



MINUTES OF ZA Annual General Meeting, 25 October 2009

Meeting chaired by Alan Wilkinson, started at 1.10 pm, finished at c. 4.30 pm

Present: Alan Wilkinson, Albert Herskovits, Amabelle Jongwe, Brian McGarry, Chipso Mpeke, Cynthia Matereke, Edith Nenohwe, Edwick Office, Fadzai Chinombe, Filistas Soko, Gary Bell, Getrude Nyamutsahuni, Grace Bradshaw, Gugu Tutani, Hazvinei Mabika, Iton Nyilika, Jeff Sango, Jeremiah Mtotela, JoAnn McGregor, Joyce Mutenda, Julia Chinombe, Julia Samakomva, Lister Manjeya, Loveness Nyakonda, Luka Phiri, Makaza Chizinga, Marbel Matewa, Margaret Ling, Marion Rufungura, Mary Matambanadzo, Michelle Patsanza, Mike Degenhardt, Mildred Mukamba, Miriam Mwaredu, Nigella (Tricycle Theatre), Nobuhle Ndlovu, Nomsa Manokore, Patricia Tiriboyi, Patrick Manjeya, Patson Muzuwa, P Mathema, Pelagia Zigangwe, Pelani Ziba, Perkins Matereke, Pheobe Mwanza, Phillip Sisauke, Richard Viaji, Rufaro Viano, Sandra Matereke, Sarah Harland, Scholastica Matiyenga, Silibaziso Ndlovu, Sinead Parsons, Sister Agnes, Stella Maravanyika, Tashlyn Nyoni, Taurai Matereke, Thabani Nyathi, Thoko Mazura, Thomas Date, Tim Finch, Trust Dube, Victor de Waal, Violet Moyo, Wellington Chinombe

Apologies: Annamari Salonin, Bernard Elliot, Caroline Witts, David Harland, Dominique Hardy, Given Hondo, Hazel Barkham, Herbert Mukarakate, Joan Weir, Kudzani Dumani, Paul Twyman, Ray Pennell, Soneni Baleni, Tony Savage

Proxy votes received: 35

Welcome:

Alan Wilkinson welcomed the members on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Tim Finch directed members to the survey questionnaires in information packs and explained what they were about. He also asked if those without status might be interested in filling in an IPPR questionnaire.

Margaret Ling - Trustees and Financial Report

Margaret began by stating that ZA had a much better set of accounts than last year with a Total income up more than 500% - from £15,449 to £97,159. The Total expenditure of £59,587 – compared with last year's expenditure of £46,470 showed steady growth. There was a Net surplus of £37,572 – compared with last year's deficit of £31,021. ZA goes forward into the current year with accumulated funds of £43,632 compared with only £6,060 a year ago.

The very pleasing results were only possible because of the support and confidence given by our donors, including: The Sigrid Rausing Trust, A&B Charitable Trust, The Cripplegate Foundation, Latin American Women's Aid, WeZimbabwe, St John Southworth Fund and City University, and many thanks to them.

ZA also received a legacy of over £33k from George Derek Witts earmarked for partnership work in HIV-AIDS and ZA's longer-term plans for supporting sustainable return to Zimbabwe. Many generous donations were received from a wide range of individuals – thank you. As a result ZA's unrestricted income is up from £13,006 to £23,381 – an 80% increase.

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A flow of regular income, especially from standing orders and membership subscriptions, is vital for our sustainability and long-term growth.

Financial plans and goals for 2009-2010

In July 2009, ZA moved over to a new, computerised accounting system. Thank you to Albert Herskovits for all his support in this process. The new system will enable more efficiency and will prove invaluable in financial planning, budgeting, and in freeing up time for fund-raising.

The ZA is in a much stronger position than a year ago, but this is no time for resting. We face big challenges in developing our capacity to support members and to grow regionally, nationally and internationally. We have three Drop-In Centres – but need more.

Next year will be an election year in this country – we need to make our mark on national policy debates around refugee issues. We want to develop our links with partners in Zimbabwe - these will provide crucial support as and when people return.

We have improved our website and newsletter but need to do more to make ourselves known and strengthen our networks. We have improved our office systems but still operate out of a tiny office. We have fantastic staff – they deserve more support. We want to empower our members – and this costs money.

Our budget for the year ahead envisages increased expenditure of £150k – nearly two and a half times bigger than the year just ended. This means a fund-raising budget of at least £150k. You can all help by renewing your membership of ZA and approving new membership rates reflecting the cost of membership.

Advisory Committee:

Sarah Harland directed members to the information on the walls about ZA activities over the past year and then handed over to:

Stella Maravanyika - described what had been happening with the Drop In Centre in Islington, and how it had begun as a woman's centre but had expanded to include all. Stella outlined the projects that had been taking place and emphasised that the needs of the elderly would need consideration in the following year. She ended by sharing highlights of her very successful trip to the Netherlands last week where she spoke before 1,000 people.

Mary Matambanadzo - spoke about the work she had been doing in the Midlands, and how the Birmingham DIC was going. Mary had travelled throughout the region providing comfort and support to many. In Coventry a group of women were in the process of setting up a drop in.

