

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2021



Inside this edition

- ▶ ***Reflections on the 2021 Elections***
 - ▶ ***Persons with Disabilities launch a political dialogue network***
 - ▶ ***Journalists commit to reporting on mental health***
 - ▶ ***Chongwe district warms up to disability inclusion-establishes DPO network***
- Plus Many more.....***

DRW DIRECTOR EDITORIAL COMMENT



The year 2021 was significantly a politically charged year because of the general elections which took place on 12th August. It was a year of uncertainty in terms of which political party would emerge victorious between the UPND and the PF under the leadership of the then election candidates Mr. Hakainde Hichilema and Mr. Edgar Lungu respectively.

Disability Rights Watch remained standing on a neutral ground amidst the political uncertainty. Nevertheless, DRW, despite remaining politically neutral in as far as partisan positioning was concerned, we remained clear and open in that we were too morally and technically support any candidate with a disability who expressed interest to contest the elections at local government and Parliamentary levels despite their partisan inclination.

We supported prospective persons with disabilities to file for nomination within their respective political parties and at the same time supported those who got adopted by the parties. This work was done under the auspices of the political participation project we are managing in conjunction with our strategic partner, the Zambia National Women's Lobby with the support of Demo Finland.

Our concern today is not around the number of persons with disabilities who openly expressed interest and actually filed for nomination within their political parties. Our great concern is largely on the fact that there was no woman with a disability who came forward to declare interest, let alone file nominations. We feel there is still a niggles on this matter of the invisibility of women with disabilities in active partisan politics.

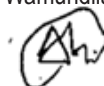
Ofcourse there has been a general outcry from women on the volatility of the political environment in terms of partisan politics being perceived as a field marred with corruption, deception, vote buying, character assassination, physical violence and of course not putting aside gender, class, disability and regional discrimination. Partisan political participation was clearly viewed as a game for the financially sound.

The majority of women with disabilities live a life of fear for discrimination, derogation, violence, rebuke and at the same time are economically far below those political giants who wield cash everywhere during the time of nominations, campaigning and of course voting. This is an obvious disadvantage which automatically places them away from participating in active partisan politics. Partisan politics must be clean for all citizens to freely participate without any form of hindrance from any angle of human existence. If partisan politics will remain as it is being perceived currently, then it will remain a completely no-enter area for women with disabilities despite their hot zeal to participate.

On the other hand, women with disabilities, as individuals and also as members of representative organisations for women or generally persons with disabilities must carry the courage to put aside their fears and brave into the political battlefield until the time comes for reality.

Reality is that women with disabilities are women just like any other woman; they are persons like any other person; they are citizens like any other citizen and therefore they can be successful politicians like any other politician. With the steadily opening up of society towards disability inclusion great hope is vivid. The day is coming when women with disabilities shall be at the helm of political power to also exhibit far much better skills and humane to lead!

Wamundila Waliuya



Director



Chairman's welcome statement

I welcome every reader to our end of year Newsletter which showcases some of the work we have done in the year 2021. The year was a very productive and busy year given that it was also an election year that ushered in a new government of UPND under the leadership of His Excellency President Hakainde Hichilema.

Disability Rights Watch has done a lot of work around the promotion of the right to participate in political and public life for persons with disabilities in Zambia. With the support of DEMO Finland and partnership with Zambia National Women's Lobby, we have delivered capacity building sessions on political participation for persons with disabilities and their representative organisations and the results are showing. We saw an increase in the number of persons with disabilities adopted as candidates in the 2021 elections and also saw some progressive disability inclusion provisions in political party manifestos. We have also done inclusion and access audits for political parties.

The rights of persons with disabilities in the more vulnerable categories such as women and girls with disabilities, persons with psycho-social disabilities, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with albinism and persons with deaf

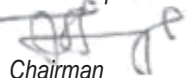
blindness are a special area of focus for DRW.

