



Travel report from Zambia

May 2016

Context



We are now in the end of the first year of our ICLD project "Womens empowerment through development of Local Democracy" and this time it is the Swedish Project group who is visiting our cooperating partner in this SIDA financed project.

20 years ago SIDA decided that a small part of the aid money would be channeled through cooperation between Municipalities, county councils and regions. The aim is to promote development of local democracy in low and middle income countries where democratic principles like transparency and accountability are adhered to and contribute to combat poverty and having a rights- based approach.

Zambia is one of 8 African countries which participate in ICLD, International Center for Local Democracy projects, run with SIDA money. If development will take place it is extremely important that there are well functioning Municipalities and those projects also are run by established channels like Municipalities.

Chinsali



Foto; Maria Wiksten

Chinsali is the birth town of the first Zambian president, from independence 1964 up to 1991. Today at the age of 92 he lives in the capital Lusaka but has a farm in his birth town run by relatives.

The Northern Province was extremely big and in 2011 Muchinga province was announced and Chinsali became the provincial capital. There are roughly 900 000 people in the province and a population density of 10 people / km² compared to 13 in Piteå Municipality.

Chinsali is a quite small town with roughly 87 000 inhabitants. One big problem is poverty and the most vulnerable are women and children. A Zambian Municipality has up to now very limited responsibilities, like market places, waste management, bus stations, land issues and social issues. A big decentralization reform is going on which also means that Zambian Municipalities will get a number a new areas of responsibility.



In Chinsali a big transformation is going on. This small town will become a new modern administrative city. A lot of building projects are carried out, the first University is almost ready and the second has started to be built. New modern buildings for being a provincial center and also a new civic center are on their way.

In order to succeed they are facing many challenges. They must involve the citizens in the process of development, they need to develop local democracy and they need to get people's trust. They need an active participation from women, they need to have female elected officials, and they need to find ways to improve living conditions for the people.

Boarding for students at the University

Election time

August 11 this year there will be an election in Zambia, both at national and local level. Chinsali is today divided into 11 wards and each ward has one elected representative in the town council. Due to new responsibilities it will increase to 15 wards. Today there are no female elected officials and all elected officials are coming from the same political party.

The election process has started and we were told that 7 women have registered to become a candidate. But the process from register to become elected is long, first you have to be supported by a political party and then the citizens have to support their candidacy and vote for them. But a big step forward is that there are today women who have expressed their willingness to stand for election. They believe that the work they have started in order to develop local democracy and empower women has contributed to that.

The project

The aim of the project is development of local democracy, something that is as important in Zambia as it is here in Piteå. The focus is to empower the officials and elected officials to develop methods to engage women and to increase transparency and accountability.

In order to do something very practical they have started the process where women will take care of the waste management in two areas. In the long run they see that women will be involved in development, will stand for election and that they will gain people's trust.



What is in it for us?



Why do you do this in Piteå? What is in it for us? Will it give business? What knowledge does it give which is valuable for us? How does it benefit us? These are some of the questions that we get on and off. Important questions. Why are 70 Swedish Municipalities involved in this kind of partnership?

Today we are talking more and more about living in a global village and these partnerships contributes to global perspectives on what we are doing, how we do things and challenge us with new questions from other perspectives.

We also know that for places who want to develop international relations are of greatest importance. The base in these relations is not business but we can see that this can be an effect in the long run. Maybe it is because that the momentum is development of public businesses, where long term relations build trust, a good base for development also into other areas.

I also think that it is one sign of an attractive employer, that staff has the opportunity to broaden their perspective and gain experiences which is of great value in the day to day work in a changing world where we also get citizens from many different countries. It contributes to open our eyes and see the world less prejudiced and in the long run to make our own Municipality a little bit better to live in, for those who have always lived here and for those who are newcomers.

