EFFECTIVENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS SUPPORT PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY RESTORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ZIMBABWE IN DARWEDALE DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE.

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Abstract
This research study evaluates human rights support programmes offered by civic organizations in harsh political and economic community in a hyper inflammatory environment. An evaluation of human rights support programmes with special reference to Restoration of Human Rights Zimbabwe (ROHR Zim) was the main objective of this research study. A qualitative approach was used in the study focus using group discussions and in-depth interviews as research instruments used. The study showed that human rights support programmes which were offered after political, economic and social crackdown in a crisis ridden community using participatory approaches were quite effective and timely relevant. In addition, more effort and commitment was needed to enhance and improve human rights support programmes. This research study recommends that the importance of human rights and human rights support programmes should also include peace education programmes for the literate and illiterate, young and adults, rich and poor.

Keywords: Effectiveness of human rights, participatory approach, civic organizations and Zimbabwe.

INTRODUCTION
Zimbabwe was and continues to be affected by a wide spectrum of issues that lead to have negatively affected the lives of people. Issues affecting people which disturb their peace include violation of human rights issues, food and livelihood insecurity, HIV/AIDS, and negative impact of climate change as well as the breakdown in essential services among others.

However, the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) under the Global Political Agreement (GPA) in February 2009 has seen some improvements in the lives of people, some policy developments that support economic recovery, addressing of civil participation and human rights issues and stability were implemented. However, according to the United Nations Appeal Process (CAP) for 2010, despite these positive changes the human rights issues remain acute. The country is still in a state of chronic vulnerability and the ongoing humanitarian crisis could worsen if support to humanitarian and recovery actions is not maintained.

The CAP 2010 depicts the country as experiencing a gradual shift from humanitarian crisis to recovery following political changes that positively affected socio-economic conditions. The development has led to a greater cooperation between the international and local humanitarian community and the Government of Zimbabwe, improvement in the country’s socio-economic and humanitarian community situation, and improved humanitarian access to vulnerable populations (UN OCHA, 2010).

Together with both local and international organizations, Restoration of Human Rights Zimbabwe (ROHR Zim) is a non-political organization, whose members are passionate and committed to bringing about change in Zimbabwe. They strongly subscribe to the founding principles of returning Zimbabwe to the apex of human rights vanguard and an economic power house on regional and international levels. ROHR Zimbabwe has positioned itself as a human rights organization that places special emphasis on grassroots based activism, radicalism, creative mobilization and outreach methodology. The organization focuses on a broad spectrum of rights—civil, social, economic and political. The organization derives its uniqueness from its radical approach and strength from a physical presence in every province, leadership in the overseas – that assist in resource mobilization, grassroots oriented programs as well as inherent activism and promptness of action. ROHR Zimbabwe is a non party – political, grassroots and membership based organization passionate and committed to bringing about positive change in Zimbabwe through advocating for a Zimbabwe where rights and freedoms of every human being are respected and promoted. The organization together with other human rights activists like Woman of Zimbabwe Association (WOZA), National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), and Girl Child among others is inspired by the founding mission of returning Zimbabwe to normalcy and higher standards of respect for human rights after years of violations of unimaginable proportions with the aim of achieving justice and peace in Zimbabwe (UNDP, 2011).

According to a report by WOZA (2011), there were numerous violations of human rights on the general populace of Zimbabwe from arms of state security especially towards and immediately after election periods since 2000 to date. Furthermore, the report indicated that the most affected were based on two issues namely, skin colour and political affiliation. According to a report by the National Constitutional Assembly (2010), 69% of the human rights violations were committed in Mashonaland Central province, 63% in Mashonaland East province, 59% in Manicaland, 53% in Masvingo province, Midlands province with 55%, Mashonaland West province, 59% in Manicaland, 57% in Masvingo province, Midlands province with 55%, Mashonaland West with 53%, Matebeleland regions were recorded on 51% while Harare had 47%.

Although ROHR Zimbabwe started operations between 2008 and 2009, it has made considerable strides within its short life span in challenging and speaking out against human rights violations. In 2007 and 2008, ROHR Zimbabwe appointed focal persons in each province, who have been acting as catalysts and link persons in identifying and taking action against violations. Some provinces such as Masvingo, Midlands and Bulawayo have already put in place frameworks to document cases of human rights violations. Already, ROHR Zimbabwe has registered a strong presence in national and international independent media, as several of its press statements have been covered in these different media. In order to register discontent on the human rights situation in the country, ROHR Zimbabwe several demonstrations in various parts of the country. There was however spirited efforts by the government to thwart these demonstrations. The researcher is interested in evaluating
impact of the human rights support programs on vulnerable population in Darwedale district (UNDP, 2011).

**Statement of the problem**
Were human rights programs offered by ROHR Zim effective?

**Objectives of the study**
- To evaluate the effectiveness of human rights support programmes offered by Restoration of Human Rights Zimbabwe.
- To suggest methods/strategies of improving human rights support programmes.

**Research questions**
- How effective were they in dealing with human rights issues between 2008 and 2013?
- What cost-effective methods can be employed to enhance and improve the current human rights support programs in Darwedale?

**Purpose of the study**
The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of human rights and human rights support programs offered by ROHR Zim between 2008 and 2013.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

**Population**
Seven wards in Darwedale have a population of 1,270 informants according to the Central Statistics Office (2008). This population approximately consisted of 780 female participants and 490 male participants above the age of 18 years. The age groups range from 18 years to above 90 years. This age group was selected because it comprises of the independent and dependent age groups which actively participate in society. More to this, it was the majority age group which legally had the right to decide and participate on civil matters affecting day to day life in society. Service providers were staff from ROHR Zim and recipients were the residence and local leaders who benefited from services offered by ROHR Zim in Darwedale district.

**Sample and Sampling Technique**
In the study, the researcher used non-probability purposive research technique, which involves the researcher’s own judgment in selecting the sample. A sample which comprises of ten informants was used in obtaining information through in-depth interviews. The ten comprises of three local leaders (with two interviews sessions carried over 30 minutes per session), four recipients (with two interviews sessions carried over 30 minutes per session) and two service provider members (with two interviews sessions carried over 30 minutes per session). Local leaders group selected for focus group discussions comprised of five male and two female, recipients comprises four male and three female. The two groups were selected because there were the main beneficiaries of services rendered by ROHR Zim. On average each focus group session was conducted over one and half hours at community gathering centers. The researcher preferred using homogenous group to get information from those who share similar characteristics.

**ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY**

**Effectiveness and relevance of ROHR Zim programs in Darwedale district**
The popular view of community leaders indicated that the services offered by ROHR Zim were effective. When probed further, indicators of effectiveness were being educative on human rights issues, helpful in promoting civil participation. One respondent commented that “zvakaotila kuti tisimudzire unhu hwedu muruwu muno” (add value on social well being of community members). However the minority of informants indicated that the services offered by ROHR Zim were not effective. When probed further, indicators of ineffective given were being unsuccessful since it seeks regime change and were fruitless in many of its mandate in community mobilization against state authorities. One respondent commented that “Hazvina unhu hevetema zvatingayamura” (lacks African contextualization).

When asked about the relevance of human rights support programs offered by ROHR Zim, the majority of community leaders indicated that there were very effective, of great importance and quite appropriate. When probed further, informants on community empowerment indicated that they were pleasing through community involvement and participation. However, the minority of informants indicated that they were not effective since they were worthless and inappropriate. One informant commented that “hazvisi zvedu semhuri yeAfrica” (not for Africans). When probed further on community empowerment respondents indicated that it was disturbing community peace.

All community members indicated that the human rights support programs were effective through adding value to their livelihoods and helpful in knowledge building. One informant indicated that “zvakatotikurudzira kuti tipinde uye kwvana chokuita mubudiriro yenzvimbo yedu” (encouraging in involvement and participation in community development matters).

Key informants indicated that they did participate in human rights support programs. On evaluating involvement and participation, popular view was that they were effective. The minority of respondents suggested that they were not all that effective. When probed further why they were effective, respondents indicated that it was in line with set up objectives set by the service providers. Indicators of its relevance, respondents indicated that appropriateness, significance and had strong bearing to community. On community empowering, respondents indicated that they were quite empowering through community participation, community involvement and had shared ownership of the programs with the community members and local leadership.

The findings/results above indicate that based on the objectives of ROHR Zim, the human rights support programmes gained majority supported and deemed effective, relevant and community empowering, despite some criticism from minority of respondents.

National institutions intervene in a variety of ways, from auditing laws and training public officials, to educating the public, monitoring the human rights situation and sometimes handling complaints. Each of these activities requires specific evaluation methods. HRSP also cover a great number of issues, from employment rights to torture, from discrimination to environmental protection. More important still, they are just one of many actors that influence the human rights environment. Nevertheless, benchmarks need to be interpreted, taking account of national context and available resources. It would be foolish to insist that national institutions should issue parallel reports to treaty-bodies or attend annual UN human rights meetings, if to do so would paralyze other important activities (Higgins, 2009).

The test of effectiveness for national institutions is not how far they make uninterrupted progress towards a society in which all human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. Many HRSP operate in an environment in which human rights are not an official priority or, worse, are under attack. They have limited powers. Their
first responsibility may be to hold the line by continuously monitoring government behavior and keeping awareness of human rights alive in society (Higgins, 2009). Data gathered through in-depth interviews indicated that the effectiveness and relevance of HRSP was hampered by political affiliation. Together with both local and international organizations, Restoration of Human Rights Zimbabwe (ROHR Zim) is a non political organization, whose members are passionate and committed to bringing about change in Zimbabwe. ROHR Zimbabwe has positioned itself as a human rights organization that places special emphasis on grassroots based activism, radicalism, creative mobilization and outreach methodology. The organization focuses on a broad spectrum of rights- civil, social, economic and political. ROHR Zimbabwe is a non party – political, grassroots and membership based organization passionate and committed to bringing about positive change in Zimbabwe through advocating for a Zimbabwe where rights and freedoms of every human being are respected and promoted. The organization together with other human rights activists like WOZA, NCA, and Girl Child among others were inspired by the founding mission of returning Zimbabwe to normacy and higher standards of respect for human rights after years of violations of unimaginable proportions with the aim of achieving justice and peace in Zimbabwe (UNDP, 2011).

For these reasons, indicators developed, understood and interpreted with judgment, taking account of the political and economic context. No single set of indicators provided information that was relevant and useful to every case. Often national institutions are most effective when they work in conjunction with other organizations, perhaps as a catalyst. This role cannot easily be. Participatory indicators were particularly important in this context (Watt, 2008).

The study also revealed that assessing the effectiveness of HRSP is complex task which should be looked at from different dimension from community members, government departments and the service providers. ROHR Zim made significant contributions in development of the country through introducing human rights based approach through organizing trainings, information dissemination, conducting research and monitoring, undertaking policy advocacy with the purpose to promote civic participation, thus play important roles in social development. Literature data show that in protecting human rights after years of violations of unimaginable proportions with the aim of achieving justice and peace in Zimbabwe (UNDP, 2011). Data gathered indicated the need to make sure the field of play was safe to both recipients and itself. According to in-depth interviews, there organization had faced some challenges in delivering HRSP in Darwedale. Financial issues, security matters, delivering HRSP in Darwedale. Financial issues, security matters, and building rapport were some of the challenges which were faced. However potential to improve human rights support programs should include rights of the disabled, crippled and other minority groups in society. When probed further on what action was taken on suggestion made, the majority of respondents indicated that there was need to include parents/guardians and security service personnel as part of the group working towards promotion of human rights issues on children. The minority of informants indicated that there was need to include parents/guardians and security service personnel as part of the group working towards promotion of human rights issues on children. The minority of informants indicated that there was need to include parents/guardians and security service personnel as part of the group working towards promotion of human rights issues on children. The minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan. On what action was taken on suggestion made, the minority of informants indicated that there was need to include parents/guardians and security service personnel as part of the group working towards promotion of human rights issues on children. The minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan. On what action was taken on suggestion made, the minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan. On what action was taken on suggestion made, the minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan. On what action was taken on suggestion made, the minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan. On what action was taken on suggestion made, the minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan. On what action was taken on suggestion made, the minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan. On what action was taken on suggestion made, the minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan. On what action was taken on suggestion made, the minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan. On what action was taken on suggestion made, the minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan.

All community members suggested that, there should organization should set non-violence as the main objective. However popular view suggested that there should be collective assessment of risks and shared responsibilities. The minority of respondents suggested that human rights support programs should be based on civic participation and multilateral partnership. Furthermore, popular views suggested indicated that human rights support programs should involve child rights issues in schools. When probed further on what action was taken on suggestion made, the majority of informants service providers agreed to support guidance and counseling programs. On what needs to be done, the majority of informants indicated that there was need to include parents/guardians and security service personnel as part of the group working towards promotion of human rights issues on children. The minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan. On what action was taken on suggestion made, the minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan. On what action was taken on suggestion made, the minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan. On what action was taken on suggestion made, the minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan. On what action was taken on suggestion made, the minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan. On what action was taken on suggestion made, the minority of informants indicated that they had suggested service provider should be non-partisan.

Service providers were appealing for freedom when doing business; independent, free from conflict with the state in the provision of internationally recognized human rights principles. Furthermore, the state should be part and parcel of human rights issues to its citizens. Data gathered indicated the need to encompass both political leaders, religious leaders and other civic organizations in community development work. Also, donor funding networks needs improvement.

Findings/results above indicated that enhancing and improving human rights support programs should be based on principles of impartiality, utilization fully of resources available, utilizing informants’ cultural experiences, multispectral participatory approach in orientation. Furthermore, involvement of players/actors such as children, service providers school authorities and security personnel were areas identified to have potential to improve human rights issues, not forgetting involvement of minority groups in society. In addition data gathered indicated that the views of recipients were considered despite the fact a lot needs to be done.

During data gathering through both focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, there organization had faced some challenges in delivering HRSP in Darwedale. Financial issues, security matters, and building rapport were some of the challenges which were faced. According to in-depth interviews with service providers, even getting office space in the district was a mammoth task. Because of this, service providers may not execute their duties freely and or may warrant few players in the field of promoting human rights issues. More to this, service providers before engaging on the mandate, had to make sure the field of play was safe to both recipients and itself.

Suggestions made by recipients, local leaders and service providers were both administrative and operational in nature. Of
interesting to note is that service providers welcomed contributions from local leaders and recipients on issues raised. ROHR Zim agreed to values which were important principles to implement in their work to achieve the main common goal for social development. These include: Democracy, human rights, gender equality, and non discrimination, be independent, free of conflict of interests and implement an external audit. Also highlighted was transparent reporting and accountability. This must be compounded by values, and norms based on civic participation and multilateral partnership, avoid violence, non partisanship and acting without negative impacts on natural environment and health. In support to data gathered through literature, support of local citizens experience, resources and capacity; respect and protect national culture and traditions which are in line with human rights principles was emphasized. This should be done collectively assessing risks and share responsibilities with all stakeholders actively involved. In light of the challenges noted, participatory approaches seem to lessen the burden of challenges faced since residents and service providers were aware of the situation with suggestions for enhancement and improvements made by both parties. By so doing, it is a way of empowering the community such that even the time would finish the project, sustainability may be attained since the community members were part of decision makers.

In order to implement these principles and to be effective development actors, ROHR Zim needs to pay attention on the increase and improvement of collective roles and responsibilities of state; CSOs and funding agencies in introducing human rights based approach and making it as practice. Also, to set up conditions protecting conflicts of interests and external influence in order to achieve goals for public interest. There is need to strengthen and to create public monitoring through capacity building of citizens, making reporting information open and accessible to public. Data gathered through literature show the element of establishing partnerships based on equal rights and mutual trust and to create enabling political, economic, social and cultural environment for CSO’s sustainable activities to improve their development effectiveness.

FINDINGS

Restoration of Human Rights Zimbabwe (ROHR ZIM) made significant contributions in development of the country through introducing human rights based approach through organizing trainings, information dissemination, conducting research and monitoring, undertaking policy advocacy with the purpose to promote civic participation, thus play important roles in social development. Human rights support programmes were effective and relevant through various indicators in protecting and ensuring human rights mobilize and organize communities, to raise issues based on public needs and opinions, to protect citizens’ violated rights, to provide with legal assistance and psychological counseling, to facilitate citizens to engage with public administration.

Indicators were developed, understood and interpreted with judgment, taking account of the political and economic context. No single set of indicators provided information that was relevant and useful to every case. Participatory indicators were particularly important in this context. Concepts of fundamental rights politically, social, religiously and culturally had a notion of empowerment along gender lines. Of great importance was promoting children rights and the girl child and women in line with UN Resolution 3025.

Aspects which need improvements and or enhancement include democracy, human rights, gender equality, and non discrimination, be independent, free of conflict of interests and implement an external audit. Also highlighted was transparent reporting and accountability. This must be compounded by values, and norms based on civic participation and multilateral partnership, avoid violence, non partisanship and acting without negative impacts on natural environment and health. In support to data gathered through literature, support of local citizens experience, resources and capacity; respect and protect national culture and traditions which are in line with human rights principles was emphasized. This should be done collectively assessing risks and share responsibilities with all stakeholders actively involved.

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Recommendations

The importance of human rights and human rights support programmes should also include peace education programmes for the literate and illiterate, young and adults, rich and poor. There it is of paramount importance to strategically have human rights support programmes which can be understood by all citizens. Involvement and participation from such a background makes the ownership of human rights support programmes community owned. This is important because the human rights support programmes will continue even if the assisting institutions and organizations leave the project.

Local language should be used on human rights and human rights support programmes. Equivalent or simplified terminology should be applied on areas with no similar meaning. Braille, sign language, use of poetry and pictorials should be used to supplement written and spoken local language. Also state and non-state media should promote human rights and human rights support programmes. Furthermore, all stakeholders involved should participate progressively for the betterment of the community as a whole. However funding it can be acknowledged that funding is needed but the funding should not come with hidden political and economical reasons behind. Available resources both human and material should have clear cut policies which governs the day to day operations.

As stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the gospel of peace should be preached across people with different economic, social, political and cultural difference. It is therefore important to shun divisions along ethnicity, race, political affiliation and economic gains in a society, state, region and beyond.

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