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Thoko Mazura - spoke about the visits she had made to women in detention. She also spoke of the work she had done on the City University research project on young undocumented migrants, and the problems faced by many who had been brought to the UK as minors by their parents and were now caught in a type of limbo, being unable to proceed with education or work without N.I. cards

Patson Muzuwa - concluded by giving an overview of all the different types of work the ZA had been involved in over the year.

Resolutions: Alan Wilkinson explained the resolutions before the meeting

Resolution 1:

To change article 9.2 to read:

A quorum is:

- [two] members entitled to vote upon the business to be conducted at the meeting; or
- **Thirty members; or**
- **one tenth of the total membership at the time**

whichever is the smaller

Resolution 2:

To change the membership rates of the Zimbabwe Association as shown below, and to introduce a new category of supporter of the ZA to be known as a Champion of the ZA

MEMBERS	SUPPORTERS
Ordinary membership - £15 per year Concessionary rate - £5 per year Joint membership - £20 per year (to same address) Local organisations: £30 National organisations: £50 <i>Members would get:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 newsletters • invitation to AGM 	Become a CHAMPION of the ZA by signing up to give continual support (sign a direct debit of a minimum of £5 per month) <i>Champions would get:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 newsletters • Invite to AGM • Monthly email Flyer (news briefing) • Invites to Spring Event and other special ZA events • Invites to Strategy Day and Training Day • A place on the ZA roll of honour in the annual report

Both resolutions were passed

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Election of Trustees:

The meeting formally approved the appointment of Tim Finch as a Trustee.

JoAnn McGregor and Paul Twyman retired, and stood for re-election. The meeting approved their reappointment.

Election of Advisory Committee:

A nomination was received for Pelagia Zigangwe to join the Advisory Committee. The meeting approved her election.

Patson Muzuwa, Thomas Date, Sarah Harland, Rejoice Farai Mahwada, Stella Maravanyika, Mary Matambanadzo, Addley Nyamutaka, Luka Phiri stood down, and offered themselves for re-election. The meeting approved their reappointment.

Thoko Mazura stepped down from the Advisory Committee and was thanked for her contribution to the work of the ZA.

LUNCH - A delicious lunch of sadza and nyama was provided by the ladies of Islington and Birmingham DICs who had been hard at work preparing the feast. Very many thanks to all those who helped and to Stella and Mary who led the teams.

Father Brian McGarry

Father Brian spoke about his work in Zimbabwe promoting healing through workshops in the community counselling victims of torture. The counselling groups of about 8 people per group were facilitated by torture survivors and aimed to provide 'first aid' assistance to those who had suffered. More severely traumatised people were referred to specialist organisations. In many cases the workshops resulted in participants having the 'freedom to forgive' those who had hurt them.

The communities generally identified different levels of perpetrator ranging from those who were responsible for organising the violence, to those who were forced into committing it.

The possibility of having workshops containing both victims and perpetrators had been raised.

About 10 per cent of the population had experienced torture.

When questioned about how things were on the ground in Zimbabwe, Father Brian commented that although life was still difficult there were signs that it was possible to speak a little more freely than in the past and that the time when ordinary policemen will refuse to obey political orders seems to be getting nearer.

Father Brian was asked about how people could continue to help their families from the UK. He suggested that the diaspora should help their families but should also

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give some thought to helping the community as well. A borehole for someone's mother could help the whole community (provided they were given access to the water) and would be better than building the mother a mansion.

JoAnn McGregor

JoAnn spoke about her new report (Legacies of Detention) which focused on the experiences of detention among Zimbabwean asylum seekers and showed that impact on the individuals is enduring – even if the period in custody is relatively short. The report by the ZA and the UCL involved interviews with 21 ex-detainees and 14 detainee visitors.

It found that the majority of detainees experienced acute short term distress – including deterioration in mental and physical health, flashbacks to confinement and past trauma and difficulties in re-adjusting to life in the community. The longer term effects were worse among ex-detainees who remained in limbo in the UK, lacking status and certainty about their futures. They described feeling depressed and anxious, and some said they had felt suicidal.

Although those who had since been recognised as refugees were faring better, they still were dealing with the legacy of their period in detention. The ex-detainees tended to have a great sense of being victims of injustice – a feeling that was not eradicated by subsequent acceptance of asylum claims and being granted British citizenship.

“The careless and indiscriminate use of detention as part of the UK immigration system is achieving little or nothing in enforcing immigration rules, but there is mounting evidence that it is damaging the individuals who experience it. The Zimbabwean detainees we talked to have already experienced much upheaval and trauma – many had been imprisoned and tortured by the Mugabe regime ... We are talking about people who, in some cases, have been subsequently recognised as refugees and granted citizenship – and in others, people who remain in the UK with no prospect of return. We are hurting our fellow citizens, we are damaging our country’s reputation as a respecter of human rights - and all for nothing in terms of immigration law enforcement.”

SINGING: The meeting concluded with some uplifting songs led by Patson Muzuwa and other members of the ZA

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