



WASN 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

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Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASOs	AIDS Service Organisations
ARV	Antiretroviral
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPV	Human Papilloma Virus
ICC	Interagency Coordinating Committee
MoHCC	Ministry of Health and Child Care
MR	Measles Rubella
NAC	National AIDS Council
OI	Opportunistic Infection
OPIC	Olof Palme Center International
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV
REC	Reach Every Community
RED	Reach Every District
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
WAG	Women's Action Group
WASN	Women and AIDS Support Network
WCoZ	Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe

Foreword by WASN Board Chairperson

2019 continued to be another challenging year for WASN despite the fact that it managed to secure funding from OPIC. It was difficult for the country as well as many AIDS Service Organisations. The economic meltdown experienced by the country had ripple effects on companies, organisations and hit hard on individuals. This was characterised by shortages of cash, fuel, basic commodities, high prices of medicines and charged in forex.

Notwithstanding these challenges WASN managed to carry out its activities in the remotest area of Gokwe South District in Chief Masuka's area. WASN had trained community members to create support groups that enabled them to advance their rights to health, ability to communicate and assert themselves, dialogues with various stakeholders and advocating for the voiceless in the community and further trained them to document their experiences living positively with HIV..

I am indebted to the Board of Trustees and WASN staff who have managed to work during the trying times under difficult circumstances. To the Trustees who are busy elsewhere, many thanks for actively participating in some meetings and activities called by WASN. Furthermore the sound advice channelled to the organisation.

I thank you all.

Moirira Ngaru



WASN Board Chairperson

Executive Director's Report

End 2018 saw Mary Sandasi retiring after serving WASN for over 30 years from its inception. She rose through all the ranks until she became the Executive Director. Mary left indelible footmarks in the organisation, partners, different government ministries and in the communities. She worked with various stakeholders and her legacy will live on. We wish her a fruitful transition and will continue to seek her advice in order to champion women and girls' agenda of creating an atmosphere where women and girls enjoy their full Sexual, Reproductive Health and Rights in the era of HIV and beyond.

Our optimism for the future will be marked by our continuation to disseminate information and create more support groups in the communities we work in. Funding has dwindled, staff have moved to greener pastures, but we thank God for continuous operations during the long journey which was hard and long but the rewards are worthy the sweat. I thank the Board members and staff for their unwavering support and sound advice during the times of strife.

With support from Ministry of Health and Child Care and Olof Palme Center International, Universal Health Coverage WASN achieved a lot in respect to human rights promotion and protection and capacitation of journalists from different media houses to report from informed position on health issues. The year 2019 saw WASN capacitating women, girls, men and boys to write their life stories in the areas of SRHR, Communication and Assertiveness and Advocacy. During the year under review, WASN staff tracked the writing of the life stories in Chirumanzu, Masuka and Musita areas. Masuka area in Gokwe South District, is an area that is far to reach, poor accessibility and shunned by many NGOs due to its remoteness, poor road and poor transport network. However, WASN has worked in that area for the past two years.

I would like to appreciate our development partners namely Olof Palme International Center (OPIC) and Universal Health Coverage (UHC) who supported WASN immensely to make women, girls, men and boys' health better in Zimbabwe. I wish you all a healthy and prosperous 2020.



Asante Sana! Iwe neni tine basa! Aluta Continua!

Anna-Collector Penduka

Executive Director

WASN in Brief

Women and AIDs Support Network (WASN) is a women's organisation dedicated to the fight for women and girls' issues in the era of HIV and AIDS. WASN is a non governmental organisation founded in 1989 in Harare after the Society for Women Against AIDS held a meeting in Harare. Key to WASN's work is the promotion of women's and girls' sexual, reproductive health and rights by addressing issues through gender lenses.

From inception, WASN has advocated for women and girls' rights. Women and girls continue to bear the brunt of many epidemics like HIV, Cancers, Gender Based Violence, and Poverty.

WASN's programs have been designed for women and girls by researches done by involving the women and girls who happen to bear the brunt of the issues. WASN draws its commitment, selflessness, strength and wisdom from the women and girls from diverse backgrounds who come from rural and urban communities.

WASN's programs are community driven as the organisation undertakes baseline surveys then tailor make the trainings to suit the needs of the different communities.

WASN values

WASN board and staff commit themselves to the following values, which become the guiding principles of the organisation.

Strategic values

1. WASN is a feminist organisation
2. WASN is gender specific and work to realize women and girls interests
3. WASN believes in and seeks to cultivate participation by women and girls in all its work.
4. WASN is committed to timely response to women and girls issues.

Cultural values

In pursuing the mission, WASN develops and strengthens a work culture among its Board and Staff that emphasizes the following values.

- ✓ Good governance
- ✓ Confidentiality
- ✓ Accountability
- ✓ Transparency
- ✓ Honesty
- ✓ Integrity
- ✓ Professionalism

In Zimbabwe, Health has been one of the most important concerns of women, girls, men and boys. In the early 80s major gains were achieved through joint and complementary responses

among the health sector, NGOs and the communities. The gains were reversed due to the impact of AIDS, structural adjustments programmes and reductions in the budget allocation to health and household incomes. Currently the quality of care has declined, health workers have left for greener pastures and the ones remaining no longer provide good consistent service due to lack of or shortages of medicines, gloves and medical equipment. It is, however imperative that all stakeholders continue to put heads together and assist each other to attain Universal Health Coverage.

The past 5 years have seen a wave of strikes and disgruntlement by health service providers as well as health consumers. Many approaches to attain “health for all” seem bleak as most health institutions have dilapidated buildings, worn out equipment, poor morale with doctors and nurses, inadequate food and medicines. However, most NGOs working on health continue to advocate for provision of health for all in the era of many diseases and the population growing.

Advocacy, Sexual, Reproductive Health and Rights

WASN’s niche to have journalists reporting on health issues with correct and consistent information was seen through a small grant from Universal Health Coverage towards the end of the year. The engagement with journalists from different media houses sought to widen and enrich the scope of health journalists when reporting



Journalists trained on UHC

The grant from OPIC ran for 4 years in Chirumanzu and Gokwe South Districts with the last year documenting the results from the two Districts. The first year 2016 was training of two Support Groups from 4 areas in the Chirumanzu District namely Bhoroma, Mavhaire, Shashe and Rupepwe. The Support Group members were trained in Sexual, Reproductive Health and Rights, leadership skills, Communication and Assertiveness, Advocacy and on how to engage in dialogues with various stakeholders in the community. Similar trainings were held in Gokwe South District at Musita in 2017 and 2018 at Masuka Clinic. The trainings assisted in strengthening Support Group members to demand and access appropriate services from different stakeholders. Once the Support Group members were trained they made the stakeholders accountable and fulfil their commitments. The efforts contributed towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2019 a number of activities were carried out in the two Districts at St. Theresa in Chirumanzu, Musita and Masuka in Gokwe South District. At each station the Support Group members who had been trained before were trained again on how to document their life stories, how joining the Support Groups changed their lives and how they now advocate for others in the same predicament or the voiceless. The men who had been trained in the 4 Support Groups at Musita and Masuka were identified as agents of change. These men who did not hesitate to share their HIV status were taught to convey correct messages and practices on Communication and Assertiveness, Advocacy and Dialogues targetting other men and boys in their respective communities. These men were educated to influence positive health seeking behaviour from their peers.

The life stories were written, read, typed, edited and the best 23 selected for printing. Each site had 100 books printed with the cover picture of the support group members. The books were launched and each member had a copy to take home. For those who had their stories in the book were thrilled that they had indeed written good stories that could change other peoples' lives. They felt honoured to share their experiences with others.

Acknowledgements

WASN acknowledges the valuable support and contributions from our partner Olof Palme Center International which has made it possible for the organisation to continue functioning and carrying out its mandate of disseminating information to women, girls, men and boys.

WASN received lots of support from the Board of Trustees during the reporting period which cannot go unmentioned.

Furthermore, WASN extends its gratitude to Women's organisations, AIDS Service Organisations, Ministry of Health and Child Care, National AIDS Council, Ministry of Home Affairs and the communities where we have worked in.

Special thanks to the Support Group members who have been attending the trainings right through the year. Some travelled long distances to attend 3 day trainings and some came even when they were not feeling very well. They did not tire but would be assisted at the Clinics.



Masuka Support Group members doing group work.

Resources

a. Human

The harsh economic problems being experienced have not spared WASN. WASN scaled down staff as there were not enough funds to remunerate all officers. However WASN exceptionally managed to carry out activities lined up for the year. Despite the harsh political, economic environment and the limited funding situation the staff managed to soldier on with the work.

There is need to commend the Board and staff members who stood firm with the organisation, built good relationships, shared relationships and decision making during harsh times and still managed to fulfill WASN 2019 plans.

b. Funding

WASN managed to carry out the planned activities despite that the staff was poorly remunerated.

Networking Meetings and Activities from Programs in Summary

The beginning of 2019 started with WASN staff writing reports from the previous year. The largest report was for OPIC WASN's major funder, the Annual report, profiling Mary Sandasi who had retired end of 2018 from WASN's directorship. Mary had stirred the ship for a long time. Mary joined WASN from the time of inception and rose through the different ranks until she became the Executive Director.

Board Meetings

The Board meetings were held quarterly on the following dates;

8 March 2019

10 May 2019

13 September 2019

13 December 2019

All the meetings were attended by the members who always constituted a quorum. The meetings were very fruitful always as staff reported back what they had done in terms of implementation of program activities, written proposals and future plans shared. The board members in turn advised the staff how best they could improve and continue fundraising to enable the organisation to sustain itself in hard economic times.

Networking Meetings and Activities in Summary

28 February 2019- OPIC Regional Coordinators visit to WASN and introducing Senele Bhala as the Zimbabwe Country Coordinator. In the meeting WASN was requested to apply for organisational funding for 5 years starting 2020-2024. The 2018 WASN-OPIC report was discussed especially issues of unearthing corruption in the communities that WASN worked in. The trainings in Communication and Assertiveness and Advocacy assisted support group members in tasking the local leadership to account for their actions. The dialogues held with Chief Masuka helped in exposing the kraalheads who were not carrying out their mandate professionally. A video of the Chief chiding those leaders who did not work well with villagers was uploaded onto WASN's website though its in vernacular.

14 March 2019- Meeting at Jameson Hotel on Safe Abortion called by WAG.

20-22 March 2019- OPIC Regional meeting in Harare at Holiday Inn to map Strategic objectives for Southern Africa.

28 March 2019- WCoZ and National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) discussions with Commissioners on root causes of the conflicts in the past, present and future using the Constitution. The vision being "A Peaceful Zimbabwe".

8-11 April 2019- OPIC activities at Masuka and Musita Clinics to document Support Group members stories.

15-17 April 2019- OPIC-Zim network meeting at Holiday Inn proposal writing.

26 April 2019 WCoZ- VFU meeting with the National Coordinator of VFU Asst Commissioner Dadela Bonongwe from Police Head Quarters to discuss issues of Sexual Violence, Domestic Violence. The Commissioner encouraged all stakeholders and gvt departments to form partnerships in the fight against sexual and gender based violence. To disseminate information by awareness campaigns that educate the populous the trends and emphasize that children's safety is critical. She reiterated that most children are raped by relatives who threaten to kill them if they divulge the perpetrator. As a nation we need to make sure the girl child is safe by being escorted to school by parents. Parents need to check on wild parties being attended by teenagers where they consume too much alcohol, smoke dugga and lace each other with drugs and end up in wild sex without protection.

2 May 2019- ICC meeting at Cresta Lodge to prepare Terms of Reference for GAVI program implementation of Vaccine Immunization.

3 May 2019- Meeting Support Group Members in Chirumanzu to teach them how to start documenting their experiences by writing stories.

9 May 2019 –Gender Commission at Rainbow Towers

24 May 2019- WCoZ –Directors Forum meeting

5 June 2019- NANGO-ZIMRA meeting officials from ZIMRA at NANGO offices to clear misunderstanding on taxation of NGO staff being paid in foreign currency.

13 June 2019- Zimbabwe Interagency Coordinating Committee (ZICC) meeting to finalise Terms of References (TORs)

28 June 2019 NANGO-CSO dialogues on SI142/19. The discussion was on the introduction of a bank rate in February under SI32 &33. After 4months SI 14/19 introduced the Zimbabwe Dollar into the country with prohibiting use of foreign currency. The effects on signed contracts where not spelt out. There were too many gaps that would only be seen through programming. The Act to use multicurrency had not been repealed as Nostro Accounts continued, payment of duty, purchase of air tickets continued to be paid in foreign currency. On the economic perspective the government had taken a gamble. The USD was not a developmental currency but it did bring stability and not development. Economists talk of fundamentals but the confidence is not there. The country is not producing but consuming more than production. Issues that made the original ZWD redundant need to be revisited. There is need for strategic engagements and dialogues without litigation.

1-3 July 2019- WASN secretariat visiting Chirumanzu to collect story books from Support Group members.

4 July 2019- WCoZ-RBZ dialogue to understand SI 142/19 on NGOs' salaries and maintenance of Nostro Accounts. Confirmation that NGO free funds from offshore salary payments into Nostro Accounts could be withdrawn in cash.

9 July 2019- ICC-Measles Rubella Campaign meeting at the Central Vaccines Stores. The meeting shared indicators for Measles Elimination. Preparations and planning for the campaign by targetting hard to reach areas.

17 July 2019- WCoZ – Marriage Bill and unpacking its contents.

23 July 2019- WAG – Abortion Coalition meeting

30 July-2 August 2019- Gender and HIV stakeholders meeting at Macheke Hotel to prepare for the strategy.

5-6 August 2019- OPIC preparation for the regional goal at Holiday Inn. A few organisations from the Consortium were invited.

28 August 2019- Submission of proposal to AIDS Health Care Foundation.

1-6 September 2019- Arrival of Pots of Hope secretariat from Namibia for an exchange visit with WASN. The 3 officers were taken through WASN's work, taken to Musasa Project, WCoZ and an outreach to Chirumanzu and met 46 Support Group members with some sharing their testimonies and others edutainment. The Namibians had an opportunity to ask pertinent questions of how the Support Group members benefitted by joining Support Groups and how relevant the education they obtained from WASN enhanced their lives. WASN took

them to Great Zimbabwe for them to appreciate the monuments that are historical to Zimbabwe.

22-28 September 2019- WASN exchange to Pots of Hope in Namibia. 3 officers from WASN learn how POH was tackling issues in Namibia. Of interest was the building of the Craft Centre, moulding of clays items, meeting place and offices which they hoped would be opened sometime in 2020.

7-8 November 2019- UNDP workshop Kadoma International Conference Centre on managing governance related risk in the Health Sector in the country.

25 November 2019- WCoZ – Health cluster discussing the plight of pregnant mothers' inability to give birth in hospitals due to strikes by doctors and nurses. A Mbare midwife started housing the women in a two roomed place without adequate facilities, no beds, no water, no gloves but most pregnant women ended up going to be attended by her.

30 November 2019- Launching of Story Books in Chirumanzu.



1 December 2019- World AIDS Day in Masvingo at Mucheke Stadium with the theme: “Our Health: Our Responsibility. Communities Make the Difference”.



World AIDS Day at Mucheke Stadium in Masvingo.

2-4 December 2019- Launch of Life Story books at Masuka and Musita Clinics.



SG members at Masuka Clinic



SG members at Musita Clinic

19 December 2019- Universal Health Coverage meeting 15 journalists from different media houses. Tariro Kutadza one of the Board members gave a presentation on Universal Health Coverage and what it entails. The journalists were being given information so that they would report from an informed position.



Journalists on UHC training

Financial Systems and Accountability

During the period 2019, the Admin/Finance Officer made sure that all procedures covering financial matters were adhered to by WASN staff and also adhering to SI 142/19 stated by ZIMRA. The use of the WASN accounting manual guided every staff member on procedures that ensure consistency, transparency and integrity in handling of financial issues of the organisation.

Monitoring of the financial performance

Use of the consolidated budget formed the basis of the 2019 expenditure. The use of programmers raising a request for the activities, countersigned by Finance officer, Executive Director and Treasurer or Chairperson ensured transparency.

WASN's financial conduct was monitored through the preparation and submission of monthly reports. The procurement procedures were conducted as per accounting manual like: use of 3 quotations, approved by the Director and selection of best quotation.

The Mid term audit was done and submitted to the donor and shared with the Board and Staff. End of December a final annual audit was done and had no problems arising from the recordings and quality of the financial reporting.

Successes

- Training of Support Group members who had created and resuscitated Support Groups of women, girls, men and boys living with HIV to document their stories.
- Women, girls, men and boys trained in: Rights Based Approaches, SRHR, communication and assertiveness skills, advocacy skills, Sex and sexuality – body and resource mapping telling their stories in the language they were comfortable in.
- Dialogues - Support Group members, Health Service Providers, Law enforcement agents, Traditional and Local leaders dialoguing on pertinent issues that affect them in the community.
- Produced materials used during World AIDS Day and T shirts.
- Production of “I” Stories and distribution of the booklets to over 300 support group members.

Lessons Learnt

- Involvement of traditional leaders and other Service Providers enhances Community Based Programming.
- Service Providers and service recipients created rapport.
- Dialogue meetings among various Service Providers and Support Group members improved demand and access of services resulting in improved service delivery.
- Creation of consortiums in tackling issues in the same constituency assisted the poorest of the poor..
- More women and girls are still in need of empowerment and skills building.

Conclusion

WASN's ultimate vision is an atmosphere where women and girls enjoy their full sexual, reproductive health and rights, despite some funding challenges and constraints WASN achieved most of the set objectives.

WASN intends to scale up its activities once it gets more funding. The trained women, girls, men and boys are making a difference in the communities as they are agents of change when other community members consult them on issues troubling them.