

**MITIGATION OF HUMAN RESOURCE RISKS: A CASE STUDY OF THE  
MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, MOTHER AND CHILD  
HEALTH, FROM 2005 TO 2014.**

**BY  
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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF  
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.**



**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA,  
LUSAKA,  
2015.**

## **DECLARATION**

I, MANZUNZO ZULU, declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that it has not been previously submitted for a degree, diploma or other qualifications at this or another university.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL**

This dissertation of MANZUNZO ZULU has been approved as partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Master of Public Administration by the University of Zambia.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Human resources have been widely recognized as critical assets in every organization. Without human resource an organisation can hardly exist. However, human resources face a number of risks which affect the productivity of organizations. This study looked at the mitigation of human resource risk at the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health headquarters in Lusaka District. The study employed a case study design. It was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Primary Data was collected using both interviews and self administered questionnaires. The specific objectives of the study included; (i) To determine the human resource risks in the ministry, (ii) To examine the mechanisms put in place to mitigate the human resource risks in the ministry, and (iii) To examine the consequences of not mitigating the human resource risk in the Ministry.

120 respondents participated in the study and the study revealed that the ministry faces a number of human resource risks which were ranked into high, medium and low risks. The human resource risks ranked high according to the study which the ministry faces include; poor recruitment/selection, stress, de-motivation, repetitive stress injuries, violence at the place of work, non empowerment, skills shortages, unplanned retirement/succession and absenteeism. Additionally, human resource risk that were ranked as medium include; efficiency of employees, family dynamics, poor ethics/ethical behavior (dishonest and corruption), alignment, reward and recognition, work-aholism, information technology, outside working environment, sabotage, low self esteem, post traumatic stress disorder and poor leadership. Those that ranked as low human resource risks include; natural hazards, political instability, terrorism, retrenchment/downsizing, occupational diseases, strikes/disputes, sexual harassment, workplace bullying, occupational injuries, statutory risks/lack of compliance with laws, sick building, electromagnetic radiation, alcoholism and drug dependency, dread diseases, discrimination and HIV/AIDS.

The findings from the field revealed that the ministry had put in place mechanisms to mitigate the human resource risks, although the majority of the respondents were not aware of the measures put in place. The mechanisms that have been put in place to mitigate human resource risks include; HIV/AIDS, work place policy, training plans, annual performance appraisal system, retirement and succession plans and check in and out log books.

Findings also revealed the costs associated with the ministry not putting in place measures to mitigate the human resource risks and these are; loss of employees through deaths or transfers and resignations, difficulties to attract and retain qualified and skilled people, loss of morale, cost factors, and low productivity.

The study concluded with a number of recommendations that could be put in place to strengthen the human resource risk management. Among them is that the ministry need to put in place a clear mechanism for identifying and addressing all the human resource risks.

## **DEDICATION**

To my lovely wife, Felesia Mulauzi Zulu and my lovely daughters, Joyce Zulu and Criscencia Zulu.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am highly indebted to my supervisor, Dr. W. Mafuleka, for the guidance and inspiration. Thanks also go to Dr. M.C. Bwalya and Mr. Masauso Chirwa for their continued guidance.

I also wish to thank the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health and the Government (MCDMCH) for granting me study leave, without which it would have not been possible for me to undertake my studies. I am also grateful to the MCDMCH staff, for providing valuable information towards the study.

Lastly, but not the least, my sincere gratitude and love go to my wife, Felesia Mulauzi Zulu, for her encouragement and support, and my lovely daughters, Joyce Zulu and Criscencia Zulu, for their patience during my absence from them in my pursuit for educational furtherance.



