

Travel Report

Project Group's report of the visit to Chinsali, Zambia- January 2018

Background

We are now in the end of this project, in the second half of the third year year of our ICLD project "Women's Empowerment through Development of Local Democracy."

This time the aim of the project group visit is to conduct workshops with three focus areas in four different groups. Focus areas are gender equality, local democracy and citizens dialog. The plan is that day one we first shall meet the local parliament here are the councilors, the chiefs and the mayor. Then the same afternoon a group of officials that have leading positions in the municipality. Day two a meeting with persons from political parties in opposition, one woman and one men were invited from each party and the same day a group of village headmen and headwoman.

The focus of the workshops are a result of dialogs that we have had both in the Steering Group and in the Project Group during their visits in Piteå in June, October and December 2017. We are now three woman coming from Piteå. Elisabeth Vidman who is a politician elected in the Swedish Social Democratic party. Anette Christoffersson process leader Citizens Dialog and Vera Renberg project leader.

The visit

When we arrived to Chinsali, we found out that the President Mr. Edgar Lungu was visiting the town.



This had some impact on our stay as this meant that the resident Tazama, the house where we earlier has stayed for our visits was now booked for the president and his staff. Moreover, we had a nice night in a house owned by the Copperbelt University. Also day two the meeting with the politicians from opposition parties was taken out of the program by the order of the president.

The first workday in Chinsali 20180123

Early in the morning, we had a short meeting with Professor Jacob Mwitwa, Copperbelt University with a dialog on the development of the university and a possible cooperation in a new project.

After that, there was a short time for courtesy calls with the Mayor Thomas Mutale and the Town Clerk Joseph Zulu.

Then the first workshop meeting took place. This group is the group with the councilors, here is now one female, 14 males and one of the three chiefs Chief Ndola were present. We carried out our program as planned with short presentations of our focus areas gender equality, local democracy and citizens dialog, and then in each area time for dialog and discussion in small groups. We had prepared a special material for each question so each person had a paper with the current question and on the same paper; there was space to make notes. Our idea is that each person after this session has the questions left, also their one thoughts, and their group's comments on the paper that they afterwards can take home and hopefully it can be used for information and dialog further on.

The councils divided in to smaller groups. Chief N'dola wanted to work alone. The groups worked with great enthusiasm. It was a great workshop and when we summand up the groups shared some of the work with the others. The only women in the group took time to speak and the men seemed to listen attentively.

Quotes

- Stop child marriages
- Encourage girls to complete at least 12 years in school
- Educate parents so they don't marry away their daughters early
- Men must take more responsibility for home work

Elisabeth Vidman:

The second workshop this day we meet a group of council officials in leading position. Number of people: nine women and eight men. Areas covered by this workshop was gender equality and citizen's dialogue.

Recurring views during the workshop:

Area gender equality

- Supporting men and women in society, among officials and politicians
- The government has taken decisions that all the girls will go to school in Zambia
- There is a need for a joint effort to abolish child marriages throughout Zambia

Area Citizens dialogue

- One method to spread information can be to give out flyers at schools

- Important that received complaints are delivered back to the politicians
- Registration in front of an election is an important part of the work
- The council officials have created a drama group in which locals can participate in. It makes it more easy to use Citizens dialogue through the group
- To provide and receive information from locals often means a lot of argumentative for the council officials
- To respect the locals views creates a good basic trust foundation

Brief summary

- Many stated that they have received several new things to take in their own work
- Gender Equality is an important area that they want to keep working on



It was a good way to work. If we had more time, it had been even better. It could have been interesting if we have had the possibility to mix groups councils and officials. It's also important to take in consideration that the work sessions probably not will start in time.

In the end of the day, we had a short meeting with the project group and Town Clerk Thomas Zulu. Focus – rounding up the day and dialog concerning continuation. The former Project group has changed – one person is on leave, one has moved to Lusaka for studies, and one has been transferred to Lusaka for a new job by the government.

One issue is the plan for the Final Seminar for this project that is to take place in June week 23. No definite plans were made.

Then, we had a talk about how to continue with a new project. How to go further on with focus on the issue of equality. In the Steering Group meeting in June in Piteå the question of a new project was discussed as from Chinsali Municipality, there is a wish to continue. The common meaning is that 3 years is a short period to build understanding and learning about local democracy values of importance and how this is possible to do for different groups in the local context of Chinsali. So the main goal is to work for more women to participate in politics. In next election, there should be a bigger number of females appealing on the lists.

A new subject for a project was introduced – to develop local plans for forming WCDs a learning for officials and politicians in the line of working with information and consultation.

The second workday in Chinsali 20180124

In the first meeting of this day, we continued the dialog with the project group and Town Clerk Thomas Zulu. We decided to suggest that the work to build a new project should be based on a support to develop Ward Development Committees (WDCs). We shall keep the dialog going from now by mail and skype meetings. There is a wish from Chinsali that more councillors can make a visit to Piteå as they have had an important learning from seeing on sight that there are a lot of woman taking place in different places as parliaments, companies' boards and being in leading positions in different places. We shall have to check with ICLD if it is possible to organise the project groups in a way that small project groups are formed and completed with politicians and other persons as for an exemplar persons from our two universities that can be part om the process.



Visit at the local market in Chinsali, Elisabeth Vidman

As this was my first time in Chinsali, we made a quick visit to the local market in Chinsali to get a perception of how everyday life works. The first thing that stroked me was that the people on the market were so happy even though I clearly saw that many people are poor and that many work hard to support themselves and their families. Most of those we met were women and they often carried their babies on the backs and they often had a basket on their heads with things they wanted to sell. It could be fruit, vegetables or fresh nuts that they had grown by themselves. The women wear skirts and dresses in many beautiful colours. Fabrics in a lot of different colours and patterns were available for purchase at the market at very low prices. For families in Chinsali , one could find the most necessary things in the market.

Meeting with village headmen and headwomen 2018-01-24

Some important issues we talked about during the meeting:

- It's important that girls finish at least 12 years in school.
- Stop early marriages.
- Educate girls.
- It is unusual with women in leading political positions – there is too much violence in politic.

It is obvious to us that this line of leaders in society has a part in the everyday life in the villages. All village headmen and women has inherited their title from their family and in a way headmen and headwomen "rules" the villages. The work they do is mostly voluntary work. Everyone in the group had different large districts to take responsible for and, as a help, they had created their own committees in their own districts and the people in the committees were selected by themselves.

So, our workdays were done and next day we went back to Lusaka for a day of documentation and reflection. Our summary of the workshop days is that we are very pleased of the result. The workshops that we carried out worked out well, the participants were interested of the focus areas. The method with the material with the questionnaires that we brought worked out well and in all groups there were discussions and comments made. We learned a lot and had interesting days.

Vera Renberg, Anette Christoffersson och Elisabeth Vidman