Empowering women in all sectors is essential to build stronger economies
Editor’s Note

Dear All,

As we conclude 2016 to signal the dawn of a new year, perhaps it’s important for all of us to reflect on our activities and plans. Did we achieve what we set out to achieve and if not, why? How can we be better in 2017 considering that every challenge and obstacle is meant to help us come up with different and more innovative approaches in our work?

The year 2016 has been significant for JCP and our Partners because it marked the beginning of our new Country Strategy 2016-2020. We made major adjustments in our programming with some programmes being phased out and others deepened to address emerging needs and priorities for Zambia.

Coincidentally, the new strategy came with new leadership after the current Country Representative, Mr. Harald Nyeggen Ser took over from Mr. Steen Erik Mey Rasmussen at the beginning of 2016. All adjustments and repositioning were key in getting the programmes up and running and our partners familiar with the changes.

Although the programme delayed to take off due to several factors including awaiting of grant letters from our donors and partnership negotiations, JCP still managed to implement most activities including the major Partnership Platform - Partner Indaba and Thematic Platforms. A Partner Communications Indaba which gave an opportunity to share best practices in gathering and sharing stories of change from a communications perspective. A Procurement Training ensured that both JCP and Partner Staff are equipped with up-to-date procurement standards and ways around associated challenges.

You will find interesting stories in this edition but look out for one which shows how learning to read and write has changed lives of women and girls in Eastern Province, with a far reaching reading competence levels to even stand and read in front of others.

As always if you have any feedback on our newsletter please get in touch with the Editor on bellah.zulu@nca.no

Bellah Zulu Editor

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About (JCP) Zambia

In 2011, Christian Aid (CA), Dan Church Aid (DCA) and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) merged to form a Joint Country Programme (JCP) in Zambia. The JCP is implemented in partnership with local faith based and other professional Civil Society Organisations and focuses on two strategic priority themes, Gender Justice and Economic Justice. It is also supported by European Union, Czech Diakonia and FORUT.

Our Overall Goal

“Rights Holders (RHs) have been empowered and as active participants, achieved gender justice and economic justice through economic empowerment, transparent and accountable use of resources while respecting and upholding their human rights.”

Within this context, mobilization of citizens and equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills is important for sustainable development. JCP is committed to working with partners whose key focus is on challenging the churches, CSOs and other actors to institute key legal and policy reforms with regard to good governance, gender equality, and effectiveness. In the Zambian context churches and faith actors command a considerable amount of respect from both duty bearers and rights holders.

Therefore churches and FBOs wield unique and comparative advantages and are key social institutions in influencing social change among its constituents, as well as influencing the national agenda towards transparency and accountability of the state to its citizens. NCA, DCA and CA through the formation of JCP have developed consented competence and effective methods in strengthening the church based organizations for increased effectiveness and efficiency, organizational development and enhanced capacity to articulate key issues in areas of focus, as well as in implementation of sustainable programmes.
The Joint Country Programme (JCP) Zambia recently held a successful 1st Annual Partner Indaba for the 2016-2020 strategic period, to reflect on how the organisation works and share experiences, lessons and best practices.

Issues of the rapidly changing global context took centre stage during the deliberations. The International Director for DanChurch Aid, Jonas Vejsager Noddekaer gave an overview of the global trends in development aid. “In Europe the issue of refugees and migration has led to many countries trying to control their borders making the issue of security prominent with suggestions to use development aid to improve own security,” he revealed.

He explained the changing landscape and how donors are now categorising countries to determine the kind of help and support they can receive. “There is need to break down the barriers between humanitarian and development aid,” he said.

During the opening session of the event, Secretary General of the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops and Chairperson of the JCP Advisory Board, Fr. Cleophas Lungu reflected on the importance of networking and partnering. He asked: “What can we do together to make Zambia a better place especially that it is going through a delicate period in history characterised by stifling of the private media and critical voice?”

Zambian Businessman and JCP Advisory Board member, Yusuf Dodia gave a thought-provoking presentation on the CSOs repositioning in the context of the private sector development. “Profit is not evil but a fuel for development,” he said in his opening statement. “But CSOs have a good opportunity to talk to private businesses to see how they can support development through Corporate Social Responsibility.”

Mr. Dodia also highlighted the credible voice that CSOs bring to the table and how they are respected by both the government and the private sector but he emphasised: “CSOs need to be more knowledgeable about issues if they are to unlock many opportunities.”