It is very delightful to see the extension of our work into Chongwe District culminating into the formation of the first Disabled Persons Organisations (DPO) network in the district and enhanced engagement with government and traditional leadership towards disability inclusion at the district level.

We implore the new dawn administration to leverage the massive goodwill the Zambian people gave them through a resounding victory to uplift the welfare of persons with disabilities. We echo the frustrations and demands of persons with disabilities at the slow pace of inclusion of persons with disabilities in governance and decision making structures. Disability Right Watch therefore urges the government to practically ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in domains of life.

Happy reading

Hon. Joseph S Munsanje



Chairman

NETWORK OF ORGANISATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES LAUNCHED

Persons with Disabilities in Zambia have formed a political dialogue network to enhance dialogue and knowledge sharing with political parties, other stakeholders and institutions of political governance in Zambia.

The network was launched in Lusaka and Mansa respectively and attended by representatives of civil society organisations, organisations of persons with disabilities and the media.



NGOCC Executive Director Engwase Mwale



Josephine Shinaka

Josephine Shinaka the Network Chairperson said persons with disabilities are faced with many challenges which hinder them from freely availing themselves and taking up leadership roles.

"Since time immemorial the voice of persons with disabilities has not been heard and that has contributed to us shying away from freely taking part in the political and public life hence hindering us from enjoying our rights and fundamental freedoms like everyone else in society." she said

persons with disabilities will be able to practice their acquired skills under the project to influence the conduct of politics through their parties

Speaking in solidarity with the disability community at the network launch in Mansa on 23rd December, 2021, Non-Governmental Gender Organisations Coordinating Council NGOCC Executive Director Engwase Mwale appealed to political parties to break the attitudinal and institutional barriers that hindered women from excelling in politics. She said women with disabilities need to be embraced and supported through the relevant party structures to have their capacity in leadership built and their needs and aspirations heard in party policies and manifesto documents.

Through this network, persons with disabilities will be able to practice their acquired skills under the project to influence the conduct of politics through their parties and through interaction with other platform members.

The platform will facilitate discussions and networking of how the challenge of low representation of persons with disabilities in the political space can be overcome.

CHONGWE DISTRICT ESTABLISHES A NETWORK FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



Dickson Shamba Palabana Ward Councillor opens Town Hall meeting in Chongwe

In 2021 Disability Rights Watch commenced its work in Chongwe District under the auspices of the Community Based Inclusive Development Programme supported by the Norwegian Association of Disabled. The organization convened the first ever district disability inclusion platform which brought together the local government, central government, traditional leaders, other government departments, the media and persons with disabilities.

The two days town hall meeting with government heads of departments, media, traditional leaders, and CSOs representatives focussed on disability inclusion and attracted a total of 33 participants (15 females and 18 males).

Traditional leaders in attendance acknowledged the gap that is existing in the communities when it comes to

disability inclusion. It was learnt that most of the villages in Chieftainess Nkhomeshya, lack information on disability inclusion and how they can help persons with disabilities in their villages.

They felt the coming of Disability Rights Watch which had vast knowledge in disability issues will really help them to handle issues in their villages without exclusion of persons with disabilities. They made an earnest appeal that such trainings should not be centralised just in the township adding that deliberate measures should be taken to take these trainings to the villages.

Government representatives bemoaned what they described as divisions among person with disabilities in Chongwe. They called on persons with disabilities to work collectively if they are to get positive results from the government.

A two days training for organisations of persons with disabilities in Chongwe was conducted on networking and coordination and was attended by 23 participants of whom 11 were males 12 female, six had disabilities, nine were parents of children with disabilities, and eight were persons without disabilities representing organisations of persons with disabilities.

"I would like to thank you DRW for this workshop. We are now aware of how to present ourselves before government because now we know our rights and can protect them. The government is aware of the slogan leaving no one behind and this includes persons with disabilities" Derick Simbao, interim chairperson of the Chongwe DPO network said.

