

Youth's Rights Information Centre (YRIC)

A project in co-operation with Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (MEF), Kitwe, with the purpose to facilitate for young people to learn more about Human Rights, Gender, and HIV/AIDS, which can influence their lives in a positive way.

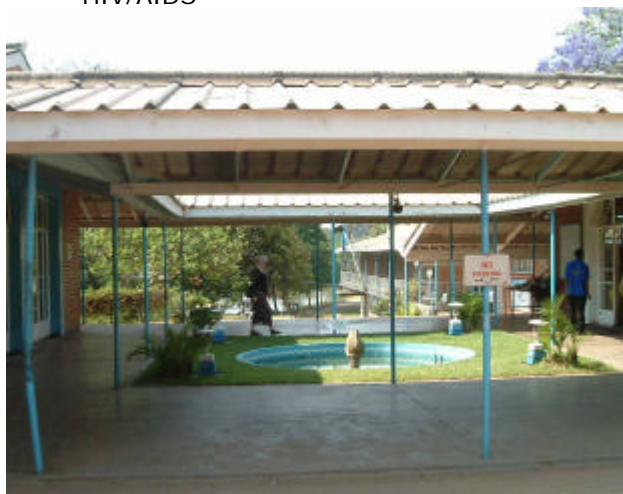
The Swedish-Zambian Association (Swe-Zam) AGM decided in March 2002 to start a project in Zambia in the spirit of Dag Hammarskjöld. The chairman Tell Åke Dahlöf carried out a pre-study, sponsored by Sida, in March 2004. A team comprising of MEF staff and Tell developed a project plan, which constituted the basis for the application to Sida/Forum Syd for funds in May 2004.

To receive funds, 20% of the total project budget was required from the applying organization, but was later reduced to 10%. Generous contributions from our members have secured financing of the project during 2005 and also for a possible extension through 2006 and 2007.

Sida granted our request in December 2004 and the project could start in 2005. The purpose of the project is to establish a Youth's Rights Information Centre in the **Dag Hammarskjöld Library** at MEF.

Planned activities 2005

1. Procurement of books and videos
2. Facilitator course on HIV/AIDS
3. 4 theme days
4. Library orientation programme for youth
5. HIV/AIDS education through theatre
6. Boosting children's reading habit
7. Rural work shops on Youth, Gender and HIV/AIDS



Reception area with the library in the background

We were a group of 5 people from the Association who made a **journey to Zambia** in September this year to revive old memories, participate in the Dag Hammarskjöld memorial ceremonies and to carry out an **informal project review**. We were concerned about some issues we wanted to clarify; unreliable communication between Swe-Zam and MEF; the need for improved monitoring routines; student representation in the project; possible volunteers and the project pace.

We had an initial meeting with director Father Thomas and some of the management staff. He gave a brief overview of the current situation of MEF, the changed business conditions, which are affecting MEF in a negative way and the need for reforms at MEF to open up for new customer groups. Our project fits well into that picture.



Director's office, father Thomas (right)

We also had a rewarding meeting with the **project committee** comprised of the following members:
Dunstan Chikonka, chief librarian
Roland Muchanga, lecturer Orphans programme
June Muleya-Kangwa, lecturer Womens leadership
Tasila Mbewe, lecturer peace building, committee secretary
Tyson Mumbi, accountant
Michael Mwanachongo, Dean, committee head
Cathrine Ngalamila, assistant librarian



Project committee members

Committee Meeting agenda:

1. The Swedish funding system
2. The status of the project
3. Activity review - what should be done by whom
4. Structure of project, communication and the committee
5. Plan for continued work

In between I had separate meetings, for planning and follow up, with Tasila, Dunstan, the Dean and the MEF chairperson Lucy Kasanga.

A summary of the meetings

- **Project status:** Due to administrative problems in Sweden the first transfer of funds was not accomplished until mid May, which caused a delay in the planned activities. But nevertheless three out of four planned theme days have been realized.

- **Project organization:** The main body is the project committee, which will regularly have formal meetings for overall planning, follow up and decision-making. Persons responsible to carry out activities will be appointed. These resource persons will have informal meetings where student representatives will participate in detailed planning and implementation of the activities.

Father Thomas and Lucy Kasanga will act as sponsors and supervisors for the project.

The communication between Swe-Zam and MEF is dependent on e-mail and from now on all mail will be addressed to all members of the project committee with copies to the project sponsors to secure that no information is lost or delayed due to people out of office or computer malfunction.

- **Project monitoring:** We went through how to fill up the monitoring form we have designed. Swe-Zam has received one monitoring form for the first period of the project.
- **Plan for continued work:** We managed to make plans for activities 1 and 2 and also book meetings for the other activities. These meetings resulted in a detailed plan and corresponding request for funds for the remaining activities.
- **Volunteers:** MEF receives 2 - 4 volunteers each year from various countries. During our visit three young people from Norway worked as volunteers. MEF can accommodate one volunteer from Swe-Zam per year.
- One **lesson learned** is that it is important to be physically present at the start up of a project with a new partner. There are many issues and questions that have to be ironed out to get the project running smoothly. We believe to have achieved it now and that our joint work has put in new energy into the project.



Proposed location for the YRIC

One of the tasks assigned on the project meeting was to find out what resources - publications, videos, training courses in Human Rights, Gender, HIV/AIDS and Youth areas - are available for NGOs like MEF for free or to an affordable cost. I made a survey in Lusaka together with an excellent guide from Rescue Mission Zambia, Shalala Oliver Sepiso. We visited 11 organizations and got material and information from several more. The findings from that study are compiled in a report that has been sent to MEF and the Swe-Zam board member. The report is available to any one on request from me.



Busy students in the library

Extended project 2006-2007

MEF and Swe-Zam have together planned for an extension of the project for years 2006 and 2007. Some of the activities from 2005 will continue, some new activities have been added including a mid-term review and also a volunteer resource to support organizational development.

Applications for project extension and volunteer work were sent to Forum Syd in August. The very good news is that Forum Syd has recommended Sida to approve our requests. Sida will take the final decision in mid December and they mostly follow the Forum Syd recommendation.

The approved project budget for 2006 is 144 000 SEK and 135 000 SEK for 2007. The volunteer budget for 2006 is 97 000 SEK

Swe-Zam's own contribution to the project is already secured but of course donations are welcome for a new two years project 2008-2009.

Planned activities 2006 -2007

Activities 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 from 2005 are continued. New activities are

1. Low cost computers and office equipment
2. Computer training and support
3. Managerial and Human Rights training for NGOs
4. Development of HIV/AIDS awareness and policy
5. Mid term review

MEF expressed needs of **future volunteers** for following tasks:

- An IT-manager supporting their computer system and implementing the IT-policy
- A medical doctor to rebuild and re-establish capacity in the on-campus clinic
- A librarian for modernizing the library, to increase capacity and maximise the use of the building

In concluding remarks, Father Thomas said he believed Swe-Zam could be of great help as **MEF's extended arms, ears and eyes** in Sweden and to assess Swedish organizations who wish to cooperate with them.

My **conclusion** is that the project is on track: MEF staff is committed; Forum Syd considers us capable to carry out the project. We can already notice improvements in communications and a step up of the project pace. We are confident that the project will achieve its goals and contribute to a better future for some of the young people in Zambia.

Rolf Svanström