



Nkomwa Foundation Trust Bulletin

Inclusivity is the key

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Nkomwa Foundation in visits for persons with albinism

Gwanda – Matabeleland based Non-Governmental Organisation, Nkomwa Foundation Trust, recently organized trips in respect of persons with albinism, in the organisation's efforts to alleviate predicaments faced by that community around Gwanda district.

The intention of the trip was to meet parents and caregivers of children with albinism to assess and understand their needs.

"NFT operations cut across all disabilities including Albinism, as it is now regarded as one type of disability- according to the Zimbabwe National Disability Policy (2021).

We have to include everyone with disability, as no one must be left hence the organisation is now targeting mining communities." Said Pick Nkomwa, the founder of the organisation.

He also added that the trip was planned after identification of several persons with albinism, who are mostly staying in and around the mining communities in the district.

"NFT seeks to provide psychosocial support-(counselling) to parents and the immediate families, of the affected to understand and accept the causes of albinism and the care that children with albinism require.

Also the other goal is to create support groups for parents of children with albinism, as these platforms will share knowledge and experiences that benefit the children.

As the organisation, we aim to fight skin cancer among people with albinism, through providing sunscreen lotions and sunhats.

We believe prevention is better than cure. We have the mandate in entire Mat South Province to provide these lotions to our project participants," he added.

According to NFT, information deficit on disability parenting is common among members of the community hence they cover the gap.

Persons with albinism are also vulnerable to ritual killings and

In Africa, people with Albinism experience several social and psychological problems. These include, skin cancer as a result of excessive exposure to sunlight. Poor eye sight which can only be corrected (partially) by costly spectacles.



are also prone to sexual gender based violence. With those risks, the organisation tries to equip parents and caregivers with information.

Mr Nkomwa also told *Choice News Africa* that, currently the organisation is assisting more than 80 persons with Albinism, and the organisation is also fighting to find more persons with albinism, as they are still hidden in various communities.

Low educational qualifications as many fail to access basic education, due to vulnerability and psychological problems.

Ostracism by society, because of pink skin vis-a-vis normal African outlook of a black skin. Serious levels of unemployment as most organisations are reluctant to employ people with albinism, arguing that such people would tend to spend too much time off sick or at the hospital.



Interventions for children with disabilities

Fifteen per cent of the world's population at least one billion people – have some form of disability, whether present at birth or acquired later in life. According to UNICEF nearly 240 million of them are children.



The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines living with a disability as having a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment that – in interaction with the environment hinders one's participation in society on an equal basis with

others. Children and adolescents with disabilities are a highly diverse group with wide-ranging life experiences. They live in every community, and are born with or acquire distinct impairments that, in relation to their surroundings, lead to functional difficulties like seeing, walking, communicating, caring for oneself or making friends. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted in 2006 in response to the severe human rights violations experienced by people with disabilities worldwide. The CRPD obligates Governments to take concrete measures to promote their full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Besana Mail Roundtable Discussion and Weekly Guest Host Onita Sibanda (**OS**) speaks to Pick Nkomwa (**PK**) the founder and Director of Nkomwa Foundation Trust (NFT).

OS: Thank you Mr Nkomwa for coming on the show. Our topic is interventions and opportunities for children with disabilities.

PN: Thank you Onita. My name is Pick Nkomwa – a person with disability. Children and youths with disability and their families constantly experience barriers to the enjoyment of their basic human rights and to their inclusion in society. Their abilities are overlooked, their capacities are underestimated and their needs are given low priority. Yet, the barriers they face are more frequently as a result of the environment in which they live than as a result of their impairment. The convention on the rights of person with disability (CRPD), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in December 2006, provides a powerful new impetus to promote the human rights of all children with disabilities. **OS:** What is your involvement in children's matters around the Matabeleland region?