Speaking during a plenary session, Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA) Executive Director Agness Mumba emphasised the need to strengthen domestic accountability. “Zambia is not short of resources and we should not be over-dependant on aid and people need to be empowered to contribute,” she said. “We need to put in place interventions to ensure put our resources together for maximum impact.”

He concluded: “We need to be more careful of the context and signs of the times, especially the shrinking funding and come up with strategies while we still have the time.”

The Partner Indaba themed ‘Strengthening Civil Society’ held from August 30 to August 31 in Lusaka was attended by JCP Partners, Networks, Board members and members of JCP’s highest governing body, the Cooperation and Coordinating Committee which draws its membership from the three agencies which make up JCP including DanChurch Aid, Christian Aid, Norwegian Church Aid and new JCP partner Czech Diakonia.
Self-Help Facilitation approach improves lives in Southern Zambia

JCP Partner Response Network has improved the lives of local communities in the Southern parts of Zambia by sharing and encouraging sustainable self-help practices in educational and livelihood & trade projects within local communities.

A team comprising JCP and Response Network staff recently visited selected target areas of Kayaba and Nalombe located in the outskirts of Zimba and Kazungula Districts in Southern Province to see some of the community schools and other projects which Response Network has helped to establish.

The Area Chairman for Kayaba, Mr. Zacheus Kanamulemba expressed his gratitude for Kayaba Community School which is being constructed by Response Network to cater for the community with funding from Norway based private donors for all the six villages in the area. “This area has been poor for a long time and absence of schools nearby meant that many children didn’t have an opportunity to go to school,” he said. “But now we are very happy for the financial support we received from our donors to build this school.”

A 10-year old Grade Two girl Kiso Simweene also expressed her excitement at the new school. “I am very happy for the new school because it is bigger and also nearer to my place; it also has good toilets,” she said in the local Toka-Leya language. “When I grow up I want to be a teacher so that I can help my parents and other people in my area.”

Mr. Crayford Siwimikamwi, a teacher at the school explained how the new school will improve lives in Kayaba community. “The levels of illiteracy are very high in this area therefore educating children means that at least every family will have a child to help with reading and translating documents,” he said. Mr. Siwimikamwi also revealed that the school had helped to build a sense of teamwork in the community. He said: “Since this school project required working together every village was challenged to build strong teams to help with different things such as providing water, sand and stones for the building project. This kind of unity will also be useful since people will come together for future projects.”

Response Network’s Building Officer and Project Manager for Kayaba Community, Mr. Caleb Chabauni was happy with the level of community involvement in the project. “This is a community which understood their problem especially in the area of education and got together to address it despite not having the full capacity,” he said. “There has been overwhelming community contribution during the building process because everyone has been doing their part by contributing labour.”

Another area which was visited is Nalombe Community located deep in the Game Management Area of Kafue National Park. Children there have for a long time been learning from a grass thatched structure with serious challenges in accessing clean water.

“When we first came to this area, it was so underdeveloped with no roads or communication of any sort,” revealed the Senior Facilitation Officer for Response Network’s Self Help Programme, Florence Choongo. “The low literacy, information and infrastructure made us introduce the Self-Help programme which encourages people to help themselves by identifying what ought to be improved using available resources. In this community people have gone into various venture such as carpentry and gardening”

“The approach helps people identify their source of problems and what they can do to improve their situation, though it proved to be a challenge at first because many people were used to receiving handouts from donors,” she added.

The Programmes Manager for Response Network Mr. Julius Simfukwe highlighted the importance of the Self-Help programme in addressing developmental challenges in Southern Province. “There has been a major transformation in our target communities in how they view development,” he said. “Self-help is a major cornerstone for development and all we have done is offer technical support. The local communities are now appreciating the need to identify and use local resource.”

However Mr. Simfukwe emphasised the need for more partnerships in the area to help address other challenges such as clean water, health and sanitation. “The donors are doing a great job because whatever they give us has gone a long way, and we are committed to making sure the resources are used in a transparent and accountable manner.”
Procurement training for JCP and partners

By Bellah Zulu

The Joint Country Programme (JCP) Zambia and selected partners are now more aware of procurement guidelines and procedures after participating in a two days capacity building training held in Lusaka, facilitated by Norwegian Church Aid's Global Logistics Department.

