ZAMBIAN NATIONAL MEN’S NETWORK NEWSLETTER

January to March, 2019 edition

SWEDISH EMBASSY LAUNCHES DADS EXHIBITION
Works with ZNMN and NGOCC

Zambian and Swedish Dads showcased their fatherhood roles at the first ever Photo Exhibition in Zambia at the Lusaka National Museum, and East Park Mall launched by the Swedish Embassy working with NGOCC and the Zambian National Men’s Network (ZNMN).

Launching the Swedish/Zambian Dads Exhibition on 23rd January, 2019, Swedish Ambassador to Zambia, Henrik Cederin, said the exhibition highlighted the role of fatherhood from two different contexts and countries.

He explained that the Swedish Dads photo exhibition was based on portraits of fathers who choose to stay home with their babies for at least six months under one of the world’s generous parental insurance scheme paid by the state.

Mr. Cederin said the Zambian Dads Photo Exhibition was inspired by the Swedish Dads Exhibition, capturing fathers sharing their stories of how they viewed their role as fathers and how they are positively affected by being involved and sharing responsibilities.

“The exhibition highlights something very important, something that we know has positive effects in a number of ways as it is a question of gender equality, it is good for society, it is good for the economy”, Ambassador Cederin said.

Mr. Cederin stressed that active dads help mothers to get back to work and supports what is necessary to achieve gender equality to help economies thrive.

He added that involved fatherhood help children thrive and that fathers involvement has been linked to higher cognitive development, school achievement, better mental health for girls and boys and lower rates of delinquency in society.

Mr. Cederin said the involvement of the fathers before, during and after the birth of a child has shown to have positive effects on maternal health behaviors and on women.

The Swedish envoy noted that involved fatherhood make men happier and healthier and called for everyone to go out to convince others dads that they will benefit more if they take responsibility in taking care of children.

Mr. Cederin added that Zambia has made progress in promoting gender equality.

ZNMN TO LAUNCH THE TRUSTED MEN CAMPAIGN

ZNMN will launch the Trusted Men Campaign in Kanyama compound during the International Women’s Week in March. The Trusted Men Campaign was an outcome statement by Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallstrom, in her opening remarks at the Stockholm Forum for Gender Equality held in Sweden in April, 2018 that ‘there is need for institutions to expand working with men by identifying trusted men’.

ZNMN was motivated to initiate this campaign after attending the Stockholm Forum. The Campaign is also ZNMN’s response to mobilise men to speak out against the violations of women and girls rights in churches, markets, schools, bus stations, youth groups, and political parties.

Recent statistics from Zambia Police service recorded an increase in the numbers of defilement cases in the third quarter of 2018 standing at 6,114 compared to 5,096 reported in 2017.

The fight for gender equality and Sexual and Gender Based Violence should not be fought by women only, but by men for women and with women. Men hold many of the positions of power across the community and society must work with them to build a more positive masculinity. More needs to be done to enlist trusted and influential men to pledge never to commit, condone or remain silent about Sexual and Gender Based Violence against women and girls. The trusted men shall change their peers attitudes and behaviour through education, awareness-raising and training and speaking out in their communities, to influence other men to change.

The trusted men shall advocate and emphasize the need for men to change their attitudes and behaviours to improve the situation of women and girls in the community by working with parents, the police and school authorities. They shall come out actively to condemn SGBV against women and girls by talking to other men in their own spaces such as bars, markets, bus stops, churches, schools etc. They will also serve as positive role models in building more gender responsive behaviours in society.

The Campaign shall take a variety of forms such as advocacy, alliances and campaigns, and educational programmes for young men, training of men as anti SGBV advocates and initiation sessions of boys into good and trusted men.
There is need for men to break the culture of silence against gender based violence were men found it hard to discuss their emotional problems. Men instead opt to suffer in silence, a situation which is not health for them.

The country should develop mechanisms that will ensure emotional wellbeing of men is addressed as an important aspect in the lives of men.

In 2018, the country registered more men committing suicide due to several reasons among which is lack of facilities where men could access emotional and psychological support services.

Revelations by Zambia Police in Eastern Province that 40 men committed suicide between January and November, 2018, gave statistical evidence of the trauma that men endure in silence. Police attributed the suicide cases to men’s failure to deal with marital disputes and family financial difficulties leading them to taking their own lives.

