



## HOPE, OPPORTUNITY, PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

The HOPE-project is a collaboration between Response Network and SMISO, Troms. SMISO is a support center for survivors of sexual abuse and incest in Tromsø, Norway.

The HOPE-project is funded by The Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (NOREC) and is a mutual exchange project between Zambia and Norway. Two participants from Zambia are sent to SMISO and two participants from Norway are sent to Response Network. The objective is to exchange experience and build competence on preventing and coping with incest and sexual abuse in the partner organization and in the communities in Norway and Zambia.



HOPE stands for Hope, Opportunity Participation and Empowerment. The main aim of the project in Zambia is to create awareness on gender-based violence (GBV), sexual abuse and incest. The project also aims to strengthen linkages between already existing organisations that work within the same areas.

The HOPE-project in Livingstone works in schools and communities in RN-operating areas. We give lectures for pupils and teachers at schools in Livingstone, as well as having sensitization meetings in the rural communities with community members and Anti-GBV committees. In addition, we also have a support group for survivors of GBV in cooperation with the One Stop Centre in Livingstone.

The aim of giving lectures and holding sensitization meetings is to increase awareness on sexual abuse and incest among pupils and targeted communities. In addition, to empower people on their rights and responsibilities, as well as giving information about the existing local support systems and how to report cases concerning incest and sexual violence.

In August 2017, HOPE partnered with Livingstone Gender Based Violence Clinic (LGBVC) and formed a support group for survivors of gender-based violence, with a total of 9 women. The aim of the support group was to offer the survivors a place where they could go, meet others in a similar situation after they had completed the one-year follow-up at LGBVC. A support group is meant to offer emotional support and practical help, concerning a problem that is common for all the group members. Part of being in the support group is that each member works towards at least two goals they have set themselves. Through working towards those goals, they mobilize the resources that they already have and develop important life skills that can help them cope with their situation. From the time we started till July 2018, we had 20 therapy meetings.



On the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2019, HOPE had a follow-up meeting with the support group. Eight out of the nine women in the support group came. Most of the women were in business through “Save and Borrow” groups and some were doing voluntary work within different NGOs. One of the women shared with us that she is continuing working towards her goal, which is to be economically independent. She further told us that after we ended the support group in July 2018, she did psychosocial counselling through the organisation she volunteers at and qualified for a certificate but was not given one. As she wanted to be a psychosocial counsellor, she applied for a course at the University of Zambia (UNZA) and got a diploma. She is now working voluntary as a psychosocial counsellor! Two of the women partnered together with three others in the group and have started their own business, which is still in the early stages, but they were both happy with what they have been able to achieve. In addition, three support groups have been formed in the women’s local communities, by the women themselves. We are extremely proud of what all the women have been able to accomplish themselves. This reaffirms Response Network’s philosophy regarding help to self-help – which people themselves mobilize their own human- and environmental resources, and that throughout this process, their self-esteem, knowledge and creativity grow with responsibility.