

STRENGTHENING INCLUSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Susan Dube; James Mutemera and Joseph Mashingaidze
CHIPINGE TOWN COUNCIL

Introduction and Objectives

The change project sought to strengthen inclusive service delivery by involving people with disabilities (PWD) in local municipal development while also exploring opportunities and avenues for their economic empowerment. The project became necessary after noting the limited spaces afforded for participation of people with disabilities, negative culture towards their involvement, policies which are not accommodative as well as inflexibility to their unique service delivery and personal development needs. If not arrested, this problem was going to result in continued marginalization of people with disabilities and increase in grievances and complaints arising out of imposing programs, services and facilities which are not ideal for them and over which they played no role in their development. The local authority (LA) thus sought to achieve the following objectives by June 2020:

1. Increase engagement platforms between the LA and people with disabilities;
2. Develop accommodative policies for PWD to access municipal services;
3. Improve participation of PWD in decision making on municipal service delivery;
4. Facilitate avenues for improved participation by PWD in local economic development



Figure 1. Dr Wakhungu and Dr Hlatshwayo hand over Christmas hampers to people with disabilities

Target group and method

The target group for the project are people with disabilities whom the Council sought to engage and include through public and targeted consultation of opinion leaders.



Figure 2. Public consultation meeting with persons with disabilities to solicit views on municipal development

Results

- Successfully mobilized +200 PWD who have previously not been involved in municipal development programs;
- Developed a database of PWD in each ward;
- Conducted targeted budget consultation and other development meetings to elicit the views of PWD;
- Initiated a policy to include at least one PWD in each of the eight Ward Development Committees (fig 3);
- Conducted two cultural and fun days as part of psycho-social support where +200 food hampers were shared;
- Initiated economic empowerment projects which are being spearheaded by PWD (fig 4)
- A desk has been created to deal with PWD needs

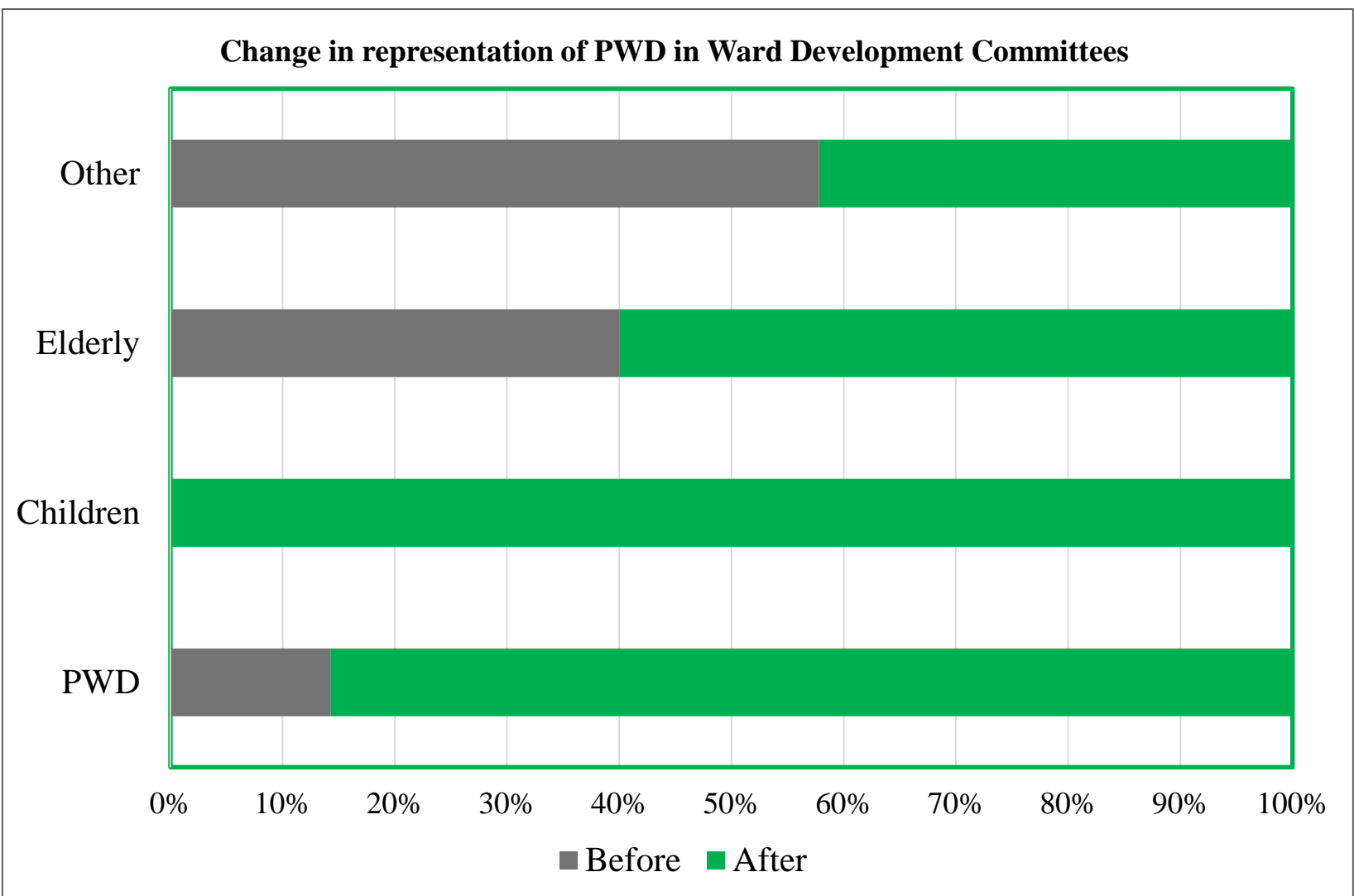


Figure 3. Representation of key populations in Ward Development Committees before and after the project

Impact

- Service delivery demands by PWD began to receive the attention of Council officials than before;

"As the Director of Finance, all I have previously thought about was how Council could generate revenue irrespective of who the client is. This project has made me appreciate more the importance of understanding the resident and their unique differences and needs" James Mutemera-Chipinge Town Council

- There was an 85% change in the participation of PWD in municipal development programs as well as representation;
- Council's budget has for the first time dedicated resources to support the service delivery needs of PWD (Fig 5);
- The disability and special needs desk provides a safe space for PWD to bring forward their issues with guarantees of dedicated attention;
- Projects with high potential to generate income and promote participation of PWD have been initiated and are running (Fig 4)



Figure 4. Council officials visit a project initiated by PWD in the Council CBD

- PWD have initiated and are going to run two major projects with seed support from Council;
 - a) A pay toilet with user friendly facilities for PWD is expected to serve 500 residents and visitors per day, generating revenue for PWD projects
 - b) Land has been identified and allocated to PWD for a culture and information centre which will house cubicles for their micro-business and culture exchange programs;
 - c) 'Start your business' and financial management trainings have been planned to ensure that there is adequate skill to record and utilize funds.

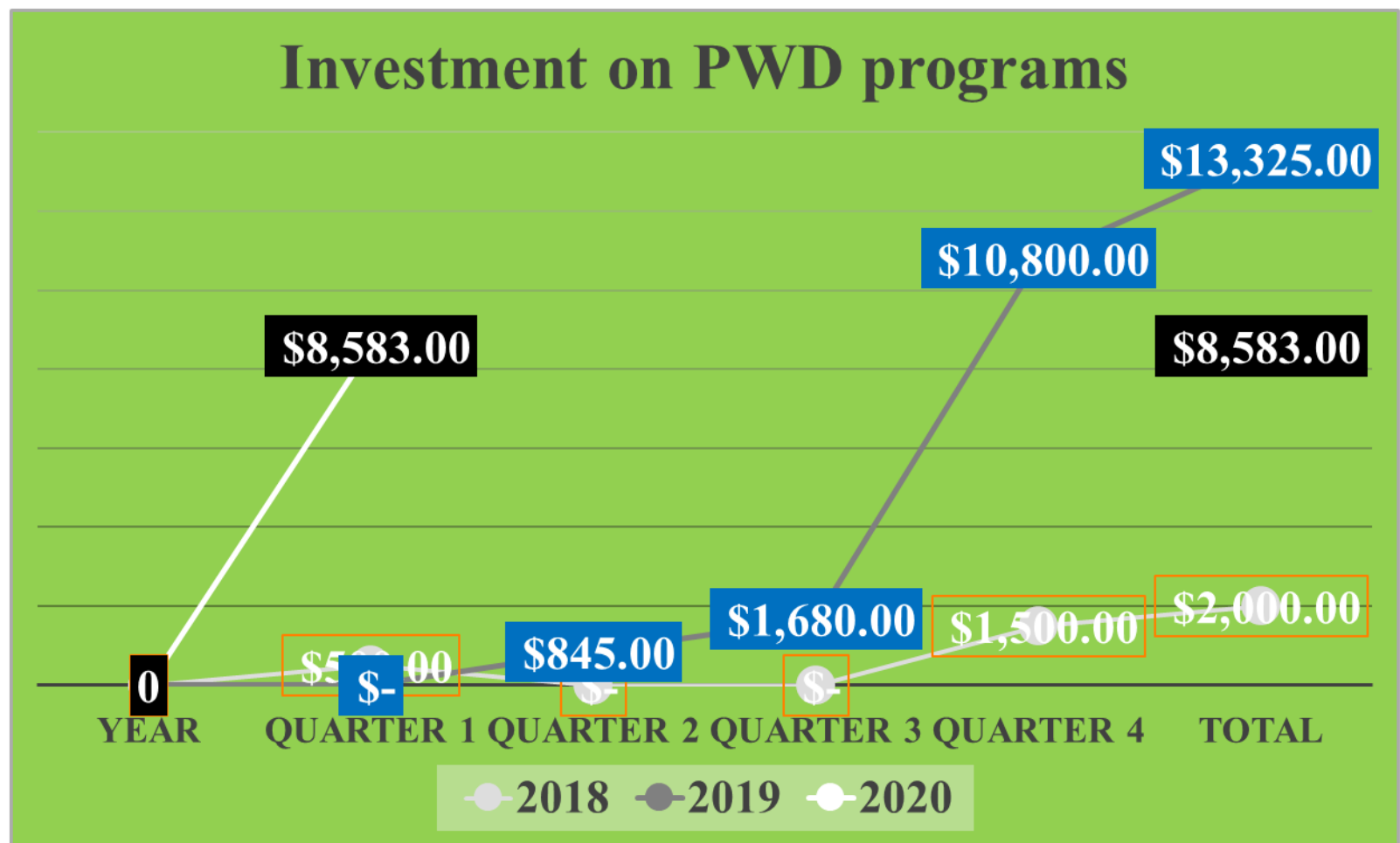


Figure 5: Change in budgetary support for PWD programs by the local authority.

- Improved appreciation of the issues affecting PWD helped change the approach to resource allocation for their needs;
- Investment in PWD programs by the local authority changed from none in years before 2018; US\$2000 in 2018 to US\$13325 in 2019, a 666% annual change;
- Investment in PWD programs for the first quarter of 2020 only is just 35% less than what was used in 2019, a reflection of Council's commitment to improve financing of inclusivity programs in its service delivery work.

Conclusions

- Improving levels of involvement of PWD in municipal development helps residents view their local authority in positive light and cooperate with it;
- A policy environment which accommodates the needs and opinions of PWD will ensure reduced complaints;
- The opportunity provided by this project for staff of the local authority to interface with PWD and hear their plight transformed mindsets and world views about inclusive service delivery;
- Projects initiated through consultations with PWD and which have their buy-in have higher chances of success;
- Mentorship and exchange learning are action oriented approaches to guarantee success of projects.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the Supervisor, His Worship Councillor Z. Nyakuchena and his team for their policy guidance and facilitation. We appreciate the mentor, Dr Hlatshwayo for his astute mentorship, advice and support. We are thankful to the ICLD team, Jenny, Anne, Dr Jennifer, Bibbie, Emma, other mentors and all participants for the team support and learning. We thank the project participants and the Chipinge team for believing in this project.

For further information

chipingetowncouncil@gmail.com

www.chipingetown.org

Facebook: Chipinge Town Council



Figure 6: The project team with the Supervisor, His Worship Z. Nyakuchena, the mentor Dr Hlatshwayo and UNCDF's Dr Jen during the Chipinge field visit



Figure 7: Project participants at an end of year fun day organized for PWD