"The training made OPDs in Chongwe realise how uncoordinated they were and how it affected their efforts, thus resolved to create a network called Chongwe Network of Organizations of and for Persons with Disabilities (CNOPD). The OPDs in Chongwe district appreciated the content of training and feel they are getting equipped with the needed skills in networking, collaboration and advocacy.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES EMPOWERED TO ENGAGE IN POLITICS

Disability Rights Watch (DRW) and the Zambia National Women's Lobby (ZNWL), with the support of Demo Finland, through their Political Participation Project, have continued to build the capacity of persons with disabilities to exercise their rights in political and public life.

In December 2021 the two organisations conducted more

political interest. Speaking at the opening of the workshop in Lusaka, DRW Director Wamundila Waliuya emphasized the need for persons with disabilities to avail themselves for leadership positions if they are to make inroads into decision making positions.

"Do not wait to be nominated, appointed or to be picked from hiding. This is the time to sell

Mr. Waliuya, Zambia National Women's Lobby executive director Juliet Chibuta said vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, women and youths continue to face challenges in society and are the most underrepresented in Parliament.

Ms. Chibuta said workshops held to train such groups will serve as a great step towards stimulating the participation of women and persons with disabilities in politics.

"Persons with disabilities are the best people to talk about issues that affect them and so it is important that they are given a seat at the decision making table," she said.

Through the training persons with disabilities were equipped with public speaking, advocacy, negotiation and other important skills in political participation. These skills were well received and appreciated by the participants. With some of them started giving radio and TV interviews.

Mr. Ng'andwe and Mr Kaoma both from Mansa said, the trainings really meant a lot as they are now able to carry out advocacy though the media and one on one engagement with duty bearers to discuss the inclusion and representation of men and women with disabilities in all development programmes in the district.



Some participants in Mansa

training sessions for persons with disabilities in Mansa and Lusaka. The training was conducted in groups of two targeting at least 20 participants in each group. This was in strict adherence to COVID-19 guidelines.

In Lusaka, the training was conducted at Cresta Golf View Hotel while in Mansa, it was at Mansa hotel.

The training covered areas of public speaking, media relations, communication, resource mobilization and networking as well as collaboration skills for persons with disabilities who expressed

yourselves as persons with disabilities and compete on the political platform," he said.

Mr. Waliuya said the cry by persons with disabilities to take part in politics is not only for top leadership positions but other positions as well because that will be a good starting point for them to begin their political journey and become acquainted with how the political arena operates.

He further said that limited participation by persons with disabilities and women in decision making are as a result of violence in the political space. Cementing the words of

2021 ELECTIONS, A TEST FOR DISABILITY INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY

On Thursday 12th August 2021, Zambia's democracy was once again tested as the country went to the polls. This was ten years after the High Court of Zambia handed down orders to the Electoral Commission of Zambia to make the electoral system and processes friendly and accessible to persons with disabilities. The outcome of the elections showed that the ECZ had not made enough progress in

attending the court orders as many facilities such as the braille jacket were still not utilized due to low awareness and lack of orientation.

However it was commendable to see an increase in the number of persons with disabilities adopted by political parties and an improvement in public attitudes towards the political rights of persons with disabilities.

LIST OF PWDs WHO WERE ADOPTED FOR 2021 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Member of Parliament

S/N	Name	Sex	Disability Category	Constituency/ward	Province	Party	OUTCOME
1.	Thomas Mtonga	M	Visual Impairment	Chasefu Constituency	Eastern	PF	Not Elected
2.	Ezkiel Kayumba	M	Physical disability	Pambashe Constituency	Luapula	DP	Not Elected
3.	Shaft Mukubesa	M	Physical	Sesheke Central	Western	PF	Not Elected
4.	Mwangala Mwenda	F	Physical	Liuwa Constituency	Western	PF	Note Elected
5.	Nickson Chilangwa	M	Physical	Kawambwa Constituency	Luapula	PF	Elected