The Swedish project group



Anette Christoffersson

Anita Granqvist

Göran Dahlén



Maria Wiksten

Vera Renberg

Gerd Sävenstedt

The Swedish project group consists of Anette Christoffersson working with the citizen's dialogue, Vera Renberg – Human Rights, Anita Granqvist – social counsellor working with consumer issues and debt restructuring, Göran Dahlén – international affairs with a background from the educational area, Maria Wiksten- legal issues who will replace me as a project leader when I retire at the end of this year.

For all of them it was the first time in Chinsali and for some the first time in Africa. They will from that point of view reflect on certain issues in this report.

Sunday

Mary the local project leader, Happy the main driver and another driver are at the airport to meet us. Last year the Municipality in Chinsali bought two new pick-up cars, which take us all the way. We are tired after a long trip; Stockholm, Rome, Addis Abeba, Harare and Lusaka. A short stop at a shopping center where we can get some local money, kwasha, and some water before we are back on the road. But as it is Sunday it is also the day for the handicraft market which is quite attractive, but there is no time for shopping. The traffic in and close to Harare is heavy and we have many hours in the car before we can stop to eat and sleep. When we reach the small hotel we are quite exhausted and happy to take a shower, eat something and go to sleep. One disadvantage but maybe also an advantage is the very long road from the capital to Chinsali. We have time to feel that we are very far from home and see 800 km of Zambia.

Monday

From early morning to lunchtime in the car before we reach Tazama guesthouse, where we are going to stay. Tazama is roughly 10 km outside of the town center. Tazama Pipelines limited is a company owned jointly by both the Zambian and the Tanzanian government. It is a company for the purpose of transporting crude oil or its petroleum products cheaply from the port of Dar es Salaam into land Zambia. The pipelines is 1705 km starting in Dar es Salam and ends in Ndola. On the way there are a number of stations and one of them is here outside Chinsali where they have a newly built guesthouse where we can stay.



After lunch we started off by visiting Patrick Kambita the town clerk, who has been part of the project since the beginning. Also Adam Jere who is the head over 6 Municipalities in the Province participated in the meeting. He was to Piteå in March.

The main issue for the discussion was the coming election which occupies most of their time.

– After election I will have a break, says Patrick who hasn't really had a vacation for several years. There will be changes among the elected officials. And for the first time the mayor will be

elected by the citizens and not by the counsellors.



We visited the ongoing training in crises management which had started this day and was going to run during the whole week. This was a yearly event but as it was election time the focus was on the coming election. Even if they believed that the election would run smoothly it was good to be prepared and as one of the participants said

- This knowledge is really valuable in many situations and it is also good to have time to meet and discuss these issues with others. The participants came from different political parties, public affairs and the police.

We, the Swedes, were placed in different discussion groups but we mostly listened.

Tuesday

This morning Lubwa mission was on the agenda, a kind of a national monument in Zambia as KK, Kenneth Kaunda, the first Zambian president was born here. His father was a reverend and a teacher at the mission station and his mother the first African woman to teach in colonial Zambia. The counselor for this ward, a newly graduated secondary school teacher has also visited Piteå.



In this monument is the umbilical cord from KK and one day also his ash will be here.

The present reverent was the host of the day and he had just served in the community for about 2 month. Our main task was to meet women, women in a village.

Like in many of the communities there are organized women groups and these were prepared that we were coming and what we wanted. There would be neither promises nor gifts; we just wanted them to share with us their joy, their struggle and their challenges.

Before we meet the women we had a walk around at the old mission station. The first stop at the graveyard was to honor KK's parents who lived, worked and died here. Here is also a monument which contains KK's umbilical cord and will one day contain also his ash. The graveyard is mended by the church and I really hope that they will put an effort to maintain it better than it is today.

The clinic



Göran Dahlén and Anette Christoffersson on study tour at the clinic

At the clinic there is space for roughly 30 in door patients but this day it was quite empty. There is also a maternity ward. In this quite small community, with roughly 10 000 inhabitants, there are as many childbirths as it is in Piteå. Even for us, far away from being professionals in the area, we could understand that if there are complications there is not much technical assistance to get. The pregnant women went during their pregnancy for check-ups and if they suspected it to be complications the woman was referred to the hospital in Chinsali.



