

CHIPAWO Arts Education for Development- A case study on arts education as a driver and an enabler of social cohesion and inclusion

(A paper by Stephen Chifunyise, Chairman of CHIPAWO Trust and Principal of the Zimbabwe Academy of Arts Education for Development presented at a panel discussion on “Culture: a driver and a enabler of social cohesion” at the Hangzhou International Congress, “Culture:Key to Sustainable Development”organized by UNESCO and held at Dragon Hotel, in Hangzhou, China, 15th-17 May 2013.)

This brief , on CHIPAWO Arts Education for Development, is intended to articulate an example of how arts education for development is critical in fostering arts as a driver and an enable of social cohesion and inclusion. **CHIPAWO- Children’s Performing Arts Workshop** was established in Zimbabwe in 1989 as “an enduring organization with a mission to benefit and empower children and society for prosperity, unity and peace through participatory arts education.” In Shona, Zimbabwe’s main language, the word “chipawo” literally means “give also”. CHIPAWO is a non governmental organization established by four arts educators and practitioners in theatre, music, dance and media. The organization has developed an arts education programme that involves children and youths in a participatory and creative learning process which is dynamic, gender sensitive and democratic. In the past 23 years, CHIPAWO has reached out to children from pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools, out of school centres, institutions for the mentally and physically challenged and orphanages. The main thrust and methodology of CHIPAWO Arts Education for Development is the training of performing artists to take performing arts education to

schools and other centre of learning and to provide youths with performing arts skills for employment. On their part, schools contract the organization to occupy three hours per week of schools' extra curricula time to run comprehensive education programmes in music, dance and drama to children whose parents are prepared to fund their children's participation as well as to learning centres of disadvantaged children where funding for their participation is obtained from sponsorship from the corporate sector, development and donor agencies, inter-governmental organizations, local charities and patrons of the arts.

In CHIPAWO's arts education for development, the child is the centre of all pedagogical activities where learning to perform with others is initiated from the first time the child begins to learn a particular performing arts skill and where learning from other children and teaching others is promoted as first step in the process of being initiated into becoming a responsible and committed performer and audience and in achieving full participation in the cultural life of the child's community.

In the year 2000, CHIPAWO established the **Zimbabwe Academy of Arts Education for Development(ZAED)** which offers school leavers opportunities to obtain diplomas in performing and media arts through an intensive training by and apprenticeship under practitioners in the creative industry. The diplomas are certified by a university.(Midland State University). Youths who have graduated with diplomas in the performing arts have taken up positions as performing art educators who run the organization's school based extra-curricula performing arts

Education programme in 40 schools in three cities and four rural districts while youths who have graduated with diploma in media arts have secured employment in various audio-visual projects. Those youths who have been retained by the organization work in the organization's media for education and development programmes.

One of the organization's most visible media for education and development project, is a 30 minute television programme, Ndeipi Ge'na ("What's Up Guys") which is produced **by youths, for youths** and **about youths** and is broadcast every Monday evening on Zimbabwe Television. The main thrust of this television programme is :

- to profile youths in arts education programmes in different communities;
- to profile youths-led projects that promote cultural diversity and enhance democracy building, peaceful co-existence and tolerance;
- to profile youth employment creation and poverty alleviation through artistic creativity; and
- to profile young celebrities in music , film, theatre, dance and visual arts industries.

This youth television programme has not only demonstrated the benefits of community based interdisciplinary approach to participatory arts education and that of the inclusive arts education through effective apprenticeships within the community, but has also presented a wide diversity of artistic expressions by the youth as a critical means of realizing or achieving their freedom of expression. Through this television programme youths are exposed

using the arts to show innovative youth creativity and to demonstrate youths identifying with , appreciating and respecting their culture and that of others. The programme also shows youths that are empowered by arts education to effectively participate in the cultural life of their communities in very inclusive , peaceful and cohesive environments.

With the support of UNESCO, through participation programme, CHIPAWO developed a traditional musical instruments making project where custodians of skills in making musical instrument trained youths on how to make a wide range of musical instruments being used in their music education programmes. One of the most significant result of this UNESCO sponsored arts education programme was the training of youths from the Emerald Hills School of the Deaf who now make marimba (xylophones) and repair the instruments that are used by other children and youths and by themselves in their music education.

Also with the support of UNESCO, through participation programme, CHIPAWO developed a 10 Day Arts Education Module of training school teachers on how to partner community artists in developing and managing in school- based arts education for development programmes. This approach of producing arts educators has become the most proficient way of building partnerships between school teachers and community artists to provide for a vibrant arts education, especially in communities where schools cannot afford trained arts teachers and especially in rural areas where communities have a large reservoir of custodians of performing arts heritage.