PN: Educational Support. Every human being has a right to access education regardless of their disability. As NFT, we ensure that we provide people with disabilities (PWD) especially to pupils and students with this opportunity by providing support to young PWDs with school fees, school essentials and school enrolment. Life skills and Economic Empowerment We are living in a country whose economy is defined by what a human being can do as an individual to earn themselves a living. Therefore, we seek to provide provision of capital for start-up business to young PWDs and their caregivers. Health Management Services. There are many challenges that are faced by PWDs in accessing health-care services that include traveling from home to care centres. We also assist them to get such services were possible.

OS: What are the challenges faced by children living with disabilities? **PN:** The challenges range from attitudinal barriers, communication barriers, accessibility barriers, institutional barriers, poverty, neglect, discrimination and stigma and sexual gender based violence.

OS: What opportunities do you see as an organization yet people

with disability do not see them? **PN:** Children with disabilities are human beings, given the platform they can be successful in life. Never underestimate the potential these children have. Opportunities are key to children with disabilities future. People with disabilities know their ability but they are caged in their own world. Serious barriers block them to realise the opportunities. **OS:** What issues of children with disabilities are addressed by the national policy on people with disability?

PN: Education, Health, Psycho-social support through various Ministries, economic empowerment programmes and provision of customised assistance devices.

OS: What are the activities you are running in Matabeleland region?

PN: We are advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities, providing educational support, health management services, training and development for example Sign Language and life skills programmes to youths. Siyayenza njalo i counselling kubazali bomtwana, sinikeze njalo i business start up capital nxa ikhona ukuthi abantu abakubazekileyo baqalise imisebenzi abayikwanisayo

OS: Kindly share with us successes and challenges you are facing on those activities?

PN: Yes, we can share theoretical material then much practical on the ground with a deaf friend. Firstly, we positioned the disability agenda at the centre of our activities in all communities we are working through advocacy. We now have a database of more than 2000 children with disabilities. We have conducted disability sensitisation programs in different communities. For example, we have taken 15 youths for vocational training and more than 35 children in primary and secondary education. Disability narrative is changing in communities. We are conducting radio programmes advocating for CWDs and newspaper articles on disability monthly in community and national newspapers.

OS: Do you see media like The Besana Mail helping organization like Nkomwa Foundation Trust to give a positive image of children living with disability?

PN: Yes, what is needed is to reach an agreement and see ways of collaborating and serve the community. The media amplifies the work and further help in changing the mind-set of the people. We are much open to work with like minded organisation, if possible we have a disability column in your publication written in local language.

OS: Your last words?

PN: Disability rights are human rights. See the person first before disability. We all have the duty to champion the rights of persons with disabilities. You can miss disability at birth but you can acquire it later. Let us build inclusive communities. It starts with you. Lastly ngibonga khakhulu for ituba. Love you all.

OS: Thank you for such an informative and educative session.

PN: You are welcome.

Community leader aged 75 sexually abused mentally ill juvenile

Nyamandlovu – Sex starved 75 year old Nyamandlovu old woman, allegedly forced herself on an 18 year old mentally ill juvenile, who could not restrain himself from Gogo Emely who was ready to satisfy her conjugal desire from the unsuspecting young man who had come to collect his payment for collecting bottle tops for the perpetrator.

According to Shepherd who is also mentally challenged, the old woman allegedly called him to come inside the room, when she was in her birthday suit, implying that she was ambushing the innocent juvenile, who also found himself between Gogo Emely's forbidden treasure inside the room, as she started the romantic skills probably exercised by her late husband.

The victim, Shepherd Moyo who is now aged 18, had gone to the old woman, a widow to collect payment for the recycling of bottle tops, which he sell to her for a living. The old woman is also a respected community leader that the young man was not suspecting anything as he was asked to come inside the hut where he had gone to collect his money within Ngoma village.

