



Trusting in Youth in Zimbabwe (TYZ)

Cooperative Agreement Number: AID-613-A-13-00003

Quarterly Narrative Report
(February 1, 2013 to March 31, 2013)

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List of Acronyms

AOR	Agreement Officer Representative
BRDC	Buhera Rural District Council
COPAC	Constitutional Select Committee
DA	District Administrator
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
PA	Provincial Administrator
TYZ	Trusting Youth in Zimbabwe Project
YETT	Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report gives an overview of the most recent activities for the Trusting in Youth in Zimbabwe (TYZ) project, implemented by Mercy Corps in collaboration with Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust (YETT). In the period from February 1 – March 31, 2013, the TYZ focus was on project start up activities with various stakeholders in the two areas of operation of Buhera and Chitungwiza Districts. Additionally, the project also invested considerable time ensuring that requisite human resources were in place for successful implementation of project activities.

The highlights of activities implemented by the TYZ during this partial quarter include:

- Recruitment of essential key project staff by both Mercy Corps and YETT
- Stakeholder sensitization meetings conducted in both Buhera and Chitungwiza
- Drafting and submission of the annual work plan, performance monitoring plan, and budget
- Drafting of YETT sub-grant agreement by Mercy Corps and submission of the same to USAID for concurrence
- Initiation of procurement process for project equipment including obtaining requisite waivers

1.0 CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

The operating environment was generally stable in country but was characterized by tension due to imminent elections which are due to take place in Zimbabwe at a date yet to be announced. In addition, project start up coincided with the constitutional referendum that was conducted on the 16th of March 2013. Local government officials including the District Administrator Offices that are tasked with clearing development initiatives at the local level were not able to clear new projects prior to the referendum as they were busy working on logistics to ensure successful holding of the referendum. Parallel to this process, the Constitutional Select Committee (COPAC) was holding public meetings on the draft constitution, making it difficult to conduct any other community meetings.

All three main political parties of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) and Government of National Unity (GNU) were campaigning for a YES vote. This resulted in less tension between the key political players and a relatively peaceful outlook. While preparations for the March 16th referendum took place, it was evident that the political parties were already strategically positioning themselves for harmonized general elections to be held later this year. With youth being viewed as the king makers by holding the deciding vote in the form of being first time voters, the period noticed a significant increase in the politicization of any intervention targeting youth.

At the macro level, insecurity continued to be a threat with deteriorating service delivery especially in urban areas. Chitungwiza on average received a water supply for two days each week and raw sewage continued to flow while garbage remained uncollected. In Buhera, indications are that a sizeable number of the population will require food aid as the district received erratic rainfall during the period under review thereby negatively affecting crop yields.

2.1 The TYZ Project Goal and Objectives

The overall goal of the Trusting in Youth in Zimbabwe Program is to ensure that Zimbabwean youth are able to cooperate across lines of division to positively change their communities and improve their lives.

Mercy Corps will contribute to this goal through the following three objectives:

Objective One: Increase youth's ability to be resilient and plan for the long term by working together on **livelihood's initiatives**.

Objective Two: Strengthen capacity of youth, communities and local government to protect their communities.

Objective Three: Increase youth ability to constructively engage their communities and government (both local and national) on issues that affect them.

3.0 PROGRESS REPORT – February to March 2013

As focus of the period under review was on start-up activities, this report highlights progress made in ensuring that the project commenced well. Progress towards achieving objectives can only be discussed in the successive quarters after implementation of associated activities.

3.1 Staff Recruitment

Both Mercy Corps and YETT managed to finalize the recruitment of project staff during the period under review. Mercy Corps recruited the project manager, monitoring and evaluation officer and two project officers. The project staff will be complemented by other team members in the Operations, Finance, and Administration Department. YETT recruited a program officer who will also be supported by various staff members that include the programs manager and the director from the partner organizations.

3.2 Stakeholder Sensitization Meetings

In Chitungwiza, Mercy Corps held an initial meeting with the District Administrator to introduce the project. After the meeting, the DA called a roundtable meeting with members of the District Development Committee including those representing the police and the Office of the President and Cabinet. At this roundtable, Mercy Corps and YETT presented the project to be implemented and members had the opportunity to seek clarification. At the end of the meetings all members welcomed the project in the district but were concerned that the wards selected were too close to each other leaving other areas in need of similar intervention. Their preference was for Mercy Corps to implement activities across the whole district or at least to cover a broad cross section of the district.

In Buhera, Mercy Corps conducted separate meetings with the Buhera Rural District Council (BRDC) officials, the District Administrator, and the Ministry of Youth Development, Indigenization and Empowerment. As per the requirements of the BRDC, they requested Mercy Corps to draft a project Memorandum of Understanding to be

signed by concerned parties. The MoU was drafted by Mercy Corps, reviewed and approved by BRDC and copies of the signed MoU were made available to the DA, Ministry of Youth, and Office of the President and Cabinet at the district level.

During the period under review, YETT engaged the Office of the Provincial Administrator (PA) in Manicaland to seek clearance to implement the TYZ project in Buhera as is required by the Government of Zimbabwe for all agencies wanting to operate in a new geographic area. The PA indicated that they had been instructed by higher authorities to suspend activities with all non-governmental organizations until the general elections are held later this year. YETT is still working on securing an appointment with the PA despite the challenges they have faced so far. The implementation of the actual project activities by YETT in Buhera District is dependent upon this clearance from the office of the PA and will ensure that there is buy in from the local authorities so there will be limited interference by state security agents on grounds of suspicion.

3.3 Annual Work Plan, Budget, and Performance Monitoring Plan

In accordance with the USAID environmental compliance (Regulation 216 environmental documentation), Mercy Corps put together the annual work plan and reviewed project budget and the performance monitoring plan. After submittal to USAID, suggestions from the Agreement Officer Representative were incorporated and the plans have now been approved. Discussions with the AOR pointed to the fact that the submitted documents will act as guidelines and can be revised later if deemed necessary especially in view of the current political environment that is characterized by uncertainty and political tensions.

3.4 YETT Sub Award Agreement

Mercy Corps developed a sub award agreement with details on the partnership with YETT. The draft was circulated to YETT for their input after which the sub award was sent to USAID for concurrence. Upon receiving the requisite approvals, Mercy Corps and YETT signed the award which guides operations of the two parties on the ground.

4.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In preparation of setting up a sound monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for the TYZ project, the team started on working on designing the baseline survey for the project. A questionnaire and focus group discussion guide were designed. These tools will be used to collect baseline data for the project indicators.

5.0 PLANS FOR THE NEXT PERIOD – APRIL TO JUNE 2013

Key activities to be implemented in the next quarter are listed below:

- Ward level sensitization meetings with young men and women
- Baseline survey
- Life skills, leadership, and advocacy trainings
- Options analysis for Early Warning and Early Response mechanism
- Youth led market assessment