



INTERVENTIONS BY CSOs DURING COVID 19 IN ZIMBABWE

BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic in Zimbabwe called for civil society organisations to strategise and rethink the implementation of their programmes and prioritise issues that had to be attended to during this time. In that regard, CSOs implemented several interventions to address both the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic itself and the impact of the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these interventions were done in collaboration with the government, while others were aimed at promoting transparency and accountability.

MEDIA CSOs

Civil society organisations representing the interests of the media sector in Zimbabwe like Media Institute of Southern Africa and Media Alliance of Zimbabwe were critical in promoting media freedom and advocating for the welfare of journalists during this time. Some of the key interventions included:

- litigation towards provision of timely, accurate and substantive access to information through all mediums and in all 16 official languages
- litigation against the harassment of journalists undertaking their professional duties during the national lockdown
- Advocacy for the explicit inclusion of journalists as providers of essential services
- Legal support to journalists arrested and detained

HUMAN RIGHTS CSOs

Civil society organisations were critical in monitoring the protection, promotion, and respect for human rights during the COVID-19 pandemic and more so during the national lockdown. This included interventions by organisations like Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, Zimbabwe Human Rights Association and Zimbabwe NGO Forum among others. Such interventions included:

- Documenting human rights abuses such as assaults, torture and other inhuman and degrading treatment and/or punishment, unlawful arrests and detention.
- Providing legal support to victims of human rights violations

CSOs IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

Civil society organisations like the Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights undertook several interventions to protect the welfare of frontline workers. Key interventions included:

- demanding PPE for frontline healthcare workers
- litigation demanding the government to deploy sufficient testing kits at all designated public hospitals, airports and ports of entry
- The ZADHR together with the Counselling Services Unit (CSU) also assisted victims of military and police brutality with medical assistance and psycho-social support

INTERVENTIONS BY CSOs FOCUSING ON GENDER AND DISABILITY RIGHTS

CSOs focusing on gender were active in responding to the crisis, many of them working collaboratively with government through the Ministry of Women's Affairs Community and Small to Medium Enterprises Development (MWACSMED) to ensure the continuation of GBV services. Organisations such as Musasa Project, Adult Rape Clinic, Family AIDS Counselling Trust, Family Support Trust, amongst others have been involved in various efforts including:

- Equipping all supported GBV facilities for instance static and mobile one-stop centres with COVID-19 infection, prevention and control (IPC) supplies.

- keeping shelters and safe spaces open for victims of domestic violence
- temporary isolation tents for GBV survivors with suspicious symptoms
- Transport support as alternatives to limited availability of public transport for survivors being referred to higher levels of care.

For persons with disabilities several interventions were made which included the following:

- advocacy towards provisions of digital tools to enable online classes by children that are visually impaired and hard of hearing