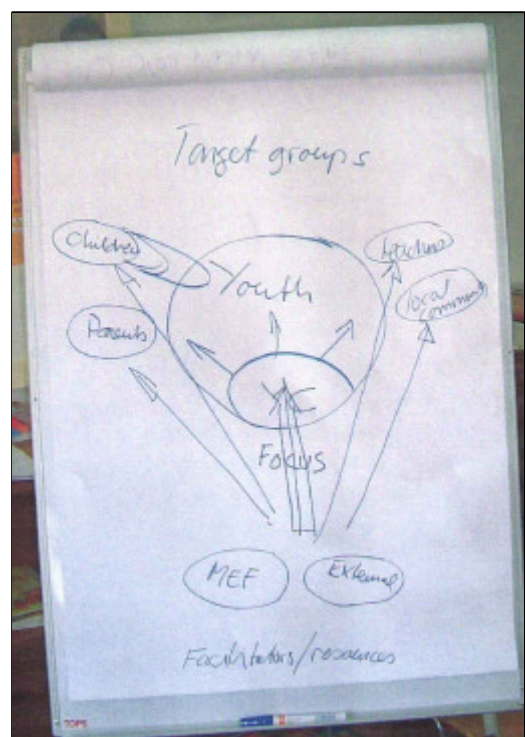
The MEF accountant, Tyson Mumbi, introduced me to the financial procedures and systems used at MEF for programme operations and projects. They are using a commercial package MYOB (Mind Your Own Business) for the general accounting and Excel worksheets for detailed project bookkeeping. In the future MEF will abandon the Excel sheets and use MYOB for all the bookkeeping.

The financial transactions are recorded weekly. A report (a copy of the Excel file) could be sent to SweZam two weeks after closing the bookkeeping period.

4.5. Project meetings

I participated actively in three project meetings. The minutes from the meetings are annexed (2-4) to the report. We had very good discussions and arrived at some important common conclusions, which are summarized below:

- we reviewed the project achievements, discussed what had gone wrong and how to rectify it.
- we planned for the near future (quarter 4 2006) and adjusted the budget
- we looked into the plans for 2007 and made a new draft plan and a draft budget (annex 5), which must be reviewed and updated by MEF
- we made a SWOT analysis (annex 6)
- we concluded that the focus of the project should be the Youth Club(s)



5. Conclusions and recommendations

Following the discussions with individual committee members and the discussions during the project meetings we came to the following important conclusions:

- a. Focus on the Youth Club (YC) – empower the members so they can empower other youths.
- b. Involve the YC members in planning and implementation of the YRIC 2007 activities including procurement of material (books, videos,...)
- c. The YC organizer should be the link between the project committee and the YC.
- d. Recruit a local successor to Anna as the YC organizer on a half time basis
- e. Establish a new Youth Club for youth in the age 14-16 from private/community schools
- f. Equip the YRIC room with a telephone line, another internet computer, furniture and office stationary
- g. Link YRIC to the Youth Leadership Programme (YLP)
- h. Revise the plan and budget for 2007. A draft should be sent to SweZam mid January 2007
- i. To secure future funds from SweZam establish a new dollar account
- j. Reporting to SweZam each quarter. A short narrative report describing activities done, a copy of the financial excel sheet, copy of project meeting minutes

To these conclusions I would like to add my own observations and reflections.

- k. Some committee members are strongly committed to the project and put in a lot of work into it while others participation is more irregular. Although we must remember that the project work is done beside the regular MEF work it is crucial for the advancement of the project that everybody participate actively.
- l. The YC venture is obvious a success story and is clearly the right path for the project in the future
- m. To find a successor to Anna as the YC organizer is essential for a fruitful continuation of the project
- n. A sound management of the financial funds for the project is important. The above-mentioned incident of lending out money to other MEF expenses is not acceptable. To enable SweZam to monitor the project, the quarterly reports including the financial statement is a prerequisite.
- o. Finally I have to express my satisfaction at what has been achieved and that I am impressed by all the hard work the project team has put in. I am convinced that the future work will be successful if the above described conclusions and recommendations, which to some extent addresses the Weakness points in the SWOT analysis, are conformed to.

6. ANNEXES

6.1. Annex 1 – Narrative report 2006

6.2. Annex 2 - Minutes from project meeting 06-10-25

6.3. Annex 3 - Minutes from project meeting 06-11-01

6.4. Annex 4 - Minutes from project meeting 06-11-03

6.5. Annex 5 - Suggested budget 2007-01-10

6.6. Annex 6 - YRIC SWOT Analysis

The annexes can be made available on request.