The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is high, around 12,5 % in the country and due to that many women in the ward are widows. The prevalence is higher among young women (4,5%, 2013) than young men (3,4 %). In Zambia the medication is free, but of course you need to be tested to know.

Sex with an infected person doesn't mean that you catch the virus automatically. Researchers stated already 2008 in the Bulletin of Swiss Medicine that people on medication don't transfer the virus if the level of virus is low and they manage their medication. Later studies have come to the same conclusion.

The medical assistant in charge together with the reverend

When I talked both to the minister and the man in charge of the clinic they told me that infected and sick people are not any longer outcasts in the Society, which really is a progress.

A School



Education is of great importance and sometimes I wish that Swedish Children fed up with the School would meet some African children who really realize the benefit of education. The education is free up to grade 7 and more than 90% start, but due to many reasons there are any drop-outs- and

mainly girls. There is as an average 48 students/teacher and the literacy rate among women is not more than 51, 8%.

We visited a School where the classroom was congested, but with a very engaged teacher who had a big challenge to teach and give the children a good start for their future.

- We are the results of girls who have not had the opportunity to education, we are poor and we struggle every day to have food on the table. We want a better future for our daughters, said one woman we met on the meeting with the women group.

The women group



In the end of this report there will be reflections from the project team. Anita Grankvist is reflecting of the meetings we had and one of them was at Ludwa mission.

When I heard them I realize that they probably became a bit disappointed with the meeting they had with us... Muzungus.... It should mean that we carried something for them – but we didn't...

Fishpond



Before we left the area we visited Senior Chief Nkula and his wife. They live in a beautiful place where they have a fish pond.

They had planted tilapia but according to Chief Nkula it didn't give more than it filled the stomach of the family.

When I compared this to the fish ponds I have seen in Vietnam the difference was enormous. But the family also had a small farm where they grew some vegetables, fruit and mainly corn.

The family felt a certain connection to Sweden as their daughter was working at the Swedish embassy in Hanoi.



They offered us the most delicious corn I have tasted for a long time

The Chipoma water falls



Even if we saw a few “Safari” cars tourism is not developed. They took us to the scenic Chipoma falls, a beautiful area which together with the hot springs can become sites for a growing tourism.

The University

Before the end of the day we also paid one of the two Universities to be a visit. This one, which has a science approach, is more or less ready, just waiting for furniture, equipment and of course students. It is located about 10 km outside town. Here is a dormitory and staff housing and at this point it seem to become a bit isolated community. I have visited this one three times before and at the two last visits they have said “Next time you will find students here” so hopefully at the next visit from Piteå it will be a running University full of life and activities. The other University, which is on the other side of the town, has started to be built.

We are sharing



There is always an exchange of small gifts and this time they had made some very special. They had made cloths for us; cloths they wanted us to wear during a walk in the town, to show that we had a special link to each other. Dresses with the Zambian colors and Zambia written on it. Most of it fitted quite well but of course some alternations needed to be done.

Chinsali Waste Management Enterprise



- We are rich, we are prosperous and we are happy. That is how it will be in 10 years from now. That is the target described of one of the 36 women who, together with 4 men, have formed Chinsali waste management Enterprise. This is one part of the local development project run by Chinsali Municipality and part of the ICLD project we are running together.

The main purpose of the ICLD project is to increase the capacity among officials and elected officials to develop local democracy with the long term objective to get more women involved in development and as elected officials.

The Municipal staff invited all women groups in Chinsali and talked to them about the project. For many of them it was unworthy to handle waste management but the women in these two groups said – we want this.

Many of the women are single mothers with an income shortage and saw in this project an opportunity to change their live, to get an income, to increase knowledge and awareness and through this work contribute to a better future for their children.

So far the women have had training in entrepreneurship and shared experiences with women involved in a similar project. Besides that the Municipality will contribute with a bit more than 130 000 kwasha in order for them to purchase protection cloths and relevant equipment in order to carry out the tasks.