“There is need to understand procurement well because it is one of the high risk activities in a project usually involving the exchange of huge sums of money,” said the training’s lead facilitator and Logistics Advisor from Norwegian Church Aid in Oslo, Norway, Mr. Dave McEntee. “That’s why we have detailed procurement procedures to help mitigate the element of risk as much possible.”

The Programme Officer from our partner Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA), Mr. Bernard Mumba said that he found the training useful and that it would help the organisation in its’ work. “It has opened up my understanding of procurement and I think it’s a plus to our organisation because it will enhance what we have been doing,” he said. “It was particularly helpful to learn that we need to plan and include procurement issues at project proposal writing stage.”

Another participant, the Programme Officer for Women in Governance and Women Economic Empowerment from our partner the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB), Ms Harriet Buleya expressed her gratitude for the training. “Now I understand what procurement really means and the kind of documentation needed,” she said. “I now know that procurement is as much the procurement officer’s responsibility as it is mine.”

JCP’s Procurement Officer, Mr. Musonda Yamba yamba also explained the importance of the training. “We administer donor funds and therefore should remain accountable to the beneficiaries, partners and indeed the donors,” he said. “Procurement has rules and guidelines and cannot be done anyhow hence the importance of this training.”

At the end of the training, JCP’s Head of Programmes, Margaret Machila explained that the training should be seen as mind-set change effort. “We have learnt that procurement is not just for procurement officers but that it’s more of an organisational responsibility and this should be seen as a training of trainers,” she said.

JCP Country Representative, Mr. Harald Nyeggen Sommer was grateful for the good partner participation. He said that the training was important to “all of us as we endeavour in this joint effort of bringing economic justice and gender justice to all.”

The training was held at the JCP Offices in Lusaka from October 12 to 13 and brought in selected partners from JCP’s four thematic areas.
New school improves education in Njolwe area of Zambia

“There was a time when we used to learn under a tree,” Reuben Phiri

By Bellah Zulu

Life has changed for the better for the people of Njolwe area on the outskirts of Lusaka from the time Norwegian Church Aid with funding from Norway based private donors constructed a 1x2 classroom block for Njolwe Community School.

“Ever since the new classroom block was built, the number of pupils has increased and all our children are able to attend classes in a secure environment and within a reasonable distance,” said the Chairperson of the Njolwe Community, Mr. Enock Phiri. “This project has really helped to improve literacy levels in our community.”

A 13-year old Grade 6 pupil of Njolwe Community School, Misozi Namwaba, expressed her gratitude to Norwegian Church Aid and shared her future plans and aspirations. “I want to become a teacher when I grow up because I love to share with others and also see them become better,” she said in the local Chinyanja language. “I thank the people who have helped us with the new classrooms because a long time ago, we used to learn from outside.”

Another pupil, 13-year old Reuben Phiri explained how the new classroom block has improved education in his community. “This school is the closest in our community and now many other children like me have an opportunity to attend classes,” he said. “At first we only had one classroom block and some of us used to learn under a tree and had to run away when the rains came.”

The Head Teacher of the school, Mr. Kebby Sichone explained what he called the biggest contribution that the school has brought in their community. “Because of the presence of a strong room which is a secured area where examination papers can be kept in this new classroom block, our school will soon become an examination centre,” he explained. “Currently pupils in examination classes have to walk more than 12 kilometres to the nearest examination centre thereby tiring them out and reducing concentration, but that will be no more.”

Mr. Sichone revealed that the community has been inspired by the works done by Norwegian Church Aid at the school and are putting resources together to build a new block. “But we will still need additional support for us to successfully complete it,” he said.

The Ministry of Education in Zambia is also happy with the support of Norwegian Church Aid in the education sector. “Our Government encourages private-public partnerships in the education sector and so this project is really a cushion to us,” said the Assistant Buildings Officer for Chongwe District where Njolwe Community School is based, Mr. Lucky Muyooma.

He added: “This school will soon be adopted by the Government as a primary school and even become an examination centre in this area. This infrastructure has helped improve many things including enrolment and sanitation at the school.”

Despite all the support and effort, Njolwe Community School still has many challenges. With an increase in enrolment to 135 pupils from Grades 1 to 7, since the new infrastructure was completed, there is increased pressure because of lack of teachers.

“We only have one teacher here who has to teach all the Grades here,” revealed Reuben Phiri. But the school administration raised the lack of housing infrastructure at the school as one of the causes.

