

MACHITENDA WOMEN ECONOMIC RYDERS PROJECT REPORT



On the 20th of May 2023, In Machitenda a small rural area in Masvingo, we as J & H Consultancy prepared a training for a community project that is being run by Echoes of Humanity Trust under the name of MACHITENDA WOMEN ECONOMIC RYDERS. This project seeks to uplift and empower the women in the area of Machitenda to be able to become resourceful and generate incomes for themselves and at the same time help develop the area of Machitenda by making it more accessible to markets and people in neighbouring areas and the town centre as well. They have been provided with resources in the form of battery powered motor tricycles and more by Echoes of Humanity Trust. These tricycles are to help them enhance their businesses and small projects as they provide cheap transportation which is considered a major cost for most businesses anywhere, giving them an edge over competition.

The training was prepared to equip the women with skills to run the project effectively in order for them to benefit from the project's vast potential. The program was broken down into three pillars, namely, Roles and Responsibilities, Bookkeeping and Accountability, and Communication. These pillars hold the structure to any successful organisation.

Our training began with an appreciation of the existing organisation, Echoes of Humanity Trust, and its projects. We were warmly introduced to the trustees of the trust and the participants of the project, followed by a tour of the premises. We were very much impressed by the projects running on the premises and the infrastructure. It left us feeling inspired and motivated for the program ahead as we knew we were working with a competent group of individuals. The fish ponds were the stand out project on the premises that showed overflowing potential.

The first pillar, Roles and Responsibilities, which was led by Antony Mudzindiko. In an open flowing discussion the participants were engaged and learnt about the importance of playing a role in the project and making sure that whatever role they played they were part of a big operation. The main roles that were discussed included Coordinator, Treasurer, Secretary and Sales and Marketing Team.

1. Coordinator

This role would require a person with an understanding of running the project. This role would require someone who is articulate and well organised as they would be the one ensuring that the project is running smoothly. The role would include:

1. To ensure effective communication, between members and the trustees of Echoes of Humanity.
2. Fleet Management. Facilitation of the repairs and maintenance of fleet.
3. Making sure that everyone knows their daily duties and responsibilities and recording progress, e.g. Rooster for the drivers.
4. Disaster management, e.g. coordinate with everyone if there is an accident on how to handle the situation.

2. Secretary

This role requires someone who can write and read very well. The role that this person would play is one of keeping information and the recording of events, by date and time. The role would include:

1. Writing minutes in all meetings in a particular format that is required i.e. Date of meeting, Agenda, Attendance, Start time and Finish time, Main points and Signatures of those present.
2. Record keeping e.g. Daily activities, Daily attendance register, and any incidences such as accidents.

3. Treasurer

This role is focused on the person who would be doing the bookkeeping of funds used by the project. These records will ensure that the finances are being used correctly and also being recorded correctly so that reports can be produced furthermore ensuring that there is transparency in the way funds are being used. The role would include:

1. To ensure all record keeping books are kept in neat and easily accessible way for members and trustees to understand how funds are being used.
2. The steward of finances, keeping a cash box and stowed away safely when not in use.
3. To facilitate the receipting and payments after approval from committee members.
4. To ensure the project is well resourced.

NB* The roles that have been listed above form the committee members.

4. Sales and Marketing

This role requires team effort from every participant involved as this is where the money is generated. In this session the participants shared their ideas on projects they would want to do and also how they could generate income from the use of the tricycles. Some of the ideas include:

- Courier services – From Town, Morganster, and surrounding areas.
- Carrying produce that they would have farmed to the markets, selling at competitive prices.
- Ambulance service.
- Ferrying commuters from rural to bus stop. Just to name a few.

The participants showed great potential in coming up with many ideas as they mentioned that transportation was a major challenge in the area and there was a market for their services. We also discussed pricing of their services and how they would then compete with rivals such as mushikashika and mini bus operators.

This role requires everyone to be able to communicate and spread the word of the services being provided through all platforms i.e. word of mouth, flyers, what's app community groups e.t.c.

