**General Project Information**

**Project Title:** Promoting and Protecting the Property and Inheritance Rights of Women and Girls Affected by HIV and AIDS in Victoria Falls and Hwange District, Zimbabwe

**Organization:** Ntengwe for Community Development, Zimbabwe

**Implemented in:** Victoria Falls urban and Hwange district rural

**Grant Amount:** $144,860

**Context**

Women living with HIV in Zimbabwe face stigma and discrimination, and are often denied their property and inheritance rights. Most of these women have no marriage certificates or wills. They often cannot afford legal fees to legal services, and in some cases executors of estates are bribed by male in-laws. Loss of property not only renders women homeless, but may also drive them into unsafe sexual practices, fueling the spread of HIV.

**Objectives**

Ntengwe sought to increase the capacity of local police, traditional leaders, local government paralegals, and support groups for women living with HIV and AIDS to curb property and inheritance grabbing in Victoria Falls and Hwange district.

**Key results**

- Enhanced knowledge and rights awareness of 4,000 community members (2,500 women and 1,500 men), 120 traditional leaders, 250 faith leaders, and 111 community leaders of their obligations to protect women’s property and inheritance rights in the context of HIV and AIDS. In addition, 5,000 school age children (2,500 girls and 2,500 boys) have been empowered with knowledge on women’s property and inheritance rights in the context of HIV and AIDS.

- Increased legal literacy and awareness of 480 women and men living with HIV about their property and inheritance rights.

- Enhanced knowledge and skills of 24 paralegals to support women’s access to property and inheritance rights in the context of HIV and AIDS. By the end of the project, 263 women were reunited with their assets.

- Enhanced knowledge and rights awareness of 60 men who participated in Positive Masculinity Training sessions. This training explored and questioned norms and beliefs about masculinity, with the aim of creating male advocates for women’s property and inheritance rights in the context of HIV and AIDS.

- Established 11 watchdog committees and 24 paralegal groups to monitor violations and to advocate for and support women’s access to property and inheritance rights in the context of HIV and AIDS. A total of 1050 cases of property and inheritance claims were reported to these organizations.

- 120 women living with HIV and AIDS established self-help groups focused on economic empowerment.

- Beyond the short-term impact of restoring women’s access to their marital property, village elders, traditional leaders and opinion leaders have helped shift the underlying gender-discriminatory beliefs that prevent women from gaining control and ownership of land and property.

- Community paralegals and watchdog groups worked effectively with traditional leaders to facilitate family-to-family dialogues to settle property and inheritance claims.

- Using theater as an awareness-raising tool was an effective mechanism to engage and educate community members on women’s property and inheritance rights in the context of HIV and AIDS.

**Lessons Learned**

- In addition to legal empowerment, women living with HIV often need interventions to address their health, education, and livelihood needs.

- Engaging men proved to be a vital strategy for strengthening an enabling environment for women’s property and inheritance rights. Including influential men who are in decision-making positions helped to promote broader participation and promotion of women’s property and inheritance rights in the context of HIV and AIDS.

- There is a need for more men to be included in the project’s Positive Masculinity Training.

**Partnerships**

Ntengwe partnered with Victoria Falls and Hwange municipalities; the Zimbabwe Republic Police Victim Friendly Unit; various magistrates and lawyers; and ward coordinators from the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Gender and Community Development.