Emely, popularly known as Gogo Thole, allegedly took advantage of Shepherd's mental status, by sexually abusing him. The young man is also known to be a hard worker who is fighting the agony of poverty, by picking and selling used plastic bottle tops for a living. The bizarre incident left a generally discreet Ngoma

community tongues wagging and shell shocked. **Choice News Africa** tracked the juvenile to his parents' homestead where he narrated his alleged traumatic experience. "It was on a Monday evening when I went to Gogo Ncube's homestead to collect my money after



selling some plastic bottle lids. She asked me to get inside her hut for the money only to find her completely naked. I was mercilessly pulled inside the hut and she shoved her hand inside my trousers pulling my private parts out, before she inserted into her. I reported the violent abuse to my grandfather who then reported the matter to the Police." Said the traumatized juvenile.

Precious Moyo mother to Shepherd told **Choice News Africa** that she was heartbroken by Emely's moral debauchery and this has reduced our trust in her as a community leader.

"My son is mentally challenged and does not know anything. To make matters worse, she is a respected political Chairlady of ward 13 in our area. I am so devastated by her evil act and someone we regard as a leader in the community.

We have reported the case to the po-

lice under ZRP Nyamandlovu CR44/07/23 hopefully justice shall prevail.

Though he received medical help he is still in pain because his privates are bruised." Said a dejected Precious.

In his comment at the above matter, Senator Ishumael Zhou, representing persons with disabilities in the House of the Assembly, called for a revisit to the law.

"This is brutality of the highest order. Many times because of stigma and stereo type, persons with disabilities face such harmful practices at the hands of their caregivers and relatives. The law should be revisited to punish those that commit such atrocities with length jail sentences." said Honourable Zhou.

ble Zhou.

His sentiments were echoed by Pick Nkomwa, Director and founder of Nkomwa Foundation Trust.

"It is so worrisome to notice such increased prevalence rate of sexual violence against young persons with intellectual disabilities in our communities.

As an organization we do not condone such practices. We urge parents and caregivers to trust none with their children as anyone is a potential perpetrator.

Nkomwa Foundation Trust Newsletter

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Disability caregivers and parents receive capacitation

Gwanda – The social partnership between Nkomwa Foundation Trust and Redcross Society of Zimbabwe, has added more value to the already ongoing capacitation workshop carried by the foundation around Matabeleland South Province.

The recently held capacitation training workshop by Redcross, has seen the capacitation of more than fifteen mothers and Caregivers, from around

Gwanda and the entire Province, as Nkomwa Foundation Trust is not reducing their outreach in disability sensitisation.

One of the trainees, Memory Khumalo was ecstatic about the course, during the interview with Choice News Africa, on the Redcross workshop.

“It was as empowering as we were taught on how to handle persons with disability on accidents. We were taught on how to handle first aid on accident scenes using basic equipment, and also without equipment.

We were also taught on how to look after our children with disability, how we must react when there is an accident and also their day to day lives.” She said. Her sentiments were echoed by Gina Mushonga, who expressed appre-

ciation on the importance of empowerment. “I would like to appreciate the Redcross training, because I have acquired the knowledge on how to han-



dle the injured at the accident. The most important topic that I cannot forget is on handling burnt persons, as a quick measure before going to hospital. This has opened our eyes as mothers and caregivers, as this will go a long way in eradication of accidents and also in reducing the risk of the aftermath of any accident that can befall a person with disability,” added Mushonga.

Nkomwa Foundation Trust staff who attended the capacitation workshop, also exchanged notes with the Redcross team, in their quest to reduce accidents and also on how to handle the situation in the event of an accident. The Director

of the Nkomwa Foundation Trust commented the social networking between Redcross and his organisation, as this has positively impacted on the lives of persons with disability. “Parents particularly mothers, play a pivotal role in raising children with disability, because the com-

munity is always shunning people with disabilities because of lack of sensitisation. I truly believe in home based care skills, because this help in improving the care of both children and persons with disability in several homes. The participants have gained more skills in this regard, making us grateful.

I would like to appreciate our partnership with Redcross Society of Zimbabwe that has brought the skills for the benefit of the constituency. In this community collaborative work, transformation will be achieved.” Said Mr Pick Nkomwa.