ZNMN as an organization that works with men and boys to fight GBV has trained 150 men and women in Rufunsu, Chilanga and Lusaka to offer counseling to men and women in distress situations.

There is need to learn from the many campaigns that have been carried out to sensitize communities on women and girls violations so that similar campaigns are directed at men to encourage them to come out in the open to speak out on issues affecting them.

There has been more attention on women and girls violations, leaving out men and boys. As a result, men have suffered in silence and this has contributed to fuelling SGBV in homes and communities.

It is difficult for men to disclose their emotional problems because culture expects men to be ‘manly’ whenever they are confronted with a situation. Hence men often find it difficult to talk about their experiences in marriage and in conflict with women whenever in relationships.

The end result is that some men become depressed or develop aggressive behaviors towards their partners, spouses and children. Bringing men to talk about emotional issues that affect them with fellow men will bridge this gap and accord them a forum through which they could delve into these issues from their own perspective.

There is need therefore to intensify efforts to engage men and boys to come out in the open to share experiences in their relationships with women and girls.

Gender Minister, Hon Elizabeth Phiri with Washington Post Journalist, Susanna Savage and ZNMN members in her office

Government has hailed the work of Zambian National Men’s Network (ZNMN) in reaching out to men and boys in changing entrenched behaviors to ensure women and girls rights are respected and upheld.

Gender Minister, Elizabeth Phiri, said this recently when members of the Network paid a courtesy call on her at her office in the company of Washington Post Journalist, Susanna Savage who was in the country to document the work of ZNMN in Chongwe and Lusaka.

The minister said ZNMN’s work of sensitizing men and boys in the fight against Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) is cardinal as it will help transform men and boys to begin to respect women and girls as partners especially that men are seen as leaders in every home.

She added that reaching out to boys is equally important as boys who grow up seeing their fathers or other males relatives abuse their women also become violent towards their partners, a situation which can be changed if they are sensitized against the vice at a tender age.

The Minister said the strategy employed by ZNMN will produce transformed men and better husbands in society. She noted that ZNMN is changing attitudes and behaviors by targeting men and boys who are the main perpetrators of SGBV.

The Minister called for support from both local and international partners towards the ZNMN to ensure the organization reaches out to more men and boys across the country.

She paid tribute to the Washington Post Journalist for choosing to come to Zambia to capture and share through their publication, the work of the ZNMN.

The stories as captured in the Washington post can be read on the link below: https://www.thelily.com/howabuse-and-women-making-more-money-are-linked-and-what-can-be-done/

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ZNMN has paid tribute to Paramount Chief Mpezeni of the Ngoni speaking people of Eastern Province for appointing a woman as National Organising Committee Chairperson for the 2019 ‘cwala Traditional Ceremony. The paramount chief has for the first time in the history of the Ngoni people recognized the capacity of M’kwanda Sakala to head the committee charged with the responsibility of organizing one of the biggest traditional ceremonies in the country.

The traditional leader has set a good example to recognize the capacity of a woman to head the Committee thereby contributing to the realization of the 50/50 SADC and African Union Protocols of enhancing the participation of women and men in decision making positions.

As a network of men and boys that works for the promotion of gender equality, ZNMN would like to congratulate Ms Sakala for being appointed to this position.

ZNMN would like to see more of our traditional leaders in the country appointing women to head such important committees that are predominantly a preserve of the men folk

The appointment of Ms Sakala should be used as an opportunity by all women in Zambia that they have space in organizing national events.

ZNMN has backed calls by the First Lady of the Republic of Zambia, Esther Lungu, encouraging men to openly talk about their infertility challenges to help solve the problem in the country.

The sentiments expressed by the First Lady calling on men to encourage men to open up will help break the silence on the issue as most of them find it hard to discuss their condition but instead blame a woman when a couple cannot have children.

There is need to develop programmes that will encourage men to discuss openly their infertility challenges to help solve marital disputes in home which have the potential to bring gender based violence.

ZNMN HAPPY WITH APPOINTMENT OF WOMAN TO HEAD N’CWALA ORGANISING COMMITTEE

ZNMN HOSTS WASHINGTON POST JOURNALIST

It is not too often that the work of a grass root organization attracts the eye and attention of an international media like the Washington Post of the United States of America. The work of ZNMN in fighting SGBV and women’s marginalization is receiving international media attention from among the world’s acclaimed media like the Washington Post.

