

AMBASSADOR'S SPECIAL SELF-HELP PROGRAM

SNAPSHOT

Bonda Art and Craft: A New Community Center for HIV/AIDS Support Groups



Photo: SSH Program

Chiedza (Light) support group members performing a drama about HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention and child protection and empowerment activities for youth and women in front of the newly built community hall during the official handover ceremony by the U.S. Embassy.

The SSH Program awards grants to registered non-governmental, non-profit, or community-based organizations to implement short-term (12-month), small-scale development projects that include significant community involvement.

SSH Program Contact:
SelfHelp_Harare@state.gov

Bonda Art and Craft is a registered non-profit organisation based in Mutasa in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe. Established in 1992, the organization's mission is to empower women to support their children and sustain themselves in spite of a positive HIV status. At the height of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, Bonda Art and Craft initiated a sub-organization called Chiedza (Light) to focus on educating the community on HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention and child protection with a particular emphasis on orphaned and vulnerable children, eliminating gender based violence, sexual reproductive health rights awareness, and empowerment activities for youth and women. Chiedza also serves as a drop-in center for victims of domestic violence.

In February 2013, Bonda Art and Craft received a \$20,000 grant through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Fund to build a community hall. Three hundred people were actively involved in the construction of the community hall project. Despite some unforeseen challenges that resulted in delays, the Bonda Art and Craft team persevered for 30 months and made every effort to ensure that the construction project was successful.

The Bonda community is an extraordinary example of community commitment, hard work, patience, and perseverance. In November 2015, despite all the challenges, setbacks, and uncertainty, the community's efforts paid off. Rachel Meyers, the U.S. Embassy's Counselor for Political and Economic Affairs, officially handed over the newly built community hall to the Bonda community at a festive handover ceremony held in Mutasa. In her remarks, she congratulated project manager Gladys Mukaratirwa and the devoted community who were intimately involved in the planning, building, and construction of the Bonda community hall.

Today the community hall is a bustling hub for the women, children, youths, and men living in ward 12 and neighboring communities in the district. Women use part of the community hall for drying their batiks and as a venue to manufacture and produce reusable sanitary wares to sell to the community. The youth will access short term skills training and community library services. In order to help get the library off to a good start, Ms. Meyers donated five boxes of books provided by the U.S. Embassy community. In her closing remarks she stated, "I am proud to count Bonda Community Hall as another example of America's commitment to a strong, sustainable, and prosperous Zimbabwe. And thank you for helping to make your own communities – and Zimbabwe – a better place."