Norwegian Church Aid with the financial support of Norway based private donors began the school project about three years ago and has spent over Twenty Three Thousand United States Dollars (USD 23, 000) to complete the project.
Learning to Read and Write improves women’s lives in Eastern Province

By Bellah Zulu

JCP in partnership with Czech Diakonia remains committed to improving literacy levels among women in Zambia. A recent field visit revealed that lives of women in the Eastern Province of Zambia have improved after being empowered with basic reading and writing skills.

In one project implemented in Katete town at St. Johns the Evangelist Parish by JCP partner Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB), a group of women explained how confident they have become now that they are able to read and write.

“I first heard about these adult literacy classes from my friend and was encouraged to join,” said Lomans Phiri, a 30-year old mother of three. “At the time I never knew how to read and write but now I can and am usually asked to read the Bible at Church.”

Another adult literacy student Maureen Phiri, 34, explained the difficulties she faced before learning to read and write. “During group meetings at church, those who knew how to read and write would be selected to important positions leaving some of us out and that made me feel really bad.”

She added: “But the worst moments was when I failed to help my children with homework and was forced to refer them to my neighbour for help. Now am happy that I can help them myself!”

Low literacy levels is one of Zambia’s biggest challenges which the country being ranked poorly in a SADC literacy survey. The Secretary of the St Johns the Evangelist Parish Adult Literacy School explained why women are still among the most illiterate in Zambia.

“Traditionally women were not encouraged to go to school and emphasis was put on just staying at home and preparing things for the household,” she said. “But now with our effort, the number of women able to read and write has increased over the past few months.”

Fr. Bernard Zimba from St. Johns the Evangelist Parish expressed his gratitude at the support towards literacy classes in an area where “women have a hunger to learn.” He said: “Adult literacy is a growing need in our area especially among women because it helps them become more functional in the society, despite the stigma which comes along due to age.”

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The Joint Country Programme (JCP) Zambia recently hosted its first ever Partner Communications Indaba to among other things, create space for engagement and sharing of knowledge, skills and competencies relevant in communications work among JCP Partners.

The event themed ‘Effective Communication for Development’, was held on November 29, 2016 at Lusaka’s Palmwood Lodge and was attended by 21 people representing the 18 JCP partners in Zambia.

JCP Country Representative, Mr. Harald Nyeggen Sommer gave a thought-provoking presentation on the importance of communication in development work. “What matters is how and what we communicate: how we break through,” he said.

He added: “Communication matters and there is no other tool as powerful – in the fight over what sort of world we want to have – than telling the story of human beings, how we are linked, and increasingly requesting good stories of change: they want to know the impact of our work, of our partners’ work.”

In an interview one of the participants, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer from the Catholic Diocese of Ndola (CDoN), Mr. Obino Chola reflected on the Indaba: “I was able to acquire the necessary skills for me to collect and share stories of change from our various projects. However the training made it clear that as organisations we need to budget for communications if we are to effectively tell the stories of change.”

“We’re currently trying our best with the basic equipment we have, but we need money to purchase some vital equipment such as good cameras to be more effective and efficient,” he added.

Another participant, Communications Manager for Response Network, Makazo Mwangala talked of her positive experience at the Indaba. “It was one of the best and most useful workshops I’ve attended because it spoke directly to me and what I do in my organization,” she said. “Perhaps the best part was that it helped me see that Communications Officers, though often times underrated, are key people in an organization.”

JCP Head of Programmes Margaret Machila closed the event, thanking the partners for participating: ‘I want to applaud your organisation’s commitment to communications – if they had not been committed, you would not have come.’

She encouraged partners to invest resources in gathering and sharing stories, saying: ‘Communication is the mainstream of development work. Communication work must be budgeted for and must not be an accident. Our donors are all saying: “We want stories of change. So if we want them, we should budget for them.”

Partners expressed a desire for the training to be repeated in future, and rolled out more widely. It covered a lot of topics from using photography and video to communicating impact in development.

The event was run by the JCP Communications Officer, Bellah Zulu, who delivered the training alongside Christian Aid’s Media and Communications Adviser, Tomilola Ajayi. It had the full support and involvement of the JCP leadership, and CA’s Programme Communications Team.
JCP hosts Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation training

The Joint Country Programme through a Kenya based training organisation, Asset Africa Institute recently conducted a Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation training workshop for JCP partner organisations.

