ILEOSTOMY AND COLOSTOMY ZIMBABWE TRUST (ILCO ZIM TRUST)

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PROFILE OF THE ORGANISATION

Through the facilitation of Lizzie Moyo and her family, the Zimbabwe ILCO Trust is an organization that came into existence in the year 2007 with the main objective of advocating for the needs and interest of all ostomates in Zimbabwe. The idea to the formation of this organization came out of the realization that there was a gap in the Zimbabwean health care system for the care of ostomates an experience which the Moyo family went through as they battled to save Lizzie’s life before and after she went through her operation. At the time that Lizzie was battling with her, medical materials and services required by Lizzie were very expensive and unavailable in health institutions in the country. It was after a torrid experience characterized by a number of difficulties and challenges that they went through in taking care of Lizzie that the Moyo family considered other ostomates similar to Lizzie who were in various circumstances including in rural areas and other poor urban areas who were also facing similar challenges in taking care of themselves that they decided to mobilize other ostomates and their families around Zimbabwe in an attempt to advocate for their special needs and interests thereby contributing to the goal of lives and humanity. The ILCO Trust is lobbying for the removal of import duty on hygiene packs and bags that ostomates require as well as use on a day to day basis so that their availability in health institutions will increase and making them freely available for most vulnerable people and whose lives solely depend upon these services and materials.

INTRODUCTION

This serves to provide a detailed report of the activities carried out by Ileostomy and Colostomy Zimbabwe Trust which covers the months of September to November 2011. The organization’s main objectives are to help ostomates around Zimbabwe through the distribution of colostomy and urostomy bags and cleaning appliances. During the quarter under review the organization managed to distribute some IEC materials, held meetings with ostomates, visit some schools and universities in awareness campaigns, supported the world health ostomy day and also published its activities through TV programmes.

ACTIVITIES DONE

Distribution of IEC material

The organization managed to distribute IEC materials to ostomates and the people around in Mutare, Harare and Bulawayo and other small towns around Zimbabwe. These IEC materials were distributed during some awareness campaigns and other meetings held with the ostomates. The material provided ostomates, their families and the community at
large with information on concerning ostomates, how it is treated, how to clean a stoma and to use the bags since most of the ostomates did not have the knowledge on how to use the appliances.

MEETING WITH OSTOMATES

Ileostomy and colostomy Zimbabwe Trust managed to hold 15 meetings with ostomates in Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare, Masvingo, Chiredzi and other parts of Zimbabwe. Some of the communication with ostomates were done through telephone and mail posts. The organization took advantage of these meetings to follow up on the health and social wellbeing of the ostomates discussing with them the challenges, they are going through as a result of their ill health. These meeting also helped the organization to realize the needs of these ostomates and came up with solutions on how to address those needs. It was also noted that most ostomates were facing stigmatization in their families, work places and the community as the condition is not familiar to many people and most of the people associate it with witchcraft and for most families it was seen as a taboo or a family curse for a family member to suffer from that kind of disease. This therefore resulted in most families keep ostomates secretly in their homes avoiding to come out since they were afraid of people’s perceptions. One of the ostomates testified that she took long to receive medical attention as her parents was associating her illness with witchcraft and spend most of the time visiting witch doctors and faith healers who did not provide any help but rather worsen the situation. The organization therefore realized and saw it necessary to have more awareness campaigns in order to equip the whole Zimbabwean community with information concerning ostomates and how they can be helped out of the devastating problem.

It was also noted that ILCO Trust has been a salvation to most ostomates since in the previous years were finding it very difficult to receive proper medical attention. Currently the country has no ostomy supplies manufacturing companies. These supplies have to be imported which makes them costly and beyond most people reach. It is costing $20 00- $60 00 per ostomate per day for the supply of bags. Most of these people leave the hospital after surgery without any information on where to get supplies and what services are available. Ostomates appreciates the pre and post counseling sessions they receive from ILCO and an assured supply of the ostomy bags which helped them to be presentable and look like any other human beings not as outcasts in their families and communities.

With proper care, information and assured supply of ostomy bags an individual can lead a normal and productive life.
AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

In the month of August, the organization held some awareness campaigns at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Midlands University and Evelyn Girls High in Bulawayo. Four ostomates were identified at Midlands state University and those together with other people who were there were provided with information about ostomates and how to take care of them. The organization also went to one of the clinics in Bulawayo where they raise awareness on ostomates, the health care service providers acknowledged that they did not have enough and detailed information concerning ostomates and their care. One of the nurses even testified that ostomy patients were just treated like any other disease without providing a special extra care and counseling since it can affect a person’s all areas of life and can lead to continuous illness and death if not carefully treated.

Some T-shirts, IEC materials and pamphlets were distributed during these awareness campaigns and the organization provided information that advocated for a social change in the way people stigmatize ostomates. It was highlighted in these campaigns that Ileostomy and colostomy was just like any other diseases and requires national attention in order to fight it away. In addition to the above, awareness campaigns were of great significance since it provided a platform for the organization to register and identify more ostomates and it also managed to equip the community with much information about ostomates, their care and how they can be helped in order to live a health and productive life.

WORLD OSTOMY DAY

The organization also managed to hold a World Ostomy Day in Harare where medical aid societies were invited. Representatives from the ministry of health, Cancer association, National Island Hospital, private hospitals, Non governmental organizations, the Sunday mail and other companies also attended the ceremony. The day is set to commemorate ostomates and is supposed to be done across the world. Ileostomy and Colostomy Zimbabwe Trust managed to show case its activities to all the members who were present. Since ILCO is still new to Zimbabweans and is operating during its infancy stages, the World Ostomy day provided the organization with the platform to provide people with information on how it delivers its services, how they are accessible and committed to help ostomates out of their ill health, stigmatization and isolation in the community. ILCO during the World Ostomate Day also managed to network ostomates with other service providers which include the medical societies. Ostomates were
encouraged to join some medical aid societies in order for them to easily access medication and cut some of the expenses they incur during their treatment. Representatives from local hospitals also provided the people with information of the services they provide and showed their interest in fighting ostomy in Zimbabwe. They appreciated the work done by ILCO in helping the ostomates and providing them with ostomy bags, they testified that ILCO was an eye opener to the ministry of Health and as a result of its vision and activities the ministry of health has recognized its need to offer care and support to ostomates.

The minister of state in the Prime minister’s office Honorable J Timba in his speech promised that his ministry will ensure that ostomates shall:

- Receive per-operative counseling to ensure that they are fully aware of the benefits of the operation and the essential facts about living with a stoma.

- Have a well structured stoma placed at an appropriate site, and with full and proper consideration to the comfort of the ostomates

- Receive experienced and professional medical support, stoma nursing care and psychosocial support in pre-operative and post-operative period in hospital and their community

- Receive support and information for the benefit of the family, personal careers and friends to increase their understanding of the condition and adjustments which are necessary for achieving a satisfactory standard of life with a stoma.

- Receive full and partial information about all relevant supplies and products available in the country.

- Have unrestricted access to a variety of affordable ostomy products

- Be given information about their National Ostomy Association (ILCO ZIM TRUST) and the services and support which can be provided

- Be protected against all forms of discrimination.
OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

ILCO ZIM TRUST is continuing with its outreach activities, during the quarter under reveal it managed to reach different places in Masvingo, Gweru, Harare and Bulawayo. In these outreach activities the organization visited different places informing them about ILCO. The key objectives on the outreach programme were to inform people on:

- Background of the organization
- The network between ILCO, ostomates, doctors and nurses in Zimbabwe
- Information about ILCO Sweden and the statistics of ostomates
- The training and counseling of ostomates and caregivers
- Continuation of meetings and support groups
- Ongoing of identification and visitation of ostomates
- Advocacy for ostomates at schools, workplaces, hospitals, policy makers etc
- Hospitals visited and other meetings held around Zimbabwe

Outreach activities are of great significance to the organization and the community at large since it is providing the people with information which was previously not known to them. Most of the people discovered that they were ostomates during these outreaches and were registered and managed to receive their bags through the organization.

TV PROGRAMMES

ILCO ZIM TRUST also managed to show case its activities on TV programmes in Zimbabwe. Awareness of the organization was raised during news hours and it was also advertised in the Standard news paper, most of the people who were not aware of the organization were provided enough information of its programming and accessibility. This helped in the identification of more ostomates who were in need of help and were dying due to poor service provision. The organization was also invited to present it programmes at Mai Chisamba Show were people come together and discuss some social ills which people are going through. One of ILCO’s representatives managed to explain some issues of Ileostomy and colostomy and how the organization is helping the people out of the problem. Most of the people in the show testified that culturally these types of diseases were linked to witchcraft and evil spirits not knowing that it can be medically treated and is just like many other normal diseases human beings can suffer.

The Harare agricultural show

The organization had a privilege to show case its activities during the Harare Agricultural Show which took place in the month of September 2011. It managed to display its Ostomy appliances i.e. drainable coloplast colostomy bags for adults and children. Also on display was a urostomy bag together with a urine night bag. There were various
creams and adhesive applicants used by ostomates when dressing their stoma. There was also a special toilet on show and a living example of an ostomate.

Many people managed to visit ILCO stand during the show, among them were The Secretary of the president’s office, people from various companies and the general public who were impressed by the organization’s activities. Many people were impressed by the activities and most of them even recommended the organization to do a full scale outreach programme which does not only focus on large cities but that which also targets the rural areas.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that ILCO ZIM TRUST is doing a lot in the lives of ostomates in Zimbabwe whose potential has been greatly tainted as a result of ulcerative colitis, cancer, accidents and many more other contributing factors which results into a stoma. The provision of some bags, counseling sessions, psycho-social support and information through awareness campaigns and IEC material has helped the ostomates to live a positive life and gave them hope for the future. Networking programmes and meetings have also improved ostomates and their families’ self esteem and they managed to encourage one another through their own shared testimonies.