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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.
APAS	Annual Performance Appraisal System.
CSO	Central Statistical Office.
CTD	Cumulative Trauma Disorder.
CTS	Carptal tunnel Syndrome .
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia.
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus.
MCDMCH	Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health.
MCDSS	Ministry of Community Development and Social Services.
MCH	Mother and Child Health.
NAPSA	National Pensions Scheme Authority.
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations.
PSMD	Public Service Management Division.
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.
RMD	Repetitive Motion Disorder

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Human resource is the mover of all aspects of development from the stage of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It is for this reason that organisations must treat its staff as the strategic corporate resource (Drucker in Chatterjee, 1999). According to Hammarskjold in United Nations (2005:25) man is the key to all problems, not money. Funds are valuable only when used by trained, experienced and devoted men and women. Such people, on the other hand, can work miracles even with small resources and draw wealth out of barren land. In addition, Storey in Armstrong contended that people are important resources through which organizations achieve competitive advantage and these resources have to be acquired, developed and deployed in ways that will benefit the organization (Armstrong, 2009).

Further, Chatterjee (1999:2) claimed that, “In all the business operations, people are the source of all productive effort in an organization. The distinguishing factor of an enterprise is irrefutably, the ability of its human resources to face up to the challenges and use its vast potential to deliver required results. For other resources, whether land or capital, to be effectively utilized, it is the human resources that have to be properly and adequately actuated.” It is in this regard that deliberate effort should be made to eliminate any occurrences that may affect adversely this major agent of development. In other words, organizations should mitigate all possible risks that may affect its human resources in order to run efficiently. The consequences of not mitigating the human resource risks are that the organization cannot meet its intended objectives. In many countries, and Zambia to be specific, few studies, if any have, been conducted to ascertain the mitigation of human resource risks that exist in organizations. This study investigated the risks which threaten availability or normal performance of personnel with particular focus on the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health in Zambia. The investigation was confined to the period from 2005 to 2013 which appears to have latest data on the topic.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Many organizations in the world, including Zambia, face the challenge of human resource risks, for instance, the inability to recruit, retain and make more productive the required personnel for the organization. The Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health is not an exception. The Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health was established to efficiently and effectively facilitate the provision of socio-economic empowerment and social assistance support to the poor and vulnerable, as well as promote maternal and child health (Government of the Republic of Zambia, 2011). This was in response to the high extreme poverty levels in the country where 42% of the population live in extreme poverty (Central Statistical Office, 2012). To achieve this objective, the ministry needs adequate staff in terms of quantity and quality so as to provide quality services to the citizenry. For instance, in 2007 the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health (the then Ministry of Community Development and Social Services) had 1,607 approved staff positions on the establishment and during this period the ministry recruited 296 staff, bringing the total number of positions filled to 1, 289, remaining with 313 vacancies. During the same implementation period of 2007, the ministry lost 10 members of staff through resignations and 8 members of staff died (Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, 2007). This state of affairs clearly presents a challenge for the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health to effectively and efficiently manage its staff. Literature reviewed indicates that many organizations in Zambia hardly design strategies to mitigate such risks.

The consequences of not mitigating the human resource risks in the Ministry are numerous: Firstly, the ministry may experience difficulties to attract qualified human capital thereby having incompetent people who may compromise the quality of the services delivered to the people. Secondly, this may result in high staff turnover due to lack of motivation and increased frustration in a long run (Vedpuriswar, 2007). Without competent people, the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health risks not attaining its mandated goals and objectives of providing social assistance to the incapacitated and extremely poor and improve provision of primary health care. In short, human resources management has become more critical than ever before (Vedpuriswar, 2007). It is, therefore, imperative for the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health to mitigate human resource risks.



Although researches have been done in human resource risk management in the world and Zambia in particular, reviewed literature indicates that there has been no study that has been undertaken in the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health to determine the type of human resource risks faced and how they can be mitigated and it is in this regard that the study was undertaken.

