



## Report on Lower Gweru, Mobile Human Rights Clinic Maboleni Business Centre, 22 August 2019.

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### Introduction

The secret of the Mobile Human Rights Clinics is that they are much more than legal advice. The law is only the beginning, a tool with which people are empowered, develop an awareness of their rights, and gain the confidence and the capacity to claim them. It is from this understanding that, Zimbabwe human rights NGO Forum (Forum) values mobile human rights clinics. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 2019, the Forum and its member organization, the Zimbabwe Association for Human Rights (ZimRights) took human rights education to doorsteps of the community in lower Gweru. The team from the Forum and ZimRights offered human rights education and free legal advice on different issues in Lower Gweru at Maboleni Business Centre. This human rights education was well received by an exciting community that was eager to learn on human rights issues. This mobile human rights clinic was well attended and a table below depicts statistics for attendance.

The main objectives of this mobile human rights clinic are as follows

- Enhancing citizens' knowledge towards effectively and assertively participate in human rights discourse and the development of their communities,
- Increasing appreciation of the importance of economic, social and cultural rights and the need to hold duty bearers accountable where these are violated and
- Creating a platform where communities consult with legal practitioners and have access to legal aid on issues that requires litigation.

### Statistics of attendance

SEX	AGE GROUPS			TOTAL
	18- 35 yrs	36-45yrs	46+ yrs	
Male	5	5	20	30
Female	25	5	40	70
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

## **Methodology**

This mobile human rights clinic was conducted through presentations on the definition of human rights, sources of human rights, socio-economic rights, civil and political rights, limitations of human rights, obligations of government on socio-economic rights and enforcement of these rights.

Presentations were followed by plenary discussions where participants sought clarifications on presented issues and discuss human rights issues affecting them.

Participants were also provided with an opportunity to consult a legal practitioner and provided with free legal advice.

Evaluation forms were used to evaluate the effectiveness of this mobile human rights clinic.

## **Human Rights Education.**

ZimRights officer educated the participants on social and economic rights enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment No.20) Act, 2013. Participants were educated on the right to health, education, environmental rights and right to food and water. The officer further educated the participants on civil rights. They were educated on the rights of the arrested and detained persons. They were further educated on the right to demonstrate and petition, right to personal security, freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and freedom of assembly and association.

The Forum Lawyer educated the participants on the enforcement mechanisms for social and economic rights as enshrined in the Constitution. He further elaborated on the remedies available for the violations of the civil rights. Participants were further educated on the use of the right of access to information in order to hold the local government accountable. The lawyer further educated participants on the procedures for complying with Public Order and Security Act. The lawyer attended to 10 cases and provided free legal advice to these cases.

## **Issues that arose**

These were some of the issues that were raised by the participants on this mobile human rights clinic,

- The participants were not aware of the constitution, a document that enshrines human rights of the people of Zimbabwe. It appears that the area is infested with NGOs that provide food aid and other tangible projects but there are few NGOs that provide human rights education. One of the participants reported they last encounter such education some five (5) years ago.
- It was reported that schools in the area are sending children to collect school fees during lessons time. Some schools are withholding reports until school fees are paid.

- The team received numerous reports of Grandmothers that need assistance to file maintenance proceedings against irresponsible parents that are failing to maintain their children. Most of these cases will be referred to the Legal Resources Foundation (LRF).

## **Solutions**

To address issues that were raised by participants, the team educated participants on the constitution. More detailed education was done on the right to education and progress that has been made by the government of Zimbabwe to realize the right to education as provided by the Constitution of Zimbabwe.

The team interviewed participants that had specific problems and offered them free legal advice. The team will further implement the action points articulated below to address some of the challenges raised by the participants.

## **Outcomes**

At the end of this mobile human rights clinic, the participants indicated that the clinic was very helpful in assisting them to better understand their rights and how they can assert them as well as the remedies they have in cases of violations.

- A mobile clinic was held.
- Participants afforded a platform to consult with a legal practitioner and have access to legal aid on issues affecting them
- Free legal advice was given to participants.

## **Action Points**

- The Forum and ZimRights will engage the government through the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary affairs to fulfill its obligations in terms of section 7 of the of the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment No. 20) Act, 2013. Section 7 of the constitution obliges the Government to promote public awareness of the constitution, translating it onto officially recognised languages and to encourage all people and civil society organisations to disseminate awareness and knowledge of the constitution throughout Zimbabwean society. This will constitutional awareness will assist Mabolani community in particular, to assert their rights.
- The Forum and ZimRights will send letters to schools that are sending children to collect fees during lessons time to imploring them to respect children's right to education which is protected by the Bill of rights and Education Act [ *Chapter 25: 04*].

- The Forum will engage Justice for Children to consider filing the strategic litigation case on the right to education. The application will be filed to force the government of Zimbabwe to provide free education on basic education in terms of the constitution of Zimbabwe.

### **Conclusion**

This mobile human rights clinic provided an opportunity to the needy clients with free legal advice and enhanced knowledge of human rights to the vulnerable community at Maboleni. As such it was a successful initiative as it fulfilled the intended objectives.