The women will take the responsibility for 2 different areas and there will be specific collection points where they bring all the garbage. A truck from the Municipality will collect it and take it to a dump site.

They also have plans for waste separation and to reuse plastic and turn it into usable items.



-We have a lot of hard work in front of us but we will not look back, we will look forward were the women singing when they entered the meeting room.

A stroll in town and a visit

In the afternoon the rest of the group went to town in order to get a scent of town and feel the atmosphere. The previous mayor heard that we were in town so he came to see, to meet and talk.



Chilufia Kapwepwe, former MP and part of the steering group is an experienced politician and role model for women who want to engage in politics.

I went to see Chilufia, member of the steering committee. She has been a member of parliament and a diplomat. A few years ago she returned home to take care of her old mother and run an NGO with projects for women. Chilufia is a big resource for the project and a role model for others even if she with her background had other possibilities than many of the women here in Chinsali.

Her mother, more than 90 years old was sick in malaria when we visited. When we were there the MP came to pay her a visit and show her his respect. Chilufias mother is the widow of Simon Kapwepwe, who was one of the three in the core group to lead the liberation struggle and form the new Zambia 50 years ago.



We also went to the Forestry department and they presented a forestry project in cooperation with Finnida. People cut out the trees to make charcoal in order to get some income. Here they have a project where they both cut, replant and make businesses. Hopefully it will succeed.

The following morning we were back on the road again, after 3 days which meant a lot to us all.

Reflections from the project group members;



Anita Grankvist

Meeting between people and cultures:

Monday 9th of May:

After the welcome-meeting with the town-clerk Mr. Patrick Kambita and Adam Jere, we were able to participate in a training of people who are going to work with the coming election in August 2016. The purpose of the training was to implement the rules of the election so that it would be fair, democratic and legally correct. The training was a 5 days workshop with both lectures and discussions in small groups.

Swedish people are famous for loving to have very well organized and well-structured meetings. After have attending this meeting I can say that at least this Zambian-meeting would make every Swede happy! There were meeting-rules that I suppose all the participants had agreed on in the beginning of the meeting, which included time-management, no mini-meetings, stick to the objectives, no cell-phones etc.... There was also a notice of what the expectations were of the participants. Altogether it was the kind of meeting that Swedish people love!

Tuesday 10th of May:

This day started with a visit to one of Chinsalis wards; Lubwa mission. We were showed the hospital, school and the cemetery. After the tour we attended a meeting with a women group of Lubwa mission. It was supposed to be around 50 women who would participate but the word had got around that we were coming so women from the whole ward showed up and there were

approximately 150 women. The meeting was said to be a dialogue between us and the women about the living conditions of women in Chinsali.

I think the first thought that did strike every member of the Swedish team, when we noticed how many women there where, was how they would dare to share their views. We were automatically thinking that these women would react/act as Swedish people do when a lot of people are attending a meeting. In Sweden there are very few persons that have the courage to speak out loud to a big audience. We soon realized that it's not the case in Zambia! The women didn't hesitate to speak and they told us about the frustration of not being able to support them due to lack of resources. They had visions and ideas of how they could make business, but with no seed money they couldn't get going.

A lot of the women were widows, had children to support and no education. They wanted their children, both the boys and the girls, to be able to go to school so they could get a better life.



One of the women at Lubwa mission

Wednesday 11th of May:

At this days program was the highlight that we all looked forward to: the meeting with the women engaged in the waste management-project. The participants are 36 women and 4 men. The participants belong to two different women clubs in the wards of Chinsali. The purpose of this meeting was to have a dialogue with the women about what they experience of participating so far and what expectations they had for the project ahead.

Likewise the meeting with the women of Lubwa mission ward, there was no hesitation of speaking out loud. The women were all very hopeful of the future and the possibility to make a living for



themselves and their families. They could also see some challenges that they would have to deal with, for example the temptation of taking all the money as a salary and not saving some of the profit within the community for investments. They had a lot of ideas of how they could develop the community both considering waste management and other items to sell. They also expressed a proudness of what they were achieving. Three of the women could consider going into politics in the future.

