



Chitungwiza Community Bulletin

For community development and poverty alleviation through entrepreneurship

A Publication by Chitungwiza Community Development Network August 2012

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From the editor

Hope you have enjoyed all our previous editions of the Chitungwiza Community Bulletin. We hope to continue providing you with thought provoking news and information on what is taking place in Chitungwiza regarding the town's the political, social and economic activities.

The constitution making process is nearly coming to its conclusion with the hope that the warring parties will be able to resolve their differences, to accept compromises and come up with a document that is going to solve the myriad of challenges facing the nation.

After the constitution making process the nation is supposed to go for a referendum to accept or reject the draft constitution. CCDN urges young people in Chitungwiza, the nation at large and the diaspora to seriously scrutinize the document in order to make informed decisions during the referendum. We strongly urge all young people of Zimbabwe to peacefully participate in the referendum and safeguard the country's democracy.

There is a strong possibility that the country will hold a general election within the next 12 months with or without a new constitution. CCDN urges young people not to be used to commit heinous crimes against humanity. We need to promote political peace, political tolerance and co-existence within our communities to promote development. We strongly urge all people young and old to register as voters so as to exercise their inalienable democratic right.

The Chitungwiza Community Development Network continues to urge young people of Chitungwiza to engage in sustainable development initiatives that aim at uplifting their standards of living. Lets promote youth entrepreneurship and invest our energy in community development .

Enjoy your reading.

Chitungwiza's "ECONOMIC BOOM"

By Collin Mapfumo.

Chitungwiza is experiencing an "economic boom" in the retail sector as more and more youths are venturing into retailing. A record number of retail shops commonly known as "tuck shops" have resurfaced across the dormitory town in the last one year as the country's economy continues to ail with few economic opportunities. Historically tuck shops have generally been a source of livelihood for few people in Zimbabwe's high -density suburbs servicing smaller communities and neighbourhoods with daily house-hold needs such as bread, milk and cigarettes. However, this industry disappeared from the scenery after the infamous government-led Operation Murambatsvina in 2005 which targeted the so-called illegal structures, only to resurface in the last year.

These tuck shops have mushroomed in almost every street and street corner in Chitungwiza. Some streets have more than 3 tuck shops occupying either the front or backyard. The majority have emerged at Makoni shopping centre and Taita in Unit O .



A line of tuck shop at Unit O shopping centre .

An enquiry by this reporter found out that Chitungwiza Municipality has authorized residents to erect these once "illegal structures" on condition that they apply for an operating license and pay a US\$35 monthly fee. However, in interviewing some of the tuck shop owners in Unit O, most complained that rampant corruption existed in acquiring these licences and were constantly at the mercy of the Municipal Police who harass them and demand bribes where one is not in possession of a licence.

"Our plight is also worsened by the small profits we get considering the number of these tuck shops at the shopping centre and those located in the residential homes", said Taurai Choto of Unit O, Chitungwiza. It is evident that the re-emergence of tuck shops in Chitungwiza and around the country is another desperate attempt by the many jobless youth to make ends meet in an economy where survivalist tactics have become the norm.

Chitungwiza municipality ignoring Tower lights.

By Daniel Madzinga

Tower lights form a major feature of the landscape in Chitungwiza. These tall steel structures were erected to provide lighting for the people during the night. This made life easier for the inhabitants of Chitungwiza as they could move at night without fear of being mugged. Despite the importance of the Chitungwiza Town Council owned tower lights, they are now reflecting the dire situation of lack of service delivery to the citizens of Chitungwiza by the municipality.

Failure to maintain these life saving structures by the Chitungwiza Municipality has exposed them to vandalism, rendering them useless. This has contributed to increased crime in Chitungwiza as thieves take advantage of darkness to break into people's homes and waylay those who travel at night. In areas where streetlights are dysfunctional muggings have been on the increase. Wilbert Maponga, a young man who resides in Zengeza said, "it is now difficult to think of night life as one has to content with thieves and robbers who now own the night because they operate under the cover of darkness".



Tower light converted in to a base station.

Instead of being repaired to provide light for people the tower lights are now being rented to telecommunications companies. The noble idea is for these companies to finance the repair of these tower lights and provide adequate lighting for their customers as part of their corporate social responsibility obligations. Alice Zenza, a young lady from Zengeza 1 said, "it is our money that they are using to convert our tower lights into base stations, don't we buy airtime any time of the day, why can't they just repair the tower lights. They are cruel I tell you."

Residents of Chitungwiza are concerned that such developments by these telecommunications companies in their community should be done after a wide and thorough consultation process. Whatever agreement that exist between these companies and the town council, it seems residents will remain in the dark.

Efforts to get a comment from the Chitungwiza Town Council works department proved fruitless.

Chitungwiza town council to lose millions.