The second pillar, bookkeeping and accountability, which was led by Henry Mabeza. Focused on the process of recording transactions, transparency, and honesty in handling cash. He showed the women the various books for recording transactions namely Invoice book, receipt book, payment voucher and cashbook. These books were explained how they worked and their importance in the transaction process. It was more of a practical application as Henry took them through each document and showed them how to fill in each form step by step.

1. Cashbook

The cash book is where all the cash transactions that are disbursed and receipted are recorded. The participants learnt the main details to be captured i.e. the date of the transaction, type of transaction (receipt or payment), amount, amount on running balance. The security features on the document

2. Invoice book

The invoice book is where all sales are recorded between our buyers and project. Whenever a service has been rendered or product sold, the details of the product or service are systematically written describing what was delivered and the money owed by the client.

3. Payment voucher

The payment voucher book is where all payments made to a supplier. The payment voucher emphasizes that all payments to be made would have gone through a procuring process before the treasurer made payment to anyone. The procuring process including getting quotations from at least 3 suppliers, discussion and authorisation by committee members on which quotation to be taken up, then finally payment.

4. Receipt book

The receipt book is where all money that has been received by the drivers from clients would be recorded. This book was particularly important because it records the physical cash the project would have gained on the transaction. The women were told to ensure that they did not forget to write receipt or write receipt before they are given cash.

The third pillar, communication, led by Tapiwa Chikaonda. In this segment the participants learnt that communication is simply the act of transferring information from sender to recipient. This may be vocally (using word of mouth), written (Letters, Reports, Text, WhatsApp or Emails), visually (charts or graphs) or non-verbally (using body language, gestures).

We had to really stress the importance for organization's to have communication backed by written forms of communication as verbal, visual and nonverbal were subject to debate and conflict. In the case of the MWER it would be mostly Letters, Reports, Text, and WhatsApp to follow up verbal communication between members.

We discussed on meetings as a tool for communication as it is no exaggeration to say that the success or failure of business meetings will hinge on the effectiveness of the communication, as well as the communication skills of the participants. This executed by speaking clearly and are getting points across in

a way that can be easily understood by everyone listening. Recording meetings through the secretary and read them back may assist to pick up on what wasn't captured or misinterpreted. By doing this you solve a lot of conflicts by misunderstanding what was said hence it helps in conflict resolution.

Meetings should have clearly stated agenda to effectively resolve areas which need to be solved. You need to plan out the meeting ahead of time and stick as closely to the planned topics as possible. In some meetings, there may be the chance to open up the conversation to cover other issues at the end, but the focus should always be on the topic at hand so that the meeting delivers a useful outcome.

We gave the ladies an example of stand up meeting which should take at least 10 minutes to be done in the morning. The meeting will be done everyone standing to ensure it is productive. The women will each state the things they did the day before the challenges faced whilst the ladies will offer help to the challenges faced. This type of meeting offers the women chance to nip problems in the bud.

The participants were given a test on what they learnt during the training. The committee that will head and give guidance to the project was selected from the results. The committee was chosen was chosen by merit. The committee was set up as follows:

COORDINATOR:	PRISCILLA MKANYANGI
VICE COORDINATOR:	EMACULATE CHINAKA
SECRETARY:	REJOICE MURIRA
VICE SECRETARY:	VIOLET MAWARIRE
TREASURER:	PRISCILLA CHIRONGOMA
VICE TREASURER:	NYARADZO MUSIPA

These candidates were the highest marks amongst the participants. All participants had pleasing results and showed that they had great understanding of what was taught to them during the program. We as J & H Consultancy were pleased with the feedback and participation we got from the participants. If they manage to execute what they have learnt they are sure to go further. The trustees also appreciated the training and mentioned that they also learnt a great deal. We recommend that the trustees also go through a training in project management so that they can also make sure that their resources do not go to waste and ensure success all round from administrating and implementing.

We look forward to engaging with you in further projects such as the soccer tournaments, and other potential projects Echoes of Humanity may have lined up. It was a great experience for our organisation as it showed the potential value chains that we could also engage in and benefit from as well as give back to the communities that support our businesses. We are grateful for the opportunity that your organisation has extended to us and we hope that the knowledge we shared will bring success to your mission.