Council Chairperson/ Councilor

1.	Western Mwale	M	Physical	Ndonda Ward	Eastern	UPND	Not Elected
2.	Chibesa Geoffrey	M	Physical	Kapula Ward	Central Province	PF	Not Elected
3.	Charles Mulenga	M	Physical	Chifunabuli (Council Chairperson)	Luapula	PF	Elected
4.	Bunda Dominic S	M	Physical	Myulu Ward	Luapula	PF	Elected
5.	Lyson Malachila	M	Physical	Lukulu Council Chairperson)	Western	UPND	Elected
6.	Prince Makula	M	Physical	UFWENYUKA WARD	Southern	PF	Not Elected
7.	Nalishebo Sianga	M	Physical	Shang'ombo (Council Chairperson)	Western	PF	Not Elected
8.	LUCKSON CHIRWA	M	Physical	MAKULULU	Central	PF	Not Elected

STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF ADOPTIONS

NAME OF THE POLITICAL PARTY	MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT		LOCAL GOVERNMENT		TOTAL		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	
PF	3	1	6	0	8	1	10
UPND	0	0	2	0	2	0	2
DP	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	3	1	3	0	11	1	13

The 2021 General Elections were marred by some incidences of violence which discouraged persons with disabilities from participating. Other shortcomings of the 2021 general elections included, insufficient voter education targeted at persons with disabilities through IEC materials and TV advertisements that have sign language translation and tailored videos for persons with disabilities.

Lack of physical accessibility at most polling voting stations also came out prominent at the 2021 General elections.

The lack of awareness and poor or nonexistent orientation on the braille jacket rendered the facility unusable.

It was also commendable that some political parties adopted persons with disabilities to contest in the 2021 general elections. It gives great assurance that strides are being made towards a disability inclusive society.

There is still need to aggressively push for the inclusion agenda if numbers of persons with disabilities in decision making positions are to increase.

JOURNALISTS GUIDED ON MENTAL HEALTH AND DISABILITY REPORTING



Journalists in Choma

The Mental Health Users Network of Zambia and Disability Rights Watch with support from Validity Foundation and Southern Africa Litigation Centre have an ongoing programme to promote legal reforms on the rights of persons with psycho-social disabilities and enhance public awareness and realization of their rights specifically the right to legal capacity.

Continued on page 7

JOURNALISTS GUIDED ON MENTAL HEALTH Continued....

Workshops in Southern and the Copper belt provinces targeting media editors and journalists as well as volunteers were conducted. The provincial media workshops primarily targeted journalists on the subject of the rights of persons with disabilities also with the inclusion of community media practitioners who are able to generate content in local languages.

In Southern Province, the training was held in Choma and in Ndola on the Copperbelt province.

The media training focused on a number of areas including; principles of human rights reporting, correct use of terminology in reporting disability, developing a media contact list for mental health reporting, how to report effectively on mental or psychosocial disability among others.

Journalists were also oriented to acceptable rights based language when reporting on disability.

The southern province workshop took place from 26 to 30 July 2021 and 3 to 6 August 2021 on the Copper belt and attracted the participation of 12 media houses, the heads of the provincial psychiatry units and the Provincial Coordinators of the Zambia Agency of Persons with Disabilities.

Journalists shared their experiences with covering of stories on mental health and disability and lamented the difficulties they found in choosing the right terminologies.

"I am a court reporter and it breaks my heart to hear words like imbecile being used in court and when reporting I have sought to find ways of using more sensitive and acceptable language but my editors always argue that these words are from the law and it doesn't matter that they are offensive.

This workshop has made me realize the legal reforms that have happened and now I can give correct context to mental disability in view of the coming of the Mental Health Act which I was not aware of..." said Pricilla Chipulu from the Zambia Daily Mail in Ndola.