By Farai Dauramanzi

Chitungwiza town council is set to record a loss amounting to millions of dollars due to the bonuses they awarded to residents in the last quarter of 2011. This comes after the City of Harare refused to cut the dormitory town's water debt.

The Chitungwiza town council awarded residents a bonus to dissolve debts on those who settled half of their debts to the local authority in December last year. This move was to fundraise for the municipality to cover its huge debt to workers and major suppliers who include the City of Harare but this plan appears to have backfired. The City of Harare has demanded that the local authority settle its water debt in full. This development will impact negatively on the already struggling town council as the local authority will have provided subsidized water to residents without a backup plan.

However most residents have not acknowledged this gesture as water continues to be a scarce resource in Chitungwiza. Most residents of Chitungwiza owe the council an average of \$700 in unsettled water bills and rates. The Chitungwiza council has over the years failed to provide clean water to areas such as Unit-O and P, where residents go for periods of up to two months without getting a single drop from the tap.

A resident of the suburb Mr Loyd Kanzonza had no kind words for the municipality, "We have gone for more than five years now without constant water supplies. We now rely on boreholes because tap water comes once in two months yet the council continues to bill us, its absurd!" Residents from this part of Chitungwiza rely on boreholes which were drilled by the European Commission after the suburb was hit by the cholera epidemic in 2009.



Water tanks that were installed by the European Commission in Unit O

USAID also intervened and installed rainwater harvesting tanks for use during the rainy season. However, tension has arisen in the community as some residents refuse to share water from the tanks which are located on their premises. Residents however, still continue to fetch water from unsafe sources which have sparked a new Typhoid scare.

Chitungwiza's white elephant.

By Collin Mapfumo.

The Old Mutual owned Chitungwiza Town Centre which was officially opened to the public by President Robert G. Mugabe in 1990 has become a white elephant. The shopping mall boasted of banking, retail, and entertainment facilities all meant to cater for a community that for years had to rely on Harare 30km away for such needs. It was a welcome relief for residents of Chitungwiza who had every right to celebrate. Two Decades down the line people of Chitungwiza have little if anything to celebrate. Their beloved town centre started deteriorating offering fewer and fewer services as years have gone by. The reasons for this gradual weakening are varied and many depending on whom you are consulting but answers and solutions are few.

Two of the major retail shops TM and OK have since closed shop and re-located to Makoni Shopping Centre which has taken over as Chitungwiza's new economic centre in terms of service provision and retailing. Amongst the few companies that have remained operating are Econet Wireless, Stanbic, CABS, Multi-Choice and ZESA Holdings.



Entrance of the two buildings that used to house OK and TM supermarkets respectively at town centre

Some business operators attributed the relocation of their enterprises to high rentals being charged by Old Mutual, others complained that the mall had become less reliable as water and electricity were constantly unavailable, making it unattractive to customers. A visit to the Town Centre by this reporter confirmed the latter as they found the centre's public toilets shut down even though water was available in that part of town. In attempting to make an enquiry with the Old Mutual officials at their offices they found a visibly disgruntled 66 year old Mr Mahiya lodging a complaint on the state of affairs. "I am an old person who knows his rights, I demand to know why Old Mutual is failing to provide toilets", requested Mr Mahiya to a certain Mr Chiringa over the phone.

In a discussion with one of the Old Mutual officials at the Town Centre on why so many businesses had ceased operating there, the official dismissed the notion of high rentals and said that their rates were competitive, but surprisingly business people were choosing to move elsewhere.

The Chitungwiza Town Centre clearly needs a rebranding strategy if it is to remain competitive. Old Mutual should fulfil its social obligation of attracting the business community to provide services to the Chitungwiza residents as was the plan when they built the complex in 1990. As an organisation that has unveiled funds for youth empowerment it is paramount that they go all the way by considering the many youth in Chitungwiza that are in need of space to operate their business enterprises.

Youths turns cans into cash

By Yvonne Makwinja

A group of artists in Chitungwiza's Zengeza 5 Extension suburb are creating art by recycling beer and soft drink cans. As the can has become more popular with the public, dumping has also increased particularly in urban contemporary Zimbabwe. Cans pose a major threat to our eco-system, they cannot be decomposed and absorbed by the soil. The environmentally conscious trio of Travolta Karidzira 23, Farai Muvhaki 26 and Japhet Phiri 28 have found creative ways of turning waste into art.

In an interview with this reporter, the youth said that they had been using beads and wire to create their art, until they noticed the cans which were being recklessly disposed and decided to experiment. Prices of their wares range from as little as USD3 TO USD15. "We urge the public to dispose of cans properly, what you might see as rubbish is actually money to me", said Farai. Well wishers are welcome in supporting this art for sustainable development initiative.



Travolta Karidzira with one of their pieces.