Washington Post Journalist, Susanna Savage in October, 2018 traveled to Zambia for a two days visit to document the life changing testimonies of men, women and boys being reached with empowerment messages by ZNMN.

During her stay, she visited three of ZNMN sites in Chongwe, Chilanga and Kanyama to have first-hand interaction with men, women and boys, some of whom are former perpetrators of SGBV on the remarkable transformation and change after being sensitized against SGBV by ZNMN.

In Chongwe’s Makoka Village, the testimony by a reformed elderly woman who was engaged in forcing young girls into early marriages caught the attention of Ms. Savage. The woman herself was a victim of an early marriage, thus did not see anything wrong with her actions not until she was transformed by ZNMN.

Makoka Village also had rampant cases of domestic violence on account of many women being breadwinners working in the surrounding farms, a reality many husbands could not come to terms with especially when their wives delayed to reach home after knocking off from work.

Ms. Savage heard the transformation some husbands have undergone who are now able to carry out some household chores while their wives are away at work, a change which is not easy in areas like these where household chores are seen as a preserve for a wife.

The interactions with the Washington Post Journalist were no different in Chilanga and Kanyama where ZNMN members shared the positive changes taking place in homes and communities based on the knowledge they have acquired regarding SGBV.

Ms. Savage shared that her trip to Zambia was inspired by information she had received of ZMN working with men and boys in fighting SGBV. She said in many parts of the world women are not respected and are seen as objects who do not have rights to decide on issues of sex and sexuality adding that there is also cultural acceptance of SGBV in many countries.

ZNMN BACKS FIRST LADY ON INFERTILITY PREVENTION

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ZNMN EVENTS IN PHOTOS

Swedish Embassy staff, Izla with Darius Mwenya, one of the Dads from Makoka village in Chongwe

Chongwe Dads with their spouses on the steps of the National Museum after the launch

A transformed member of Makoka village in Chongwe who used to marry off young girls giving a testimony

Guests admiring the Dads photos at the launch

ZNMN members in Chilanga after the GBV training

NGOCC Executive Director, Engwase Mwale with two of the Dads at the launch of the Dads Photo Exhibition
WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Zambian National Men’s Network (ZNMN) is a Non-Profit organisation whose mission is to engage Men and Boys as allies in gender equality and Socio economic empowerment of females in Zambia. ZNMN was established in 2013 and legally registered with the Patents and Companies Registration Agency in 2013. Its main objectives are (a) to engage male support for gender equality and equity and female empowerment in Zambia (b) to counter all forms of gender-based violence (GBV), (c) to facilitate community-based financial institutions (CBFIs) for provision of access to finance for vulnerable citizens’ economic empowerment (d) to conduct research, development and advocacy for gender sensitive human development.

ZNMN Key priorities
- Work with men and boys to address and prevent all forms of Gender Based Violence (GBV) against women and girls.
- Engage men and boys in reproductive health education and HIV prevention as well as address men’s health and health seeking behaviour.
- Engage the education sector in addressing gender inequality to provide quality education and lifelong participatory learning.
- Advocate against early marriages in targeted communities by working with traditional leaders and faith based organisations.
- Engage men as partners in efforts to improve women’s economic empowerment through their increased control over productive resources and benefits.
- Advocate for Gender responsiveness in agricultural value chain development.
- Research and advocacy for building networks and alliances for positive gender outcomes.

ZNMN uses the following methodologies to reach out to communities
- Men and Boys Campfire conferences
- Couple counselling and sensitisations
- Popular theatre/ drama, sketches etc
- Gender Action Learning System (GALS)
- Road shows and Travelling workshops
- Radio and television programmes

Networks
ZNMN is a member of the following Networks;
African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)
Regional Network of Men Against Gender Based Violence (Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Mali, Rwanda and Tanzania.)
The Gender Based Violence Prevention Network
Kota Alliance USA
Men for Gender Equality Now (MEGEN)

OUR VALUES

- Respect for Human Rights/Women’s Rights
- Gender sensitivity
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Integrity
- Friendliness
- Non discrimination
- Teamwork
- Non partisan
- Continuous Learning

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