

## **Fourth Annual Report Web Update**

### **GTF088 National Association of Societies for the Care of the Handicapped (NASCOH)**

The ongoing programme on “Enfranchising people with disabilities (PWDs) to exercise their constitutional right to vote and facilitating their inclusion in governance systems”; which is grounded on providing voter education to PWDs, training them as election observers, facilitating positions of authority for them and ensuring accessibility to polling stations, continues to make tremendous headway as it draws to a close.

To date, 14 100 PWDs provided with voter education and 400 PWDs trained as election observers; 503 issued with birth certificates and national identity documents; 5 PWDs have already been nominated as councilors in five districts, while a further 6 PWDs have been appointed to positions of authority. NASCOH chairperson, Godfrey Majonga, is now Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Media Commission. All in all, over 1 405 PWDs have been appointed to various positions ranging from headmen, councilors, board members to commissioners; NASCOH is on the verge of signing disability inclusion policy and memoranda of understanding with local councils; after lobbying from NASCOH, the President of Zimbabwe announced that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities shall be brought for consideration by Parliament this year; NASCOH now has a memorandum of understanding with its major strategic partner and Zimbabwe’s sole elections management body, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), has indicated its commitment to ensuring access and hassle-free voting for PWDs at all polling stations; in partnership with the International Federation for Electoral Support (IFES), NASCOH has embarked on an exercise to audit polling stations in Harare, Chitungwiza, Bulawayo and Umguza for accessibility, with a view to ensuring appropriate adjustments by ZEC before Zimbabwe’s mooted elections. Disability ward committees have been established in all wards in the districts the 7-member consortium has operated in. People with visual impairments can now vote in secrecy, accompanied by their trusted assistants only, following the repealing of the electoral act which previously provided for them to be assisted by polling officers and police when voting.

Evidently, PWDs have become increasingly aware of their voting rights 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 officers to ensure the sanctity of voting and elections; and the government is putting in place disability-friendly voting systems and infrastructure for PWDs. This bodes well for the inclusion of people with disabilities in electoral processes and governance systems.

The NASCOH Annual Report for 2012 can be accessed under the following link:  
[www.nascoh.org.zw](http://www.nascoh.org.zw)



People with disabilities proudly displaying their certificates after completing the election observer course