In 2004 , the organization, with the support UNESCO and UNICEF , pioneered the development an arts education programme for mentally and handicapped children in children’s homes and orphanages. The most notable achievements of this arts education programme has been its inclusiveness and capacity to show mentally and physically challenged youths empowered by an inclusive and participatory arts education to fully participate in the cultural life of their communities and to show that they can share their artistic interests, and build bonds of mutual respect and understanding with other youths in community environments that ensure that ,like other youths, the mentally and physically challenged youths can fully realize their aspirations and potential. The best example of the inclusive and cohesive nature of this approach to arts education was the group of children from the Emerald School for the Deaf , representing Zimbabwean children at the World Children’s Theatre Festival in Lingen, Germany in 2005 with their play “Cry Thinking” in sign language, music and dance. The same arts -empowered youths produced a 13 episode television drama programme with the participation of other youth without such handicap clearly demonstrating the arts as a vector for social inclusion.

Arts education enthusiasts , in the Southern African region, welcomed the results of the 2006 World Conference on Arts Education- Road Map for Arts Education; the results of the 2010 Second World Conference on Arts Education -the Seoul Agenda: Goals for development of arts education and the declaration in 2005 of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development and the International Implementation Scheme for the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development that was subsequently. Unfortunately in spite of these

clear road maps and guidelines of arts education and the implementation schemes on education for sustainable development, governments in the Southern African Region, have not moved significantly in reforming their education systems to include arts education in the school curricula as well as in mainstreaming culture in the education for sustainable development . This situation has continued despite the appreciation by educationists in the Southern African region that the arts are integral to life; that the arts are crucial vehicles of both knowledge and methods of learning and that in many respects learning through the arts is essential in transmitting knowledge and skills that enhance sustainable human development in many societies.

The reasons for the lack of progress in bringing the arts into school curriculum in many countries in the Southern African region are many. The following are some of the common reasons that are quoted:

1. the view that the school curriculum is already over-crowded with what are considered essential subjects to accommodate arts subjects;
2. critical lack of financial resources that are needed to reform the education systems in order to include comprehensive artistic and cultural dimensions in the school curricula;
3. difficulty in building sustainable partnerships between the community of custodians of arts heritage and education institutions – the partnership needed in producing effective in-school arts education programmes;

4. the tendency to use teacher education qualifications that ignore the capacity and competencies of custodians of cultural heritage as effective transmitters of arts heritage and the safeguarding of that heritage for sustainable development and
5. the absence of platforms for educationists or curriculum planners to dialogue with members of the arts community, both traditional and contemporary, in examining existing school curricula to ensure effective incorporation of arts education. In various programmes that have been held in the last four years in the Southern African region, in the exercise of implementing the 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, especially in community based inventorying of intangible heritage, many communities have noted with concern the existence of many obstacles to inter-generational transmission of intangible cultural heritage especially the performing arts heritage.

Equally serious concerns have been raised by the community of artists involved in implementing the 2005 Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, of the slow efforts of government of the Southern African region in reforming their education systems to accommodate comprehensive arts education in the school curricula. It has also been noted that cultural policies that articulate strategies of developing and promotion of creative industries in the absence of appreciating the critical importance of comprehensive arts education in the school curricula, fail to provide a basis for growing viable cultural industries.

All these challenges being faced by governments in the Southern African region, have clearly justified the need to support non-governmental organizations and cultural institutions that engage in the transmission of the arts as critical vectors and enablers of social cohesion and inclusion and that the basis for the development of viable cultural industries for sustainable development.

In concluding the main features of CHIPAWO Arts Education for Development as a case study on arts as a driver and enabler of social cohesion and inclusion it is necessary to indicate that the model of arts education for development that has been developed by CHIPAWO in the last twenty three years has been taken up by non governmental organizations in arts education in four Southern African countries, leading to the creation of CHIEZA(Zambia), CHISA(South Africa),CHINAMIBIA(Namibia) and CHIPABO (Botswana) as arts education for development organizations which share the philosophy, methodology and CHIPAWO's experience of arts education as a vehicle for balanced emotional, intellectual and psychological development of children and young people.

In the last two years, these arts education for development organizations have formed an international organization for arts education for development called Children's Arts Education World (**CHAREWO**) whose main aim is to champion the use of the rich arts heritage, cultural resources, indigenous knowledge and skills as critical elements of participatory arts education for sustainable development. Children's Arts Education World is striving to promote effectively partnerships between community of artists and

custodians of arts heritage on one hand, and the formal education institutions on the other hand in producing quality education for sustainable development facilitated through arts driven creative leaning and teaching.

CHAREWO has also created a platform for seeking international assistance for running programmes for effective training of school based teachers and community based artists as effective arts educators for development. The organization has also made itself available to participate in government programmes aimed at reforming education systems to effectively brings arts into school curricula and the curriculum of teacher education as well as to play a role in national cultural policy reforms that ensure that arts education by non-governmental organizations and intergenerational transmission of arts heritage by custodians of cultural heritage are effectively supported.

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