There was such a big difference in the meetings with the two women-groups that we met. The first group in Lubwa mission expressed so much frustration with both poverty, lack of resources and the feeling that they can't change their living conditions without being depended of others. The other group of women that was involved in the project was so much fuller of hope and the faith that they could make a change for a better life to themselves and their children.

The vice chairman in the newly started Enterprize

Informal meeting/dinner



We were also invited to Mrs. Mary Sinkalas' home for dinner one evening together with the Chinsali project group. We did talk a lot about the project but also about overall difficulties for the officials of Chinsali municipality to develop the municipality. There is a permanent underlying conflict of interests between the citizens from Chinsali and the officials that have been assigned there from other parts of Zambia. Many of the citizens think it's wrong that people from other parts of the country come to Chinsali and get the best jobs without realizing that the employees require certain qualifications. It takes time to build trust and understanding between officials and citizens.



Anette Christoffersson

In May 2016 I had the privileged to travel to Chinsale with the project group.

For me it was the first time in Africa. I had already met the members of the Chinsale-project group in Piteå and now I had the opportunity to meet them again in their Municipality..

The first day we attended a meeting where the participants were trained to work in the coming election in August 2016. The meeting form was a workshop with both lectures and group practise. Everybody was very enthusiastic and joined in the discussions. The only difference between group meetings in Piteå and in Chinsale is that in Piteå people are a little bit more occupied with cell phones and computers during meetings.

The second day started with a visit to Lubwa mission. There we were taken around in the mission, the hospital and at the school. We also attended a meeting where the women from the village attended. For me it was a very strong experience to hear the women tell us about their thoughts about what is important in order to build a better future for themselves and their children.

The third day we attended a meeting with women engaged in the waste management-project. Also in this meeting it was obvious that African women don't hesitate to speak out in a large group of people.

For me the meetings, especially with the women will be what I will remember. It was encouraging to meet so many strong women and I am sure that they will be able to build a better future for themselves, their children and Chinsali.

The journey has also given me a perspective on the kind of challenges the project group in Chinsali is struggling with and I am full of admiration of the work that they have started.



Göran Dahlén

The road

As born and raised in a small village in the middle of nowhere, in a remote part of Jämtland I am used to the road as a central point of life, as a meeting place. A place where life develops, social life mixes with working life and young people meet old. When I'm sitting in the back of the pickup, a little bit scared, although "Happy" is a good driver he drives a little bit too fast for my taste, thought like this gets to my mind. Yes, the long road from Lusaka to Chinsali, a day's drive, gives you time to think. I see children on their way to school, people on their way to work. People selling things and people just meeting each other.



When I see the women at the well next to the road, chatting, giggling with each other, it does remind me of all the men sitting on our lawn, playing cards, fifty years ago. They were there picking up the mail as my family had the post office in our small village, but it was also an important social meeting place and so is the well. A place for communication, a place to share thoughts. Where is our place for communication these days, Facebook? A blog or any other virtual place? Where is our "Well"?

Where is our main road where everything takes place? What have we lost on those fifty years and what have we won? Yes I see poverty on the way to Chinsali, a lot more poverty than at home. But I also see a lot of human meetings, a lot of laughter's, and a lot of joy. To be honest I don't see so much at all along the roads at home, most emptiness. I myself have no answers to the questions, but in our struggling for development I think that we lost some of our human values on the way. We don't have to get out on the "main road". We can live our lives without a lot of human meetings. We sit in our houses, we get our mail. The news and our entertainment are in our computers and we have our social lives right in the mobile phone. Many of us can work from home and we can order our groceries for delivering right at our front doors. What does that do to a human being?