First ever Disability Expo for Matabeleland South

Gwanda – Zimbabwe is this month hosting the first ever massive Disability Expo that will attract both local and international attention, as it has the support from both the government and several disability stakeholders.

ua Malinga said the expo will empower and compliment the inclusive environment for people with disabilities. “The Expo will run under theme, ‘Holistic Empowerment of Youth and Children with Disabilities To-

wards the attainment of vision 2030. A better and brighter future for everyone.’

“The expo will give people with disabilities a platform to exhibit talents, products, technology,” said Malinga.

po is a good music to their eardrums, Nkomwa Foundation Trust Director Mr Pick Nkomwa said, they have eagerly waited for such opportunity. “It’s a privilege and honour for our rainbow province to host this occasion. As an organisation, we utilise this time to brim to our fullest with our patrons showcasing their enrichment in cultural and economic walks of life.

Our patrons are already all set to deliver spectacular performance I urge and invite fellow colleagues to support us and ensure that our flag flies beyond the sky,” he said. During the expo PWDs will be showcasing their God-given talent, in various ways. Matabeleland South Permanent Secretary for Provincial Affairs and Devolution Mrs Latiso Dlamini-

It will be a hive of activities in Gwanda on the 28-30 June 2023 as people with disability drawn from the entire nation will converge at Phelandaba Stadium for the National Disability Expo.

The Disability Expo comes in the midst of tireless working and awareness campaigns efforts combined with several workshops that the Gwanda based Nkomwa Foundation Trust, held massively in the Southern region of Zimbabwe.

The expo that will put Matabeleland South in limelight will create trade links, smooth network and brisk of growth in the business sector for people with disabilities. In a press-release by Special Advisor on National Disability Issues in the Office of the President and Cabinet Dr Josh-

The Head of State is expected to grace the occasion. Of late people with disabilities (PWDs) were left behind in socio-economic development.

However the Government’s blueprint which emphasise inclusivity has seen PWDs enjoying equal rights with every community in the society. For a local Organisation for Persons with disabilities (OPD), the ex-

Maseko said preparation are now at advanced stage, the organising committee will be ensuring that all activities have a smooth-flow during the expo.



Matabeleland South persons with disabilities in harsh water accessibility

Gwanda – Thousands of persons with disabilities in and around Gwanda district, are facing acute water shortages, with some having to walk long distances to look for the most precious need, because a person's life is defined by water.



Nkomwa Foundation Trust, an organisation founded by Pick and with limited resources, is fighting tooth and nail to provide community based approach intervention to marginalised communities in the disability section.

Their recently visits to the remote areas, realised the acute shortage of both water for drinking and other basic necessities that persons with disabilities are not basically affording.

NFT has embarked on home visitation to project participants, providing psycho social support.

NFT team is now spending much of the time assisting persons with disabilities in accessing water in Gwanda rural wards, from their limited resources that need a generous hand, to up their gear in helping their disability community, who are in dire needy.

Persons with disabilities continue to be denied the right to water. The issue of unavailability of

water is a very serious issue that has negatively affected the lives of people with disabilities in Gwanda and surrounding areas.

NFT team upon realising the needy of the vulnerable persons with disabilities, took it upon themselves to assist Christabel Siziba and Doubt Ndlovu with physical and intellectual disabilities respectively. The water point is located about 7 km from their homes, a prohibitive distance for a person with disability to get water.

Caregiving for persons with disabilities often depress family members, as they experience burnout or even hopelessness. These trauma factors have a negative effect on the overall psycho-emotional health of persons with disabilities. In such instances, social support can act as a moderator, or a buffer, between stress and health.

Inclusive water systems for persons with disabilities are integral for achieving sustainable development goals.

According to Pick Nkomwa, NFT founder, people with disabili-

ties face difficulties collecting water due to the distance they travel to the water pump.