The training which was held at Palm Wood Lodge in Lusaka Zambia from November 21-25, 2016 was attended by representatives from all of JCP’s partner organisations including JCP staff. It equipped them with management tools and techniques necessary to “establish and operate effective project monitoring, evaluation and results-based management systems.”

Emphasis was placed on understanding the interrelation between the ‘change we want’ and the interventions that an organisation puts in place. “Monitoring and Evaluation is not as a result of someone’s expectation but an honest realisation on the need to make a difference and bring about real change,” said JCP Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Fundraising Officer, Caroline Mukosa.

“The environment in which programmes are anchored are also constantly changing; demanding continuous and systematic collection and accurate analysis of programme data to inform appropriate decision making and timely corrective actions,” said the Lead Trainer Dr Margaret Nduta Githae. “To be effective, there is a need to understand key aspects of project design, planning, implementation, management and monitoring and evaluation with clear understanding and differences between monitoring and evaluation functions.”

Participants appreciated the training and agreed that it would improve the way their organisations do monitoring and evaluation. “This training is good since it relates to what we intend to do and how we can share because often times we do a lot but capture little,” said the Programme Officer for Advocacy and Demonstrative Interventions for Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA), Mwenya Chiti Mubuku. “If we are really going to change the way we do things, it cannot be business as usual.”

Another participant, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for the Catholic Diocese of Ndola, Obino Chola admitted that in the past they’ve had challenges in accurately measuring progress. “This training will help us review and redesign our documents to emphasise targets so that we can measure the change taking place,” he said. He added: “However the most important aspect of the training is the inclusion of planning and how it must be included from inception if change is to be measured.”

At the end of the five day training participants received certificates. Representing Asset Africa, Dr Nicholas Kiriuiki Banda thanked the management of JCP Zambia for “giving us the opportunity to conduct the training and we hope that participants found Asset Africa a professional centre of excellence that would partner with NCA-Zambia in the design and delivery of various programs in future.”

JCP Zambia Country Representative, Mr. Harald Nyeggen Sommer appreciated the training and hoped that there would be more possibilities for collaboration with Asset Africa.
All JCP staff and Management recently got together for the Annual Staff Retreat at Chaminuka Lodge on the outskirts of Lusaka. The retreat, themed “Equipping Ourselves for 2017,” was held from November 9-11, 2016 and was an opportunity for the team to reflect on how to improve the work place.

“We will take stock of where we are and where we need to improve in order to make 2017 the greatest year in JCP history,” said the Chairperson of the JCP Staff Welfare Committee and Programme Officer for Gender Justice, Jacqueline Muthee Kabalo. “We can promise lots of fun, food for thought and food for the stomach!”

The Country Representative, Harald Nyeggen Sommer reflected on some of the challenges which the Joint Country Programme has faced and how they can be addressed. “We need to recognize our interconnectedness which can only be achieved when we plan and prepare,” he said. “We need not only plan but also be able to take control of the various processes within the organisation.”

He highlighted the need to do things smarter taking advantage of the various resources and competencies within the organisation. The retreat was a chance to discuss other issues that would help bring about more unity within JCP and with partners.
1. Lomans Phiri is a 30-year old literacy student at St. Johns Catholic Parish in Katete, where we work through our partner Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops, Photo by Bellah Zulu, Katete 2016

2. Mina Sakala Mwale (49 years) and her husband Boniface Mwale (57 years) are beneficiaries of the JCP’s Economic Empowerment programme in Chipata, Photo by Bellah Zulu, 2016

3. Susan Jere and Venesta Tembo are happy vegetable farmers in Mteleza area of Chipata, who benefited from the Norwegian Church Aid and Czech Diakonia co-sponsored Economic Empowerment programme being implemented by our partners the DMI-Sisters, Photo by Bellah Zulu, 2016

4. Welu Phiri of Sanjika area in Chipata sells crashed stones. She is a beneficiary our Economic Empowerment Programme, Photo by Bellah Zulu, 2016

5. Literacy students in class at St. Johns Catholic Parish in Katete, where we work through our partner Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops, Photo by Bellah Zulu, Katete 2016

6. Miyambo Majuba is an 8-year old grade 1 pupils at Kayaba Community School in Zimba district where we have helped build a school through our partner Response Network, Photo by Bellah Zulu, Katete 2016
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