

Third Annual Reports: Web Updates

GTF088 NASCOH Governance and Transparency Programme

The 5-year programme “Enfranchising people with disabilities to exercise their constitutional right to vote and facilitating their inclusion in governance systems” aims to strengthen the involvement of people with disabilities (PWDs) in local authority activities and to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in societal activities. Now past the half-way mark, a number of commendable achievements have been registered.

Highlights of the current programme include:

- 14 100 PWDs provided with voter education and 400 PWDs trained as election observers
- 503 PWDs issued with birth certificates and national identity documents with the assistance of the registrar’s office
- 5 PWDs have already been nominated as councillors in the districts of Mutare, Masvingo Rural, Mudzi and Mberengwa, while a further 6 PWDs have been appointed to positions of authority. All in all, over 1 405 PWDs have been appointed to various positions ranging from headmen, councillors, board members to commissioners.
- Nyamutsahuni Ward in the Mutoko North province of Mashonaland East has established itself as a role model for disability inclusion and empowerment in the country following the installation of 10 PWDs as village heads, and ward committee members at a specially-convened “Disability Rights Day” event held on August 3, 2011 at Nyamutsahuni township.
- After consultations with urban councils, NASCOH has since drafted a generic disability inclusion policy and memorandum of understanding for adoption by the local councils and this is bound to push disability inclusion in local councils several notches up.
- Over 150 PWDs from all over the country have participated in the weekly radio programme ‘Seka urema wafa’ (Everyone is potentially disabled) since the inception of the DFID programme.
- Stories published in the NASCOH newsletter have helped to put the programme and disability in general, in the proper perspective. NASCOH now has a column in one of the country’s major daily publications, The Herald, where it profiles crosscutting disability issues.
- After lobbying from NASCOH, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe intimated that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities shall be brought for consideration by Parliament
- NASCOH is working with the country’s elections management body, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to ensure disability access and hassle-free voting for PWDs at all polling stations.

From the foregoing activities, it is evident that PWDs have become increasingly aware of their right to vote and are now ready to exercise their right to vote and be voted for come election time; they are increasingly being appointed to varying positions of authority and participating in the country’s governance systems at various levels; they are empowered and ready to exercise their role as election observers and election officers to ensure the sanctity of voting and elections; and the government is putting in place disability-friendly voting systems and infrastructure for PWDs.

As the programme draws to a close, NASCOH will seek to replicate successes registered in current districts of operation to 21 other districts, engage ZEC extensively to ensure the inclusion of PWDs in its structures, including polling officers, embark on an extensive awareness building exercise to conscientise PWDs, and the general public, on the importance of the United Nations Convention on

the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and lobby for its signing and ratification. This will include translations into the vernacular. Engagement of local authorities to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in societal activities will be stepped up and disability ward committees will be set up in all the districts.

The NASCOH Annual Report for 2011 can be accessed under the following link:
www.nascoh.org.zw