A Psychiatry Officer from Choma General Hospital disclosed that the workshop was a great initiative which had rich information on mental health and human rights and would now be able to execute duties from an informed point of view.

"I have worked as a clinician for a long time and never understood or perceived the rights of my patients (mental) from a social and human rights model. This workshop has changed my perception and will influence how we collaborate with the community to improve the standard of care in our facilities" Choma General Hospital psychiatry officer said.

MHUNZA Director Sylvester Katontoka challenged journalists to ask tough questions to the authorities on the various human rights abuses that persons with psycho-social disabilities face and take interest in the litigation case whose brief they received on Section 4 of the Mental Health Act.

Following a successful capacity building intervention in the two provinces, journalists from various media houses pledged to write better stories on the rights of persons with disabilities specifically the disadvantaged category of persons with psycho-social disability.

The objectives of the training were to have journalists including radio presenters equipped with knowledge on the rights of

Continued from page 8



Journalists, persons with psychosocial disabilities and OPD leaders after a media training in Ndola, Copperbelt Zambia

persons with disabilities in line with relevant international treaties (UNCRPD) and determined by the Lusaka High Court.

MHUNZA AND DRW INTENSIFY ADVOCACY AROUND THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT

Community meetings for mental health users in Lusaka and Mongu in Western Province targeted at mental health users and some members of their families were held in Lusaka and Mongu. These were a platform for sharing lived experiences and engaging with government on how finance for mental health can be increased.

The meetings also introduced the Mental Health Act in a simplified manner and enable the users to understand their rights and be supported to take practical steps to realize their

rights. Various IEC materials in the form of policy briefs, posters and brochures were also shared with participants in the two provinces.

The meetings conducted in Lusaka and Mongu in the period from May 14 to 3rd June, 2021 introduced the Mental Health Act in a simplified manner and enabled the users to understand their rights and be supported to take practical steps to realize their rights.

DRW Director Wamundila Waliuya expressed happiness that there was a multi-sectoral approach

domestic legislation and introduce journalists to principles of disability rights reporting.

Media workers were also educated on the Mental Health Act and how it can be used to protect the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities and advance continuous improvement of care. During the sessions participants were provided with a summary of the case on legal capacity yet to be

being utilized to work for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life in the Western province. He called for the active coordination and involvement of organizations representing persons with disabilities and the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities to ensure that the implementation of government programs was inclusive.

He explained that the coming into force of the Mental Health Act was an opportunity for government to increase support and funding to mental health

Continued from page 10

Continued from page 9



programmes using a human rights based approach. DRW Director Wamundila Waliuya also took sessions on the UNCRPD and simplified it for the audience to understand. He led interactive sessions on the right to legal capacity and persons with psycho-social disabilities were very delighted to know that their decisions and their preferences were protected by the law.

One of the participants disclosed that the training opened his mind and understand his rights.

“As I am speaking to you now my eyes are open I am happy that I can make decisions. I was relieved of my employment because of my mental disability and I am unable to fend for myself. To make matters worse my former employer has refused to pay me the three months' salary he owes me despite the labour office giving him my calculations. He has asked me to report him anywhere I want, please helps me exercise my rights and get the money I worked for.” One female participant explained.

On the other hand, the Mental Health Users Network of Zambia MHUNZA used these meetings to re-energise its support groups in

Western Province taking into account the unique challenges mental health users in rural areas face.

On arrival in Western Province a meeting was arranged with the Provincial Administration under Central Government to allow the team to introduce the work they had come to do in the province and invite the a senior government official to open the sensitization meeting on the Mental Health Act.

The courtesy call team was led by Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities Provincial Coordinator Mr Lukwesa Kalumba. The visiting delegation composed of MHUNZA Director Sylvester Katontoka and DRW Programs Coordinator Bruce Chooma.

