

COVID-19 REALITIES

NANGO newsletter documenting COVID-19 outbreak in Zimbabwe.



Communities continue to receive food aid during the lockdown



Milton Park COVID-19 Clinic is ready for patients.

NGOs react to lockdown extension

The government's stance to extend the lockdown is a noble idea as the COVID-19 threat is still very high. In order to curb the spread of this pandemic, it is important for the government to appreciate the role that Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) can play in awareness raising and offering the much needed humanitarian assistance. The work of NGOs should therefore be listed under essential services.

There is a lot of misinformation and distortion of information about COVID-19 in rural areas and peri-urban areas. There is need for government to take a systematic approach to tackling the coronavirus crisis rather than focusing solely on urban areas. This can be unrolled effectively if CBOs, FBOs and NGOs are permitted to compliment government efforts of awareness raising.

Non-compliance in most high density suburbs is caused by the need to fend for families as most people survive on hand to mouth. The government should also put in place stern measures to deal with retailers that have increased prices of basic commodities inordinately.

There is corruption in the sale of subsidised mealie meal as suppliers have been accused of selling the scarce commodity to hoarders who then sell in the black market. Some retailers have been reported to attach their own conditions to the sale of mealie-meal. Some law enforcement agencies have also been accused of abandoning their responsibilities to buy scarce basic commodities in bulk.

Most police officers have been seen executing their duties without masks or gloves. The government is urged to ensure that all essential service providers have personal protective equipment at all times when executing their duties in order to protect themselves and others from contracting COVID-19.

IN THIS ISSUE

NGOs react to lockdown extension

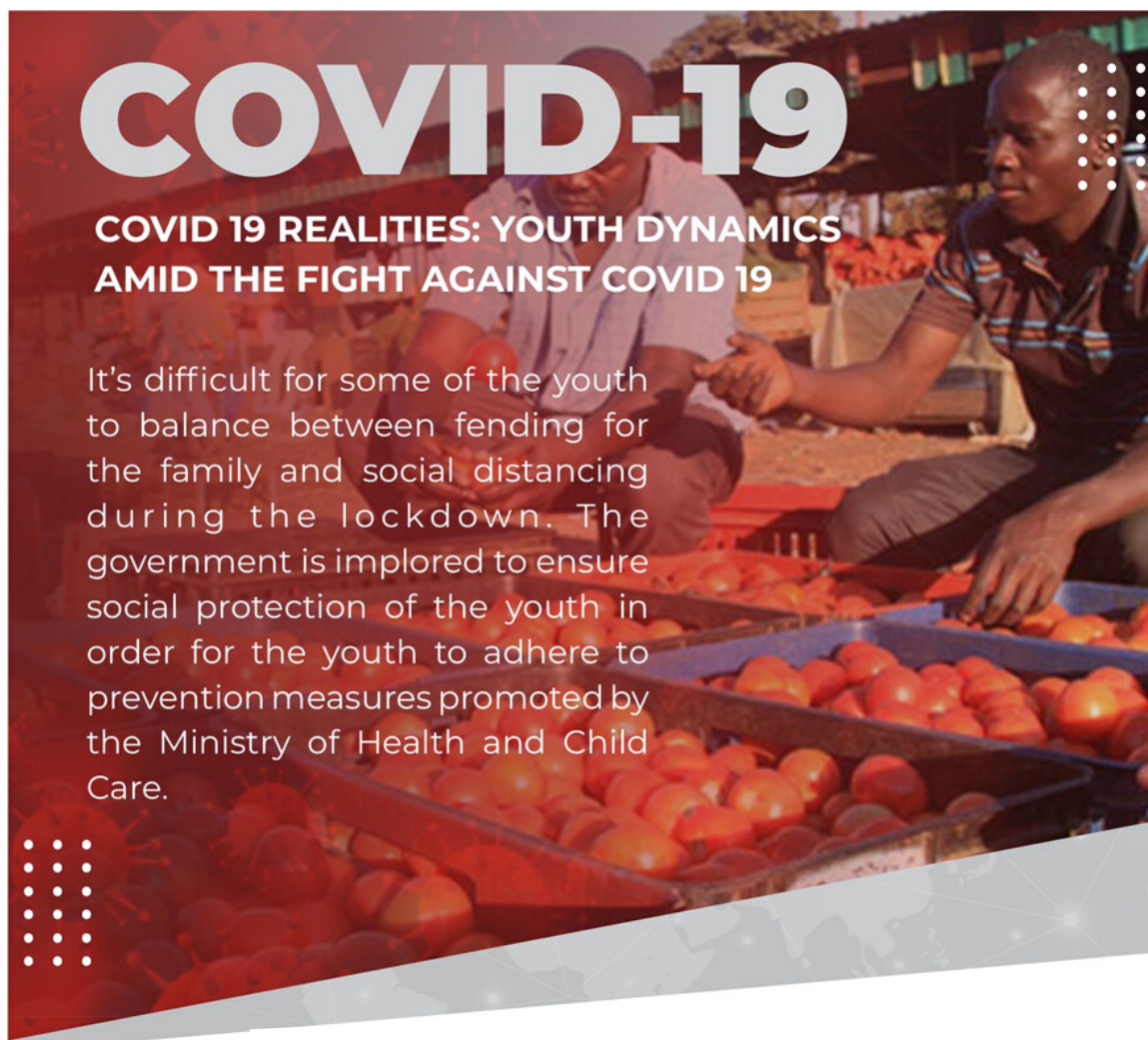
Implications of COVID-19 on PLWHIV and SRH

High Court orders gvt to promote access to information

Helplines



| Province | Number of confirmed cases |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Matabeleland North | 1 |
| Bulawayo | 10 |
| Harare | 13 |
| Mashonaland East | 4 |
| Mashonaland West | 3 |
| Total | 31 |
| Cumulative Tests Conducted: | 6395 |
| Deaths: | 4 |



COVID-19

COVID 19 REALITIES: YOUTH DYNAMICS AMID THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID 19

It's difficult for some of the youth to balance between feeding for the family and social distancing during the lockdown. The government is implored to ensure social protection of the youth in order for the youth to adhere to prevention measures promoted by the Ministry of Health and Child Care.

High Court orders government to promote access to information on COVID-19



High Court judge Justice Mafusire on 24 April 2020 ordered the Ministry of Health and Child Care and the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services to promote citizens' access to information pertaining to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This follows an urgent chamber application that was filed by MISA Zimbabwe, represented by lawyer, Rudo Magundani, of Scanlen and Holderness. The Ministry of Health and Child Care and the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services, were cited respectively as first and second respondents in the matter.

The court ordered, with immediate effect, that the respondents should publish and disseminate on all available platforms, the daily Covid-19 updates issued by the Ministry of Health, in all the official languages.

Justice Mafusire, further ordered with immediate effect, and on a regular basis, that the Ministry of Information, shall publish and disseminate on all available platforms and in all official languages the following additional information:

- i. The list of all private and public testing and treatment centers at national, provincial and district hospitals allocated for dealing with Covid-19 cases.
- ii. The type and quantity of medical equipment and any other resources needed that is actually available any further procurements as and when made and

how members of the public and private players with capacity may assist.

iii. In addition to measures such as lockdown that have been implemented, the plans and strategies that have been put in place both during and after lockdown by the respondents to combat and contain the spread and transmission of Covid-19.

MISA Zimbabwe position

MISA Zimbabwe looks forward to compliance and enforcement of the court order by the respective ministries.

Every citizen has the right to comprehensible, accessible, timely and reliable information concerning the nature and level of the threat that COVID-19 poses to their health including evidence-based guidance on how to stay safe.

In the interest of public health and building public trust and confidence, MISA Zimbabwe urges the government and relevant public institutions to be easily accessible and forthcoming with information pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In that regard, the promotion of access to information by the government particularly on information related to its strategies in combating the virus, availability (or lack thereof) of various resources and equipment, will go a long way in promoting transparency and accountability which is key in building public trust.

The public should not be left to guess on whether or not government has sufficient resources to deal with the virus and prevent its spread.

Continued to page 7

This will also assist in mitigating against any false or misleading information pertaining to government's efforts in fighting the Coronavirus.

In doing this, the government should be encouraged by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights' Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information's position on the critical duty of States in times of public health emergencies.

This responsibility and duty entails ensuring members of the public receive accurate, regular, accessible and science-based information on the threat COVID-19 poses to their health. In addition this also includes the role and impact of the measures adopted for preventing and containing the virus, magnitude of the spread and precautionary measures that members of the public should take.

Covid-19 related information should thus be availed to all citizens despite their location (cognisant of people in rural and marginalised communities), or, economic status (taking into consideration those that cannot afford internet access or the mediums being currently relied on for information on the virus).



The benefit of the Donation Button

- It offers transparency to both development partners and NGOs as it reports on the number of contributors and the value contributed.
- It enables NGOs to receive donations from multiple payment channels and settle into an account of their choice.
- Settlement of amounts collected is on a daily basis, thereby storing value.
- It removes the burden of reconciliation of all the donations received from the various payment channels.
- NGOs only need a bank account thereby cutting out the administration process of opening and managing these multiple channels.
- The Donation Button eliminates fraud as NGOs have only one account to settle.

The Donation Button enables NGOs to receive donations both locally and internationally with the currency being settled into their Nostro accounts.

Zimbabwe's Own Crowdfunding Donation Button

Enabling NGOs & PVOs to raise funds both locally and internationally

Paynow has developed a Donation Collection Button that enables credible NGOs to fundraise for worthy causes, a solution popularly known as crowd funding. Crowd funding is a method of raising money through collective efforts of friends, family, customers and individuals. This approach taps into the collective efforts of a large pool of individuals and corporates, primarily online via social media and leverages networks for greater reach and exposure.

This Donation Button enables funders, individuals or development partners to contribute towards a cause without the expectation of receiving anything in return, this type of funding is linked to charitable institutions.

This Donation Button was been successfully used by some to fundraise for Cyclone Idai relief. Here's the link to the Donation Button.

<https://www.topup.co.zw/donate/miracle-missions-trust>

Continued to page 8

- The Donation Button can be implemented within an hour to 24 hours of engagement with Paynow giving your organisation an immediate solution to pressing campaigns.

In addition to the Donation Button, Paynow is offering social media market campaign development and will forward finance your social media fees in order to ensure that your campaign gets the right traffic. Terms and conditions apply.

Take advantage of the fact that millions of people are spending time on social media due to the lockdown, improve your visibility and raise funds from well wishers across the globe. www.paynow.co.zw



News from the Southern Region

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Masvingo have continued to work from home during the national lockdown. This is some of the work that they have done.

1. CSOs in the NANGO Southern Region are working from home in accordance with the national lockdown.
2. NGOs are relying on WhatsApp groups to raise awareness of COVID-19.
3. Organisations operating in and around Masvingo province are lobbying the Ministry of Health and Child Care to ensure that children and old people's homes receive adequate information material about COVID-19.
4. There has been robust resource mobilisation particularly to ensure that disadvantaged members of the community receive sanitisers and food during the lockdown period.
5. Law enforcement agents in Masvingo have been encouraged to be on high alert and to respond urgently to suspected cases of child abuse and exploitation during the lockdown period.
6. Advocating for fair distribution of food aid to the poor by the government.
7. Advocating for access to medication and food for people living with HIV during the lockdown period as most of them do not have travelling permits and therefore fail to access health care facilities.
8. There is increased dissemination of information regarding home care for suspected COVID-19 cases.
9. CSOs in the health sector continue to encourage people with chronic conditions to replenish their medication.
10. Masvingo based NGOs are also alerting communities to be wary of the looming malaria outbreak.

Humanitarian sector's response to COVID-19 pandemic

The Coronavirus pandemic has since December 2019 spread to alarming levels causing severe detrimental effects worldwide. In a little over 5 months it has infected over 2.5 million people worldwide and claimed the lives of over 180,000 people. Zimbabwe as of 23 April has recorded 28 confirmed cases and 3 deaths. The Government called for a nationwide lockdown on 30 March 2020 as a means of flattening the curve and reducing the spread of the pandemic. However, the effects of the lockdown on the economic livelihoods of citizens, nutritional status, psychological well-being on households and increased protection risks of vulnerable groups including women and children cannot go unnoticed. With Zimbabwe's health care system not adequately equipped, the impact of COVID-19 will have far more reaching consequences than in the developed world.

Since March 2020, GOAL Zimbabwe has been at the forefront of urgently responding to the COVID-19 outbreak in Harare, Mutare, Chipinge and Mashonaland East (Marondera, Ruwa, Domboshava) through awareness and educational campaigns. The public awareness campaign is being conducted through funding from Irish Aid and UNICEF under the Zimbabwe Idai Recovery Project (ZIRP) and in

partnership with Promobile, Ministry of Health and Child Care (MOHCC) and Ecobank. The campaign involves the use of branded trucks that drive around sharing and delivering key messages on Coronavirus prevention centred on recommended hygiene practices, social distancing and on Gender Based Violence (GBV) and child

protection services available for and in communities during the lockdown. Part of the awareness campaign interventions are conducted at food distribution sites with strong adherence to recommended COVID-19 health standards particularly temperature checks, hand-washing and social distancing.

Gabriella Prandini, GOAL Zimbabwe Country Director, highlighted that in ten days the public awareness and sensitisation in both rural and urban communities has so far reached 344 412 people across all targeted districts with key messages and information material on COVID-19. The initiative is ongoing and will continue for the months of May and June.

"This initiative has enabled us to provide key messages on COVID-19 awareness and preparedness in one of the most effective and efficient ways. We were able to reach a wide range of communities from urban to rural, from beneficiaries of food aid to vendors. Having combined food distributions with this initiative also proved to be a successful way of

Continued to page 7



NGOs continue to compliment government efforts.

communicating prevention messages to the most vulnerable communities in Mutare and Chipinge District,” she said.

“GOAL will still provide food aid to cater for the food and nutrition needs of the communities we serve in Mutare and Chipinge districts of Manicaland Province. These people trying to recover from Cyclone Idai and are also coping with ongoing drought and sky-high inflation rates. Now is the time to act with speed and courage and to be there when needed the most,” she added.

GOAL Zimbabwe has been supporting vulnerable populations in Zimbabwe since 2002, when it first responded to the country’s food security crisis. Today GOAL operates in Harare urban region, Manicaland, Mashonaland East and Masvingo provinces. Programming is designed to build resilience and sustainable livelihoods of vulnerable communities; improving health, water and sanitation and hygiene, nutrition systems and strengthening crop and livestock value chains needed to foster long-term financial security.



Implications of the COVID-19 on PLWHIV and access to SRHR

The World Health Organization (WHO) (COVID-19) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on 30 January 2020 amplifying the multiple challenges countries such as Zimbabwe were likely to confront. In the meanwhile, the Government of Zimbabwe reiterated its preparedness and launched the national COVID-19 response plan. The health systems in Africa are in need of a great overhaul hence there is great fear that with the viciousness of this pandemic evident in better equipped countries, the worst could happen in Africa. Worldwide, there are measures that have been put in place in an effort to curb the spreading of the pandemic. Zimbabwe is not an exception. In late March, the Government of Zimbabwe

promulgated Statutory Instrument (SI) 83 of 2020 which imposed a national lockdown that limited human movement, shutdown industries except a few designated service sectors. While the lockdown measures are a noble idea in the context of flattening the curve, they present certain socio-economic dimensions and implications for access to public services in general and health care in particular, for instance, access barriers for people already living with other diseases such as TB, HIV, other non-communicable diseases as well as access to comprehensive SRH services.

Major challenges faced

Poor health service provision

Hospitals were ill equipped to effectively respond to the pandemic when it first hit Zimbabwe. The country’s COVID-19 response was characterized by low testing coverage because of lack of adequate equipment and commodities and a dissatisfied health care workforce. Access to medical services for non COVID-19 related illnesses has become a challenge since most of the scarce resources are channeled towards the pandemic. There have been reports of challenges to access maternal health services and Anti-Retroviral drugs for those on ART among others. The Malaria outbreak has seen to over 170000 cases representing a staggering 44.7% increase for the period April 2019. In the same period, the number of deaths increased by 20.4%. At the base of it is the slow response and uncertainties among health care workers as they fear attending to these cases since Malaria symptoms are similar to those of COVID-19.



Health care workers should all be provided with masks and gloves.

Presumptive cases of COVID-19 are referred for self-isolation at home. Infection control at household level is a challenge because of the required procedures in providing care to the infected which may pose a risk to other members of the family if not handled with care. Home based care for presumptive cases leaves women and girls more vulnerable as they are primary care givers.

The major setback is that majority of potential family care givers do not have adequate information on COVID-19 and do not have personal protective equipment.

Gender based violence, harmful practices and sexual reproductive health and rights

Globally, the cases of GBV and harmful practices are on the rise and Zimbabwe is no exception. Confinement to the home seems to have increased tensions threading the family fabric. The shortage of basic commodities is inciting violence in the homes with women falling prey to GBV hence rendering their homes unsafe for inhabitation. The risks for sexual exploitation have also grown exponentially as families navigate the unusual circumstances of a lockdown. In fact, a disproportionate number of families in Zimbabwe live in overcrowded residential spaces.

The economic arbitrage and rent-seeking behaviours which characterized the wholesale and retail sectors is at its worst. For instance arbitragers are exploiting the market imperfections and high volume of underground trading to hike prices of sanitary wear knowing that it's a basic necessity.

Food insecurity and malnutrition

According to Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee of 2019, 5.5 million people in rural areas and 3.9 people in urban areas are food insecure. COVID-19 pandemic came at a time when the economy was already crumbling. While others

managed to stock food in preparation for the lockdown, some people were unable to do so as most are informal traders that survive on hand to mouth. Staying indoors will worsen the already volatile situation.

Fiscal measures and social services

During the lockdown, the government liberalized the foreign exchange market allowing the use of United States Dollars. The market arbitragers and financial speculators are also taking advantage of the new measures. While big supermarkets still transact in the local currency, trading is characterized by long queues and social distancing is hardly practiced, putting people at risk of contracting COVID-19.

In terms of cushioning safety nets, the Social Welfare Department is offering a meager ZWL200 (US\$5) per head per month to those identified to be in need against the poverty datum line of US\$1.90 per day in an environment defined by skyrocketing prices of basic goods. There are also growing fears that the cushioning allowance is being politicized which means a lot of deserving cases might be missed.



Vulnerable rural community members have been reminded to observe social distancing when receiving aid

Water shortages

Access to clean, safe and portable water has been a challenge in the country with most citizens digging up wells and boreholes. In areas where communal boreholes are available people have to walk long distance and join long queues in order to get water. Tap water rationing has been the order of the day in Zimbabwe and in most cases the water looks unclean and unsafe for drinking. The acute water shortages make regular hand washing a tall order while crowding around communal sources of water makes social distancing an elusive goal. There is need to educate communities on how to sanitise water taps, boreholes handles and knobs in order to curb the spread of the pandemic.

Guest Feature

COVID-19 Realities of a young mother

Phew five minutes to myself, five minutes of peace, five minutes of silence....wait I hear someone calling me, I hope I locked my toilet door it's the only time I have to myself. I know most women cherish and enjoy these few minutes of bliss despite what room you find yourself in. It has been a while, but I know if you are like me this lockdown has been a blessing and otherwise too right. I, for one, enjoy the quality family time with Mhofu, family and everything else. I didn't know Mhofu was such foul mouthed when playing cards and losing at monopoly. I mean these are the good, happy days, I won't talk of the days I have concluded that jail was not really that bad you know. I mean we do live close to a mountain I do own a spade, it has been raining, it won't take time to dig a hole. But today I won't be talking about how you can get away with murder.

During this lockdown I realized the importance of grooming our little ones for the future. Are you a

Working online and offline

Zimbabwe AIDS Network (ZAN) has become an alternative source of information and learning for CSOs and community groups who may have no access to other mainstream sources of updates on COVID-19. Live virtual interactive sessions are being facilitated with various groups. For instance church leaders held an online interactive session where they built consensus on the role of the church in response to COVID-19. ZAN also partnered with the Council of Social Workers on one of the most subscribed discussions which explored strategies to strengthen HIV interventions during the lockdown. The network is also tracking access to other health services and identifying gaps which civil society can plug together with the Ministry of Health and Child Care.



good companion? Spouse? Partner? Friend? I mean being with someone 24/7 is not all rosy as it looked like the first three days. It made me decide that I want to teach my son to do more household chores, to equip him with all skills even those that society has said are feminine. I mean who can't spread the bed, anyway... this period has taught me to raise my daughter and son the same. I will not encourage them to perpetuate any stereotypes that are grounded in patriarchy. They will both know how to cook, clean, generally help out in the house, do the garden, clean up after the dog among other chores. I will raise them to understand feminism and how to demystify gender stereotypes.
Continued to page 10



This lockdown period has taught me that religion and school are not entirely to blame for perpetuating gender stereotypes but guardians and parents also play a part.

Parents and guardians have to play their part in teaching basic etiquette, good manners and to take up responsibility around the home. One does not have to be constantly told to leave their shoes outside or to attend to a crying baby. Easing the burden on the woman ensures that both can enjoy their conjugal rights. During the lockdown men should voluntarily redistribute the burden of unpaid carework.

It's this period that we all have to say thank you to amazing women and men who stay at home all day and do amazing work every day and still put on a smile when we come back home from work. THANK YOU!! Much respect to you, and much respect to women and men who are frontline responders and still come from work with zeal to catch up on household duties.

So after reading this talk to them, I mean your little ones. Tell them the importance of sharing household duties, discipline, support and respect. It might be too late for Mhofu and some of our partners to change but let's put effort towards the future. I have decided to have a conversation with my son, daughter, niece, nephew, granddaughter, grandson and any other child.

This is also a time to learn a skill, get a hobby, exercise, read a book, start a garden and importantly build your spiritual life.

Stay home.
Stay safe.



Doing things differently



Top: Gweru urban residents queuing to restock basic commodities after the lockdown was extended.



Right: Inmates from Mutare Farm Prisons receive donations from Ruvheneko Rwenyenyedzi Trust



Left: As the lockdown continues Zvishavane residents come out to queue for basic commodities. It's proving to be difficult to maintain social distancing where people have to scrounge to get into queues.



Tellers are commended for wearing masks and using hand sanitisers



GOAL staff executing their duties while community members queue two meters apart.



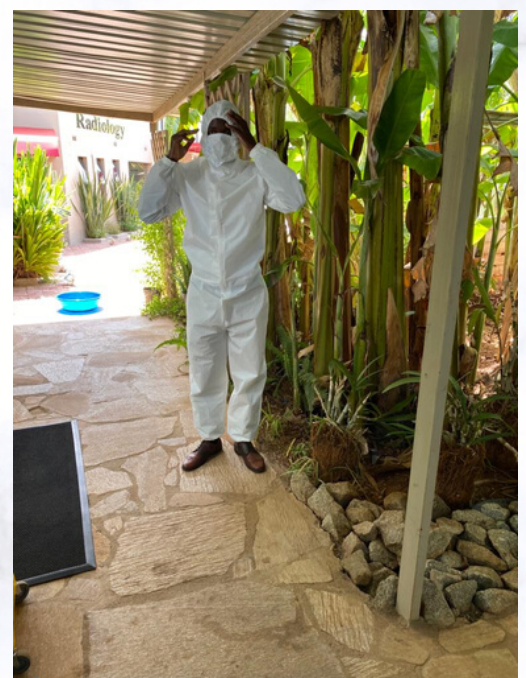
Remember! Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly for at least 20 seconds.



Sanitise your hands, surfaces and frequently used objects.



Some COVID-19 Centers are under renovation while some are ready to treat patients showing symptoms of the pandemic.



All frontline responders should be provided with personal protective equipment.

Need help during the lockdown? Here are suggestions of who you can contact

COVID-19 related information: Toll Free 2019

To know your human rights: Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights
24 hour National Hotline +263 772 257 247
Matabeleland/ Midlands +263 773 855 635
Manicaland/ Masvingo +263 773 855 718

To report gender based violence: 24 hour toll free lines
Musasa Project - 08080074
Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association - 08080131
Adult Rape Clinic - 0775 672 770
Shamwari Yemwanasikana Hotline 0772 607 384

To get legal advice: 24 hour toll free legal service helplines
Legal Resources Foundation - 08080402
Women and Law in Southern Africa - 0777 366 952
Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association - 08080131
Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights - 0772 257 247

For psycho social support: 24 hour toll free line for children in distress and COVID-19 information
Childline Zimbabwe - 116

The publication of this newsletter is supported by



act:onaid



European Union



Publisher: National Association of Non Governmental Organisations (NANGO)

Head Office: Number 2 McGowan Road, Milton Park, Harare, Zimbabwe.

Email: info.nangozim@gmail.com,
director.nango@gmail.com

Website: www.nangozim.org

©NANGO

Disclaimer: The contents of articles from independent writers do not necessarily reflect the position and resolve of NANGO, United Nations Development Programme, ActionAid Zimbabwe or European Union.

NANGO is supported to provide platforms that promote national dialogue on topical and contemporary issues that affect Zimbabwe citizens in one way or another.