Heavy pump handles and water containers, is one of the biggest challenges because of the condition of the disability.

Christabel Siziba express gratitude to NFT team for the relief and assistance, “Ngiyabonga khakhulu linalgadinwa kusasa ngokungivakatshela.”

Doubt Ndlovu's mother Lizzy Sithole, appreciated the love presented by NFT team. “Asazi singalibonga ngani, sikhulekhela kuJehovah alibusise ngomusebenzi wenu”

The NFT team leader Pick Nkomwa also said that the situation on persons with disabilities, in remote areas was just an iceberg, because persons with disabilities endure hard times on daily basis.

“People with disabilities may not be poorer if access to water is resolved at the household level, but may be poorer due to lack of access of basic necessities within their households. Programmatic work is needed to ensure WASH facilities are inclusive to people with disabilities. Accessible amenities, water storage facilities and inclusive policies can boost progress.” Added Nkomwa.

MatSouth NGO equipping institutions with disability

Gwanda – Matabeleland South based Non-governmental organization Nkomwa Foundation Trust (NFT) recently conducted institutional capacitation on social inclusion to institutions, in the organisation's quest to equip every institute with disability information.



Zimbabwe Redcross Society Matabeleland South Province and Senondo Seventh Day Adventist church are also the beneficiaries to receive intensive capacitation. Social inclusion is a strategy in response to a situation in which certain groups in society are systematically excluded from opportunities that are open to others.

Those groups can be discriminated against on the basis of sex, age, clan, ethnic background, disability, health status, religion, sexual orientation, where they live and other social identity. Social inclusion ensures that socially excluded people have equal conditions for realising their full human rights and poten-

tial to contribute to national, political, economic, social, cultural development, and benefit from the results. According to the World Health Organisation, there are 650 million (11%) people with disabilities (PWD) in the world. This group of people would be the most uneducated, the most unemployed, they would have the least

transport, housing and many family problems. From a Christian perspective they are the most un-reached people in the world. Unfortunately, due to inaccessible buildings,

negative attitudes, ignorance and some incorrect teaching, PWDs are not generally included in the life of the Church. There are many misconceptions about disability in the world and in the church. Fear and a lack of understanding cause people with disabilities to be ignored. Further, those people with disabilities in the Church have endured much wrong teaching regarding faith and healing. Some Churches will not allow people with disabilities into the church. In the business world, People with disabilities continue to experience various barriers in their day to day living. Persons with disabilities are not a homogenous group. They may have a physical disability, a sensory, intellectual or mental disability. They may have had a disability from birth, or acquired this in their childhood, teenage years or later in life, during further edu-

cation or while in employment. Their disability may have little impact on their ability to work and take part in society, or it may have a major impact, requiring considerable support and assistance. The attitudinal barriers in the sectors bear a big brunt in failure to uphold social inclusion approach. The gaps identified by Nkomwa Foundation Trust (NFT) saw the organisation rolling out these institutional capacitation. The institutions were capacitated on disability, disability sensitisation types of impairments, disability models, and disability legislative framework and on strategies to implement the social inclusion. The programs consist the practical side and participants were taught on Deaf culture and Basic Sign language.

One of the participants, a congregant known as Dumisani Matshelela acknowledged the gaps in church and failure to uphold social inclusion. "Today's session was an eye opener, issues we took so lightly matters most. I am so challenged to change my mindset." Said Matshelela.

The NFT Country Director acknowledged the impact produced by these capacitation trainings. He said there is need for continuous sessions till there is a correct attitude towards disability in the society.

"The inmost need of a person with a disability is the same as anyone else, forgiveness, acceptance and love. Just as much as persons with disabilities need the Lord in their lives, so too, does the church need PWDs.

The Church is simply not complete without persons with disabilities. Let's provide an atmosphere, whereby they can realise their full potential and the purpose, which God has for their lives." Said Pick Nkomwa.

Shot in the arm for Mutorashanga boy with disability

Mutorashanga – Nkomwa Foundation Trust recently came to the rescue of a Mutorashanga boy, aged eight, who is in grade two at Chrome Primary School, with a wheelchair that will help with mobility to and from school.

The boy Denzel Mapuranga who is physically challenged, with a disability could not freely go to school without the aid of his father and mother, who would take turns to carry him to a school that is more than eight kilometers from home.

The wheelchair donation, gave hope to the family and the child, as he smiled all the way, as a thank you gesture to Nkomwa founding Director, Pick, who travelled all the way from Gwanda to Mashonaland West province to assist the boy who could not go to school in the

company of others.

“I am very grateful with the donation from Nkomwa Foundation Trust. I appreciate their efforts of travelling all the way from Matabeleland South to give us a

school, because she was born with a disability on legs.

He cannot walk and now this blessing from Nkomwa Trust, will go a long way in assisting our son

with mobility to school and also to play with other children.” Said Lovemore Mapuranga the father.

Nkomwa Foundation Founder told *Choice News Africa* that, when he heard about Denzel, he was touched, prompting him to travel all those kilometers to make sure the boy is assisted.

“I can now have a peaceful sleep, after helping Denzel with his mobility assistance to and from school as well as going to play with other kids of his age.” Said Nkomwa.

The organization which is based in Matabeleland South capital of Gwanda, has gained inroads, into the country with their work of helping people with disabilities.

wheelchair that has created an opportunity for our son Denzel to go to school in the company of others.

I used to take turns with my wife to carry our son to



Visually impaired couple thrown out of family home



due to these words,” Added Soneni in tears.

The incident left the whole Nkulumane community shocked without anything to say. The couple’s property is still in the open by the road. Thieves are also helping themselves by selecting what they want from the property and running away.

Sesiphuza ukulala sizama ukuxosha amasela ebutha impahla zika Soneni. Said one of the neighbors only identified as Madhlamini.

Bulawayo – Visually impaired couple of Nkulumane suburb were recently evicted, from their family home, living them stranded and homeless in chilly weather by messenger of court who was ordered by their mother.

The couple was staying together with tenants after they moved in by their mother with the help of the court, to benefit from their late father’s inheritance as shown on the execution order form.

They were born with a vision disability all three of them in their family, with the two being taken care of at Jairos Jiri Centre in Bulawayo.

“Sengeqela forming falls accusation ethi ngathengisa impahla,

ngadla imali ye rent” Said Soneni Thebe the victim, explaining the way her mother used to sue and chase them out of the house.

Literally meaning that, Soneni sold the house property and used all the money from tenants without sharing with her brothers at Jairos Jiri and court bills.

The mother of the visually challenged is now blocking access to the house because her daughter took peace order against her mother for accusing and uttering bitter words to her saying, “ Indlu leyi asiyo yeziphofu hambanini”.

“These words are painful to my heart, though she didn’t beat me physically but I was beaten by her words, I can even die

Senator Zhou, a local parliamentarian who deals with disability issues in the August house, was not immediately available for comment to the press, concerning this high class of inhumanity by a parent.

Some of the residents told Choice News Africa that it was high time, families should resolve issues with cruelty like the one displayed by a mother of these visually challenged children.

Mr Pick Nkomwa of Nkomwa Foundation Trust, a disability organization based in Gwanda, told *Choice News Africa* that he is going to look into the issue, since it concerns the people under his jurisdiction of disability.

Beit-bridge disability community honoured

Beitbridge – The recent partnership between Nkomwa Foundation Trust (NFT) and Bible Society of Zimbabwe (BSZ) in providing the customized assistive technologies to persons with disabilities, has empowered the community collectively.