The call was made on Provincial Assistant Secretary Richard Mulwanda who met the team on behalf of the Provincial Permanent Secretary. He welcomed the team to the Province and pledged government's commitment to the implementation of the Act. He indicated that the government was available to support the team in any way including granting them access to any government institution or facility that the team needed to fulfill the objectives of its

Continued from page 11

Continued from page 10



MHUNZA Director and ZAPD Provincial Coordinator Western Province pay a courtesy call on Provincial Administration

mission.

Mr Katontoka extended an invitation to Mr Mulwanda to open the meeting and meet with persons with psychosocial and learn from their lived experiences, he thanked

The first set of community meetings was held in Mtendere Compound of Lusaka where MHUNZA and partners have existing support groups and in close proximity to the apex institution of mental health provision, the Chainama Hospital.

The meeting was attended by 18 people 7 of whom were women with psycho-social disabilities. The MHUNZA Director Sylvester Katontoka chaired the meeting and he also invited a representative from the Chainama Psychiatry Hospital.

Mr Katontoka introduced the new Act and explained in simple terms what it sought to do and dwelled on the rights of mental patients.

The meeting participants were drawn from various communities around Mongu including some from a special education unit with girls and boys with disabilities. The mobilization of participants was done in collaboration with the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities provincial

coordination office.

The meeting was officially opened by the Provincial Administration Assistant Secretary Mr Richard Mulwanda who affirmed the commitment of government to human rights protection as evidenced by the country's accession to various international instruments including the CRPD and their domestication. He encouraged persons with mental disabilities and their organization to engage

with government on areas of concern with regards to how laws and policies are implemented that affect them. He said government was committed to leave no one behind.

The meeting was closed by the Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities Provincial Coordinator Mr Lukwesa Kalumba who thanked the implementation organisations for the support rendered to the province and to persons with disabilities.



MHUNZA Director with a psychiatry nurse at Lewanika General Hospital

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES COMMEMORATED



The 2021 IDPD was commemorated under the theme “Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world.”

DRW joined the rest of the world in commemorating this important day. The national event which was graced by the Minister of Community Development and Social Services and took place in Copperbelt province in Ndola district and was attended by the DRW Director Wamundila Waliuya. The Lusaka provincial event was held in Kafue district and was graced by my Kafue Council Chairperson, Buumba Malambo. DRW staff and partners also attended the commemorations.

DRW also participated in commemorations in Southern Province which were graced by the Provincial Minister Hon Cornelius Mweetwa.

Some members of the disability movement decided to commemorate the 2021 IDPD with a peaceful protest. The protest was as a result of the fact that some members of the disability movements felt the new dawn government had done nothing to include persons with disabilities especially by not nominating any person with disability to parliament as the constitution of Zambia provides under article 259.

Persons with disabilities in their diversity account for over 1.5 million Zambians, they thus represent a significant population whose voice must be heard in all aspects of life on matters of public interest and development in general.

Like every other year, 3rd December is recognized as a day, on which persons with disabilities come together to celebrate and strengthen their voice on issues that affect them.

Continues on page 13

Continued from page 12



Southern Province Minister Cornelius Mweetwa at IDPD commemorations in Choma

Hon Mweetwa expressed the commitment of the new government to addressing the needs of persons with disabilities and to work progressively to ensure that persons with disabilities assume leadership roles at all levels starting from the communities.

The theme: "Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world" was timely and spoke to the need of including persons with disabilities in all aspects during and after the Covid 19 pandemic.

The coming of the corona virus put the lives of persons with disabilities at risk as they are more vulnerable to contracting COVID-19.

Kafue council chairperson Buumba Malambo called on parents and care givers of children with disabilities to ensure that they are not being sexually abused.



Mary Mulimba giving a vote of thanks on behalf of persons with disabilities in Choma

Published by



Plot No 37A Elm Road Woodlands, Lusaka, Zambia

Phone: +260956396085, Email: info@disabilityrightswatch.net

www.disabilityrightswatch.net www.facebook.com/disarightswatch

Supported by:

