

ALBINO FOUNDATION OF ZAMBIA

Breaking the silence on albinism

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Albinism Campaign REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Community radio station, Radio kwenje, Muvi TV and Zambia news and information services (ZANISE) reported a sad development in their news headlines on 8th November 2017 in which a 19 years old girl from Chama district was attacked and her right hand chopped off by unknown people. This case attracted national attention as it also went viral on social media. Many people and organizations condemned the attack and some expressed interest in following up the matter.

Due to the fact that the young girl who was attacked is a person with albinism, the albino foundation took keen interest in the matter and it became a major concern because the foundation had earlier recorded other cases of the same nature. Now it was evident enough that ritual attacks against people with albinism are happening and increasing in Zambia. as the foundation is mandated to deal with issues affecting the welfare of persons with albinism in the country, it sourced for support from its partners/stakeholders in order to carry out a campaign against ritual killings in Chama district. The following is therefore, a detailed report of the said project

Overall Goal

To hold a campaign against ritual attacks of persons with albinism in Chama district



AFZ Planning Meeting in Lusaka. Officers discussing the news and preparing to go to Chama to follow up the case

BUDGET BREAK DOWN

The albino foundation managed to source financial support amounting to k21, 100, 00 (*Twenty One Thousand, One Hundred Kwacha*) from its partners.

k20, 000 came from STEPS, Disability Rights Watch (DRW) contributed k300, 00 and k800, 00 was collected from individuals.

Actual Budget

	SEGMENTS	ITEMS	DETAILS	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
1	Logistics	Transport	Officers Going and coming from Chama	K600,00 each x 5 ppl	K3,000,00
		Lodging	Officers Accommodation while in Chama	K200,00 each x 4 Rooms = k800,00 x 5 days	K4,000,00

		Meals	Officers meals	K500 x 5 days	K2,500,00
				Sub Total	K9,500,00
2	Case Sturdy	Local Transport	Movements within Chama district	K1,200,00	K1,200,00
				Sub Total	K1,200,00
3	Engagement Meeting	Venue	Conference Room	K500,00	K500,00
		Transport Refunds	Invited Stake Holders Within Chama	K100,00 each x 15 ppl	K1,500,00
		Lunch & Water	Invited Participants	K100,00 x 15 ppl	K1,500,00
		Stationary	Albinism Handouts	k500,00	K500,00
				Sub Total	K4,000,00
4	Albinism Campaign	Banner	Painting shops with albinism massages	K600,00	K600,00
		Posters and Flyers	Massages Against Ritual Attacks	K500,00	K500,00
		Drama group	Community awareness on ritual attacks	K800,00	K800,00
				Sub Total	K1,900,00
5	Victims Support	Sunscreen Lotions	Skin protection and cancer prevention	K400,00	K400,00
		Basic Supplies	Blanket and clothes	K600,00	K600,00
		Empowerment	Cash Donation	K1,000,00	K1,000,00
				Sub Total	K2,000,00
6	Documentary	Camera Person	Shooting and Editing	K1,500	K1,500,00
				Sub Total	K1,500,00
7	Administration	Administration	Office Accommodation	K1,000,00	K1,000,00
		Bank Charges	Bank Charges	K300,00	K300,00
				Grand TOTAL	K21,400,00

Twenty One Thousand Four Hundred Kwacha

TRIP TO CHAMA

The foundation selected 4 officers and 1 cameraperson to travel to Chama district to follow up the news and carry out planned activities. The team consisted on 2 ladies and 3 gentlemen, 2 people were persons with albinism while 3 people were without albinism. The team traveled on Friday 24th November 2017 and came back to Lusaka on Tuesday 28th November 2017

	NAME	POSITION	ROLE
1	John Chiti	Executive Director	Albinism campaign & awareness
2	Duncan Lalusha	Board Chairperson	Stakeholders meeting
3	Gift B Sakala	Member	Case sturdy
4	Marambo Siyamayuwa	Secretary	AFZ support to the survival
5	B Mark	Cameraman	To produce a documentary for AFZ

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

While in Chama district the team did the following activities;

1) Courtesy Calls

It is our tradition and part of protocol that when one is in a foreign land, you have to get permission and blessings from the authorities in that land. Therefore, our first activity in Chama was to pay courtesy calls to the authorities of Chama district. We visited the district commissioner's office (DC) senior chief and the chief in the village where the attack happened from. We also visited the council chairperson and we got blessings from these offices. They welcomed us to Chama and pledged to support us in our activities. They were aware of the ritual attack that happened and they strongly condemned the incident

Objectives:

The objectives of this activity were;

- To follow protocol and get blessings from the authorities
- To engage them as stake holders in our programs



Outcome

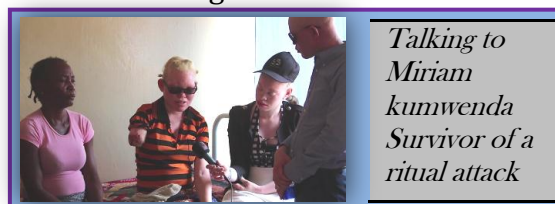
The outcome of this activity was the support we got from the authorities. The DC gave us a vehicle to help our movement within Chama; the council chairperson helped us to organize the stakeholders meeting while the chiefs gave us a go ahead to do activities in their chiefdoms. They all allowed us to document our visit and for this reason have appeared in our documentary. These offices appreciated our effort to travel all the way to their district and they urged us not to make it the first and last time to visit them.. Thus we were now ready to carry on with our planned activities in Chama

2) Case Sturdy

We visited Miriam and her family. We inspected the house where she was sleeping in and the bush where she was taken on the night she was attacked. We interviewed Miriam, her young sister, mother, uncle and neighbors to get their side of the story. We spoke to the doctor who treated Miriam to hear her health condition and police officers handling the case to know how far the case had gone.

Objectives:

- To get the true picture of the attack
- To understand how ritual attacks happen so as to come up with preventive measures



Outcome

“Mr. Nkowani, a teacher at a named school in Chikwa village had been making advances to Miriam. He had been proposing marriage to her for several times. A day before the attack Nkowani offered Miriam k100 so that they can have sex. Miriam claimed she refused and never tolerated him because she was already 2 months pregnant by another person. Nkowani didn’t mind the pregnancy as he often visited Miriam’s place with intentions to marry her.

On the other hand, Miriam’s biological father died some year ago and her mother had remarried to another man. They are 2 sisters in her family and she is the first born. Miriam’s step father has 3 wives in different places so he is not always home. The tradition is that when he is away Miriam and her young sister sleep in the same house with their mother but when their step father is around they sleep alone.

On Saturday night they were all asleep when Miriam heard a knock on the door and when she injures who was knocking a man identified himself as Mr. Nkowani requesting her to come out. She refused to open the door and suddenly fall asleep. By the time she woke up Miriam was tied up and being taken to a nearby bush by 2 people. Her sister said she didn’t hear anything even though they were sleeping on the same bed. Miriam struggled with the people who carried her and when they reached under a tree she saw even more people wearing black cloths. They beat her up and started cutting off her left hand with a machete but there was a directive among themselves that it was the right hand that was needed so they stopped and started cutting off the right hand. As she struggled she was hit at the back of her head and she became unconscious. She woke up around 01; 00hrs when the attackers were gone with her right hand. She started crying as she tried to get back home. Her sister and mother came out to meet her and later took her to the clinic. They called her uncle who lived in Chama town who came around 12; 00hrs the following day with an ambulance to take her to Chama district hospital in Chama town.

Miriam was able to identify one person and the police apprehended him as a suspect. This also led to the arrest of Nkowani but the officers told us that they had to relise him due to insufficient evidence as Miriam could not identify him among the attackers. The police didn’t seem to know about the advances Nkowani had been making to Miriam and when we shared with them our findings they considered him a suspect and believed he had a role to play in the attack. Most people we spoke to were angry with the police for relising Nkowani even if he was on police bond while the police also accused Miriam’s family of hiding certain information from them. During our visit the case was still on investigation and Miriam was about to be discharged from hospital.

3) Community Awareness on Albinism

We did a community awareness on albinism in Chikwa village where the attack happened from. About 200 villagers gathered including women and men, children and adults. Even village headmen and teachers were part of the audience. We engaged a local cultural group called “*Tilipo Theatre Club*” who performed traditional dances and a play on albinism. Then followed a talk/discussion on ritual attacks. There was good participation from the people as they asked and responded to question on albinism. The message that came from the performances, discussion, questions and answers was generally to condemn the recent attack that happened in the village.

Objective

- To do a campaign against ritual attacks of people with albinism
- To fight beliefs and misconceptions the society has put on albinism



Outcome

The campaign message was well received and the recent attack was strongly condemned by everyone. People pledged to be each other's keeper. It was clear that the attackers usually use neighbors and relatives of the victim to get information. The event therefore, urged people to be conscious about who they talk to and report any suspicious incident before it becomes an attack. We also learned that Miriam and her sister were the only persons with albinism in Chikwa village apparently and the villagers were urged to look out for any other person with albinism in their area and register them to the headmen

4) Albinism Posters, Flyers and Paintings

We produced about 250 posters and 500 flyers with messages against ritual attacks against persons with albinism and these were distributed in Chikwa village and Chama town. The posters and flyers were designed in both English and local languages (Nyanja and Tumbuka). Posters were stuck on walls, poles, trees, sign posts while flyers were given out to individuals. Furthermore, instead of making banners we painted 2 shops with the same message on the posters. This was even more effective as the paintings were more visible and would last longer

Objectives:

- To raise more awareness on albinism and discourage attacks of persons with albinism
- To fight beliefs and misconceptions that the society has put on albinism



Outcome

This activity led us to having small discussions on albinism with people as they would come to ask questions after being attracted by the posters or paintings. Our officers thus took time to talk to small groups of people in different places about the posters and its contents. Some individuals showed interest in the matter when they were given flyers. Others

offered to join the organization so that they too can have a role to play in the matter while others started following us being present and taking part in every other activity we did in Chama

5) Engagement Meeting

A Stakeholders meeting was held at Chama Council Chamber on Monday 27th November 2017. About 15 participants from different offices came to discuss the ritual attacks of persons with albinism in Chama district. Some of the offices represented were; Zambia police (victim support unit) village headmen, traditional healers, Zambia association of persons with disabilities, office of the DC, Chama district hospital, Chama council and family members to Miriam. We also had some individuals who attended because they were concerned about albinism in the district. John Chiti and Duncan Lalusha facilitated the meeting and members saw the need for our organization to establish a branch in Chama

Objectives:

- To engage relevant authorities on albinism issues
- To come up with a strong network that shall deal with albinism issues in Chama district

Outcome

8 people volunteered to form an “Albinism Committee” that was going to deal with albinism matters in the district. The committee elected a chairperson, secretary and treasurer while the rest of the people were committee members. The duties of the established committee were;

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) To follow up the court's proceedings with Miriam's case to the end and react to their satisfaction or | dissatisfaction when the case is closed, |
| b) To open an albinism register which will register persons with albinism in Chama district | |
| c) To continue raising awareness on albinism and campaign against ritual attacks of persons with albinism | |
| d) To raise funds for albinism activities in the district | |



6) Support to Miriam

Having survived a ritual attack we knew that Miriam needed more support from us. When we injured her and her mother about what kind of support they needed they pointed out the lack of blankets, sunscreen and clothes. Other items such as groceries and food had been donated to them already by other organizations and people who heard the news and visited them in hospital. We therefore, bought sunscreen, blankets

and clothes for Miriam and her young sister. We also made a cash donation of k1, 000, 00 (One Thousand Kwacha) to Miriam. The support was well received and Miriam appreciated the organization for showing interest in her welfare

Objectives:

- To give material and financial support to the survival
- To help Miriam recover from the trimmer of the attack



PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

With this project, our foundation has achieved the following;

- 1) We managed to do **all** the activities we planned. There was good management of time and resources such that every activity was done successfully.
- 2) We established a committee that has continued with the works we started in Chama. In a year's time this committee will establish a branch for our organization
- 3) Our project was well received and **appreciated** in Chama whereby we received maximum support from stakeholders and Chama community
- 4) We managed to **engage** stakeholders and government departments in addressing ritual killings. Offices such as Chama police, DC, village headmen, traditional healers
- 5) are key stakeholders for our project
- 6) Whereas they were organizations, individuals and government departments who visited Miriam to show solidarity, the albino foundation is the **only** organization that took time to do different activities in Chama district. Most organizations would just end at visiting Miriam in hospital and giving her material support but we went further to visit her village, do community awareness, engagement meeting etc. we and our donors have been recommended for going an extra mile in Chama district.

CHALLENGES

However, we did face a few challenges during our project;

- 1) It was a 3 hours drive from Chama town to Chikwa villages where the attack happened from and the road was not good. Only vehicles with 4 wheel drive can reach there. Even though we had a good vehicle we still faced challenges going back to town because it rained when we were in the village so the road became slippery and muddy. It took us 5 hours to reach town as we became stuck and would physically push the vehicle to get going. We wanted to do more awareness in Chikwa village but because of the rains and **poor roads** we just went there once and did the rest of the campaign in another village which was more accessible.
- 2) The ritual attack case was on investigation stage from there suspects would go to court so we could not do much to the case but to allow the police to do/finish their job. By then we could just help the investigation, follow the court proceedings and give our reaction after judgment depending on how the police/court will handle the case.



- 3) Miriam is in danger as a person with albinism and as a key witness to the case. She should be protected but her **safety** was not resolved or guaranteed. We had meetings with the police, DC and some of her family to discuss where she would go after being discharged from hospital and the matter was not well resolved. We, the police and DC advised that Miriam should stay within Chama town but her mother wanted to go back to Chikwa village with her. Some family members who live within Chama town even offered to stay with Miriam but still her mother refused. It seemed as if she did not trust any of her family members to stay with her child.

On the other hand the mother was willing to give Miriam to the albino foundation and she insisted that the only options for them were either we (AFZ) take Miriam to Lusaka or she goes back with her to the village. Her family members were not an option. Miriam and her young sister were not comfortable staying in the village and were willing to stay with any family member but their mother insisted that if we don't take them they will have no choice but to go back to the village. To this effect Miriam went back to her village after being discharged from hospital. We didn't understand why her mother was willing to trust us (the strangers) with her children than any of her family memb

RECOMMENDATIONS

This project recommends the following;

- The albino foundation should establish branches in districts/provinces that are along the border. We have noted that most ritual attacks are prominent in districts that are along **borders**. This is so because ritual killings also involve body trafficking as we see that they happen from one African country to another. AFZ is therefore, guided to extend its services to target districts along the boarder
- The foundation is also recommended to open a **home** for refuge where people like Miriam can be kept. AFZ is the right organization that can receive and look after persons with albinism in need of shelter. For this reason the foundation is seeking support to open a home of refuge that can provide temporal shelter to individual who are at risk

OTHER PICTURES



Committee Chairperson



John Chiti and Young sister to Miriam(Wainess) with her child



Duncan Lalusha Board Chairperson



Miriam Kumwenda whose right hand was chopped off



Gift Sakala holding the poster



They took her from the house to that bush where they cut off her hand