Upcoming events

Event: Youth Entrepreneurship Awareness Campaign Roadshow

Venue: Chigovanyika Shopping Centre, St Mary's.

Date: 08 September 2012

Time: 12 00—16 00 hours.

"We know where most of the creativity, the innovation, the stuff that drives productivity lies—in the minds of those closest to the work."- Jack Welch

"Ability can take you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there".— John Wooden

Chitungwiza's ghost industries.

By Mutakiwa Shayanowako

The Chitungwiza industrial area which is located in the southern end of the town paints a gruesome picture of how the country's economic meltdown has affected the town. Run-down buildings, rusting warehouses and security gates are now a common feature of the once economic hub of Chitungwiza. In the early 90's companies such as Jagers Wholesalers, Corn Textiles (later Modzone), ZUPCO, Chubb Security, Dairiboard to name but a few, provided not only services but more importantly employment opportunities to Chitungwiza's many school-leavers.

It is sad to note that none of the aforementioned companies still operates in the industrial area. The majority have shut down completely, or simply re-located. Delta Beverages is the only major company that has remained operational in the face of economic challenges prevailing in the town. However, questions have been asked on why youth in the town continue to operate on road sides and undesignated places when property meant for such economic activities is being ignored.



Gates at ZUPCO premises in Chitungwiza

The majority of the town's youth have found refuge within the informal sector and are quite a common facet along the town's roads and streets. Carpentry, brick making, welding and motor vehicle services have become the new model of industries providing employment opportunities for the youth. Surprisingly they have not been provided with the necessary support in terms of infrastructure and finance by government and the town administrators.

When the CCDN team met with the former Acting Town Clerk and Chairman, of the resuscitation team, Mr Fungai Mbetsa in August 2012 they were told that the municipality has no land all land was taken by private individuals and companies.

Land grabbing and corrupt activities amongst the town's administrators is well documented. One former ZANU PF Deputy Mayor (name withheld) is known to own a third of the town's commercial land. How one individual gets to own so much land at the expense of the majority boggles the mind.

Recently the MDC-T had to expel some of its councillors after investigations proved that they were involved in corrupt land deals in the town. It is also concerning to note that out of desperation youth have been forced to partake in such corrupt acts so as to support their business initiatives. It remains to be seen whether the Chitungwiza Municipality will take heed of the youth's plight and take the necessary measures to ensure that the Chitungwiza industrial area is revived for the benefit of Chitungwiza community to provide the much needed operating space and premises to the young entrepreneurs in Chitungwiza.

YASC hosts Mini-Olympics

Young Africa Skills Centre hosted a Mini-Olympics on the 10th of August 2012 in commemoration of the 2012 London Olympics courtesy of the British Council. Students from various colleges that include Young Africa (Chitungwiza), Young Africa (Epworth) and Transparency competed for medals in events such as basketball, volleyball and athletics.

CCDN Director Mr Eddington Shayanowako who was the guest of honour, in his speech urged youths to use sports as a tool to instil self-discipline and provide unity within the community. He also urged government and other stakeholders to support youth in the "ghetto" with sporting facilities considering the potential that is in abundance in these communities.



Presentation of Awards by CCDN Director Eddington Shayanowako after the Mini-Olympics at Young Africa Chitungwiza.

Chitungwiza commuters cry foul.

By Farai Dauramanzi

Commuters from Chitungwiza are complaining about being dumped at the ABC Auctions when they are going to work in Harare. Commuter omnibus drivers who ply the Harare-Chitungwiza route are now resorting to dumping passengers at the ABC auctions before the fly over along Seke Road in order to avert police who will be manning a check point at the fly over bus stop. The commuter omnibuses popularly known as kombis are attributing their move to increased police presence in Harare's CBD.

A driver who plies the Harare-Chitungwiza route, John Sithole said, "We have resorted to leaving passengers at the ABC auctions because of fear of having our vehicles impounded by the police. It's risky to pass through the fly over check point, I better take my chances by avoiding getting into the CBD."

A survey by this reporter showed that most of the commuter omnibuses and their drivers do not have proper legal documents to carry out their mandate. Moreso, the kombis are constantly overloaded carrying 22 passengers instead of the stipulated 15 passengers thereby risking lives of the commuting public.

Chitungwiza in pictures



Tower light converted to a base station.



USAID sponsored rooftop water harvesting tank in Unit O.



Women taking advantage of a burst water pipe to do their washing in Unit M



The comeback of tuck shops in Chitungwiza



A disused Wedzera Service Station in the Chitungwiza Industrial area.



Chitungwiza town centre on a "busy" Monday morning.



Young Africa (Chitungwiza) and Transparency during a men's basketball game during the Mini-Olympics.



Young Africa Chitungwiza and Epworth during a female volleyball game during the Mini-Olympics at Young Africa Chitungwiza.