The global village



Where I grew up we didn't see so much foreign people around. No, most of the people have lived in our village for generations and everybody knew everybody. Yes, there were some Finnish families living there working as lumberjack, well the man did, in those days it was very rare that the women were working. And there were also some Norwegians living in our village, they came as refugees during the Second World War. One of them married my mother's sister and is now a part of our family. One summer I visited his childhood home on a remote island outside Trondheim. It was the first time I saw the Ocean; it was a big adventure for me. I still remember when my parents went on their first trip outside Scandinavia, in the beginning of the sixties, to Italy. For them this was a big thing, seeing Italy, seeing another way of living. But in all we did not meet people from other cultures and we did not get influences from other ways of living. How is it for us, for generations after my parents? Yes it is different these days, if we want it or not, the world has got smaller, or is it bigger? It depends on how you see things. We knew a lot more these days. We travel a lot and we see a lot of other cultures. More people from different parts of the world are now living in Sweden, but what do we really learn from that? Do we get more tolerant to others, to other ways of living? Can we see the world as a global village, where we all have responsibility for each other? If you look at research the answer is definitely yes, at least in the long run. Swedish people are more tolerant to other cultures now than they were thirty years ago. Influences from all parts of the world have made Sweden to a more tolerant country, to a more open society. Being in Chinsali, meeting the people, talking to them, seeing their way of living changes my way of thinking. It gives me more knowledge about life and about how to live my life. But you need to be open minded, you need to try to "walk in another man's shoes" or as it is in this case another women's shoes. There is so much to learn from other cultures, so much to gain. If we really dare to see the world as a global village we as persons has a lot to gain in that and so has Sweden as a country.



Maria Wiksten

”- God bless you”. Our eyes met and I felt the power in her glance. A power so strong and so present, the power from a women living in Chinsali.

Our journey to Chinsali started with a 24 h flight followed by 800 km by car to a place far away from home. A different place in many ways but also so equal. The life circumstances for the people materialistic seen is tougher. Things we are taking for granted such as always have electricity, fresh water from the tap, available healthcare and the possibility for everyone to get a higher educating, are something they hope for. Another big difference is the presence of a belief in God. For us in Sweden it is not normal to talk and think about God or pray to him in an official meeting. In Chinsali the faith in God is part of life. Almost like the air we breathe.

We met two women groups. The first group were at a mission station, Lubwa who was built in the beginning of the 1900 Th. century by the Scottish church. The first president in Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, was born at this very mission station. This mission station has a medical clinic where about 45 babies are born every month. It also has a school with a possibility of boarding.

The meeting with the first women group started in the church with songs and preach from the pastor about righteousness. Usually we don't talk about righteousness in Sweden. After that we were taking a tour around the station. We saw the medical clinic where babies were delivered, the cemetery and visited a lesson for young children. Many of the women followed us during the tour. After the tour we went back to the church and estimated that 150 women came to speak with us. Many of the women were widows and they raised their children by themselves. Six children is normal to have in Zambia compared to Sweden's 1,9 children.

The women expressed their needs. They wanted to learn how to make business, so their children can get an education and have a different future than they themselves. It was so natural for the women to stand up and express their ideas publicly. None of them were afraid of speaking in a big public meeting. If this meeting had taken place back home maybe one or two women had spoken in public. In Chinsali it was natural for the women to stand up and talk.

The life circumstances are not easy for these women but they had plans for how to improve their life. They wanted to learn how to make business to be able to pay for a good education for their children. They wanted us to help them to buy a peanut butter machine. My impression was that they knew that nobody but themselves could fix their life, but they knew that they needed help to help themselves

Their analysis regarding the root of their life situation was clear; the system and the structure in a society where women and men have not been equally treated.



Women participating in the project

The other women group meeting also started with songs and pray. This women group is a part of the project (36 women and 4 men). Through the project they started to work with Waste management. They have formalized their work in an enterprise and said thanks to the project they learn to work tighter and make business. This women group was thankful and were one their way to another life for themselves and their children.

My heart was and still is so touched by meeting of these women. Women so strong, powerful and with a strong dedication for a change in their part of the world, to make it into a better place for them to live in. My believe is that every change starts with the peoples dedication.

The Chinsali Municipality has an important ingredient in the people for making a change in the society. The power from the women.

Maria Wiksten