A total of thirty-five (35) persons with disabilities benefited from the programme. Assistive devices provided included 15 wheelchairs, two tricycles, six walking sticks, two white cane, seven pairs of crutches, three sitting units, one commode and one walker with wheels with an estimated cost of US\$10 000. Beitbridge district is the fourth area of the Matabeleland South Province to benefit from the initiatives of the two organisations. Other districts that include Bulilima, Mangwe and Gwanda have benefited from the same programmes in the past years. In November 2022, the two organisations facilitated capacitation workshops for persons with disabilities and caregivers on detergent making in Beitbridge district ward 10. During the trainings assessment was done to all persons with disabilities who attended for the manufacturing of customized assistive devices. Nkomwa Foundation Trust (NFT) is an organization that advocates for the

rights of Persons with Disabilities in Matabeleland South Province and beyond. The rights include the right to have an assistive device for effective participation of an individual in community development. In their activities,

NFT engages like-minded organisations, like Bible Society of Zimbabwe (BSZ) as resource partners in serving the disability community in the region.

During the presentation, the atmosphere of joy filled the beneficiaries, as they expressed their gratitude for the opportunity.

Simelinkosi Mbedzi who received a white cane expressed his appreciation. "I am so happy to receive without paying a single cent. As a person with

visual impairment, this device is vital in my daily living. I was currently using a wooden stick and this will enable my being and it's portable," he said. A caregiver to Prudence Zulu identified as Sibusisiwe Tlou could not hold her tears of joy, after receiving the most needed assistance. "It's like a dream today, I can't believe this. I used to carry my niece using a wheelbarrow or to my back going to hospital, field or attending community meetings. My great thanks for this wheelchair, I am now going to rest carrying a 15 year old niece at my back when travelling, and this will go a long way in helping us as a family. I am very grateful," Moyo said. The 93 year old granny Elizabeth Muzhambi who received a wheelchair and a commode had just few words as she appreciate. "I now have my car, please give me my bag I need to go to Makhado and buy what I want. Thank you my children and God

bles." Added Gogo Muzhambi. Ward 10 Councillor Edward Ndlovu, expressed his appreciation for the gesture to his area.

"I am happy with this event, as it happens in my ward. I worked with NFT last year in November 2022. After the training, they promised to come back with assistive devices. I never believed but my concerns are no longer there as the team fulfilled their promise. My people have benefitted and this is a commendable work by these organizations." Said the community leader. NFT Director Mr Pick Nkomwa could not hide his joy for the successful programme. "Many thanks to Beitbridge leadership for permitting us to carry out this programme in the district, I am glad we managed to put some smiles to 35 souls.

Assistive devices are critical to persons with disabilities. They enable people to live healthy, productive, independent and dignified lives as well as to participate in education, labour market and civic life. Much thanks to our partner Bible society of Zimbabwe for helping us achieving this dream in this region. There are some gaps as what we provided is just a drop. Quite significant number of persons with disabilities are in need of assistive devices. I call upon all development partners to have a disability budget in their programme implementation.

Those mainstreaming disability associations, I recommend that their assessment or survey is essential before imposing a programme to the disability community. Involvement and consultation is imperative, collectively, because we can achieve an inclusive world." Concluded Nkomwa

Nkomwa Foundation's timely visits to vulnerable mine

Gwanda – Matabeleland South mining areas and also the makeshift dwellings have recently been reached by Nkomwa Foundation Trust, in the organisation's quest to include everyone with disability in their programs, as it is their mandate as a disability organisation.

The Foundation is currently reaching out to small scale mining and resettlement communities with disability sensitisation trainings, targeting the caregivers, parents as well as general populace in those community. The thrust of the visits is on disability parenting equipping and information dissemination on disability issues as well as various services available for persons with disabilities in the provinces and the country collectively.

"There is excessive information deficit in marginalised communities, especially within families of children and relatives with disabilities.

Disability itself cuts across all aspects of a child's life and can have very different implications at different stages in life. It is very important to ensure that the rights of children with disabilities are taken into account in laws, policies, programmes and other interventions in a way that no child

is left out." Said Pick Nkomwa who is also the founder of the NFT.



Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) requires State parties to take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children. According to Nkomwa Foundation Trust's visits outcome, almost all persons with disabilities in rural communities continue to experience exclusion among other barriers. Speaking to Choice Africa, Egnés Dube, and Community Disability Facilitator in Ward 3 of Gwanda rural said,

"There is a lot of work to be done in our communal communities. Persons with disabilities are in dire need and still regarded as objects rather than human beings," she said.

One parent whose child has albinism, Energy Moyo appreciated the help rendered by Nkomwa

Foundation Trust. He said he was hopeless with his child. He also said that he cannot believe that his child finally got friends who care for him.

"I am grateful with the knowledge and NFT's outreach that has brought solutions to my problems as a parent for a child with disability. The education received pertaining our child will go a long way in looking after the child and the entire community," said Moyo.

Madodana Ndlovu who is a parent of a child with clubfoot was also another parent, in denial and could not believe that his child has a disability.

"Angila umtwana onje mina, abantwana bami bonke baright, lokhu angikuzwisisi. Ngahamba egoli umtwana wami eright kodwa ngiphendukile sokunje hayi ngizwa ubuhlungu" said Ndlovu. NFT's Pick Nkomwa highlighted on the need of proper implementation of social protection systems.

"Through proper implementation of the CRPD's provisions, we can spark a social and cultural change, creating a fairer and more empowering community that will contribute positively to the country's economy growth for years to come. A society that neglects people with disabilities is a society that neglects its own potential," he said.

Disability sensitisation awareness stretches to Nkashe community

Gwanda: National Aids Council in partnership with Matabeleland based Nkomwa Foundation Trust (NFT) have joined hands in working round the clock to uplift the status quo of people with disability in marginalized communities across the rainbow province, this time landing in Nkashe area of Gwanda.



Driving past Brethren in Christ Church Nkashe branch recently realised melodious voices echoed from the building, songs that caught one's ear and could tell that the service was on fire. Unfortunately it was not a church service, it was a forum of NFT and community members of Nkashe community who converged for a disability sensitisation workshop/meeting.

The Nkashe community in Gwanda rural ward, was recently capacitated on disability issues, disability mainstreaming, disability terminology and parenting.

More than 100 villagers participated in the meeting inclusive of community leaders, persons with disabilities, caregivers, government officials and other development partners' representatives.

For several years people with disabilities have been infringed of their rights to education, health facilities and called by demeaning names.

Speaking during the interactive sensitization, community members shared their touching experiences that they endure in all walks of their life.

"I did not acquire all the education facilities because of my physical disability and education career ended when I lost my mother. No one bothered to assist me," said Sidudzile Ndlovu.

Matshetsheni kraal head Mr Zephaniah Ndlovu said people with disability (PWDs) are also still being excluded in our society and deemed asexual not fit for marriage.

"In my strides of life, I have realized that persons with disabilities face a serious challenge to secure marriage because of the ignorance and uncivilized mind-set that the community have. As village head I presided over countless disputes where PWDs are infringed of their education, health rights, and the issue of statelessness.

I am thankful to NFT for opening our minds with their capacitation on disability issues. I

believe there will be changes." Added the village head.

Ward 1 Councillor, Stanford Nkala said his jurisdiction was overwhelmed with a number of persons

with disabilities and he had nowhere to refer them to, and was grateful to the visit by NFT and National AIDS Council, as he christened it opening of doors.

"We have been knocking several doors for our colleagues to get assistance but all went up in smoke, the coming of NFT is a blessing to our community.

The knowledge imparted to us is a treasure." Cllr Nkala alluded.

Nkomwa Foundation Trust Director Mr Pick Nkomwa said an equal world can be achieved through togetherness.

"We are in pursuance to ensure every community is put under one roof through these sensitisation campaigns across the Rainbow Province



and beyond.

Much appreciation to all participants, the community leaders and our partners for making this programme a success.

We want to ensure we have an inclusive environment from grassroots level. We are diversifying programmes to ensure that every community is covered," concluded Nkomwa.