### **1.3 Study Objectives**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

To investigate the types of human resource risks and the mitigation measures at the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

- i) To determine the types of human resource risks in the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health.
- ii) To examine the mechanisms put in place to mitigate the human resource risks in the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health.
- iii) To examine the consequences of not mitigating the human resource risk in the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health.
- iv) To recommend appropriate ways in which to mitigate the human resource risks in the Ministry of community Development, Mother and Child Health.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

In order to probe this problem, the study was guided by the following questions:

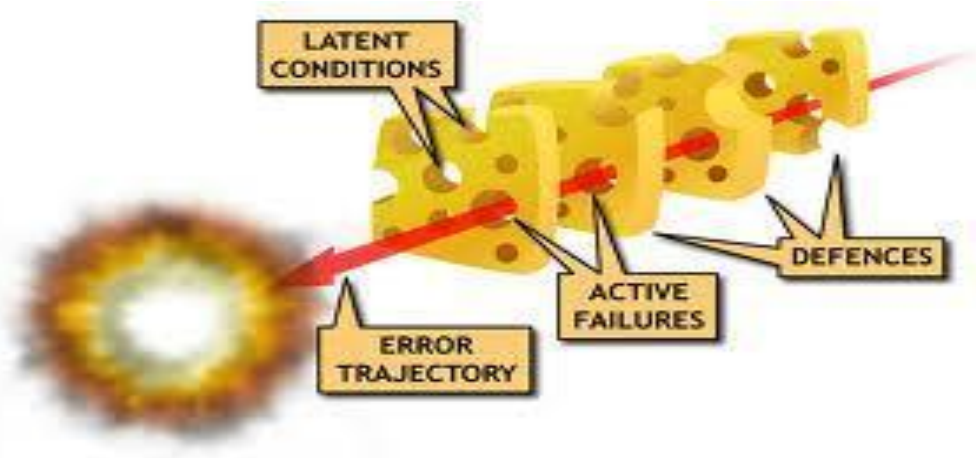
- a) Does the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health (MCDMCH) face human resource risks?
- b) Has the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health in place mechanisms to mitigate human resource risks?
- c) What consequences does the ministry face as a result of not mitigating the human resource risks?

## **1.5 Rationale of the study**

The study envisaged providing information, suggestions or advice to, not only the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health, but also to other organizations in the mitigation of human resource risks that affect productivity. It will also contribute to scholarly literature in the field so as to stimulate more research and advance knowledge in the area of human resources risk management, especially that data on the topic is very scanty and such a study has not previously been done in Zambia. The study is anchored on the assumption that every organization in the world has human resource risks that affect the attainment of its goals and objectives. Therefore, the study will be a wakeup call for all those organizations in the public sector that have not yet put in place human resource mitigation measures in order to achieve their set objectives effectively and efficiently.

## **1.6 Conceptual Framework**

This study was guided by defence in depth theory developed by James Reason in 1990. This theory, though old, is applicable to many current organizational needs. As the name suggests, defence in depth theory holds that there is need to build layers of defence to mitigate risks. This is so because according to this theory, a risk has a trajectory, which passes through corresponding holes in the layers of defense, barriers and safeguards. In this regard, the defence or safeguards should not provide a linear line where the risks can easily penetrate. The defence or barriers should, therefore, be in zigzag, if risks are to be prevented from passing through the holes to reach the level of error trajectory. Failure in a form of explosion happens when risks pass through all the holes (Figure 1 below). The strategy is based on the military principle that it is more difficult for an enemy to defeat a complex and multi-layered defence system than to penetrate a single barrier. Defence in depth minimizes the probability that the efforts of malicious hackers will succeed (Reason, 1990).



*Figure 1: Defence in depth theory*

*Source: Reason (1990)*

Reason (1990) indicates that a *defence in depth* approach acknowledges that all systems are imperfect and that by lining up layers of defence in depth, they are presented with the opportunity of catching, retarding or retiring risk prior to failure. Similarly, human resource risk factors essentially follow a similar path in that there are both active failures and latent conditions that coexist within the workplace and when these factors come together they will result in poor productivity outcomes.

Human resources are one of the most indispensable assets in every organization. Human resources are the people with skills working in organizations to produce goods and services. Without human resources, organizations can hardly perform. However, every organization in the world, whether private or public, faces the challenge of human resources risks. This study will focus on a risk to mean the probability of loss or uncertainty of future events through staff turnover and death which, if left unchecked, could adversely affect the achievement of organisational objectives (Naidoo, 2002). According to Deloitte, (2008) a human resource risk is any people, culture or governance factor that causes uncertainty in the business environment that could adversely affect the organisation's operations. There are two types of risks, internal and external. Internal risks are those which are of the organization own making, they are inherent to the organization's goals and objectives and external risks are those which are inherent in the environment where the organization operates and has no control or influence.

In view of this, organizations should put up defence layers to safeguard its human resources from possible risks that may result in organizational failure. In this context failure implies human resource risks like poor recruitment and selection, poor retention of staff, reward and recognition, poor leadership, stress, discrimination, sexual harassment, violence in the workplace, absenteeism, injuries, occupational diseases, HIV/AIDS, and other risks that may result in loss in productivity or post-employment claims (Stramrood, 2008). Organizations should, therefore, put in place mitigation measures or barriers or mechanisms to human resource risks if they are to attain their goals and objectives. Measures put in place are defence layers that have the ability to catch, retard or retire risk so that an error trajectory is not achieved and more importantly, the likelihood of a failure is reduced significantly (Reason, 1990). Defence in depth is the coordinated use of multiple security countermeasures to protect the integrity of human resource assets in an organization (Reason, 1990).

Mitigation, in this study, denotes reducing the probability or consequences of a risk event to occur. Mitigation includes reduction of the likelihood that a risk event will occur and/or reduction of the effect of a risk event if it does occur. High performing organizations have developed strategies through strategic planning process by removing performance barriers (Airmic, 2010). Approaches to managing risks are designed to enable an organization to reduce uncertainty surrounding the achievement of objectives. They aim at reducing the likelihood and the effects that the event which the organizations expect to affect them negatively will occur (Meyer et al, 2011). According to Howard and Jawahar (2012), the purpose of risk mitigation is to analyze, assess, control, avoid, minimize or eliminate the unacceptable risks of an organization.

Risk mitigation helps an organization to avoid costs of risks and disruption of operations, thereby promoting the achievement of the intended objectives (Howard and Jawahar, 2012). The way human resource risks are handled will determine the success or failure of achieving organizational goals. Emblemvag and Kjolstad (2002) claimed that effective risk management enables decision makers to increase their knowledge about their options in times of uncertainty and thus reduce their risks of business failure. Whitfield, (2003) noted that, the ability of an organization to anticipate and manage risks is critical for maintaining ongoing operations. Public Administrators, hence, need to understand human resource risks so that they can put in place

measures that will mitigate the risks. Steinberg and Brownmilow, (2000) further noted that managers want to sleep comfortably, knowing that major surprises will not hit their organisation.

## **1.7 Literature Review**

### **1.7.1 Introduction**

This section is divided into the following components: the importance of mitigating human resource risks by organizations, the identification of human resources risks and categorization by risks inherent in the environment in which the organizations operate and the risks which are of the organisation's own making, the strategies that organisations put in place to mitigate the human resource risks and the consequences of not mitigating the human resources risks.

### **1.7.2 The Importance for Organizations to Mitigate the Human Resource Risks**

Mitigation of human resource risks involves understanding the risks that can impact the attainment of the organizational goals and objectives and putting in place measures to bring them to acceptable levels. Each organization is created to meet specific goals and objectives, hence the need to ensure that this is achieved. Human resources are important in achieving the set organizational goals and objectives because it is the human resources that mix the other resources - financial, material and others to achieve the intended objectives (Chatterjee, 1999). Ernst & Young, (2009) further submit that 'managing risk in the HR area has become an increasingly important issue for global executives.' In risk mitigation the managers Prioritize, or rank, each risk for significance and likelihood of occurrence. To rank risks management, it is better to determine the strategy that would be most effective. Therefore, it is imperative for any organization to ensure that it puts in place measures that will mitigate and help manage the risks that affect human resources in order to achieve the intended objectives.

### **1.7.3 Identification of Human Resource Risks**

A number of scholars have studied human resource risks that affect organizations. For instance, Stramrood, (2008) conducted a study entitled the *Impact of People Risks on Any Organisation and Potential Strategies to Mitigate those Risks: A Literature Review*. Stramrood identified 30 human resource risks from a research conducted in South Africa among 35 Safety Practitioners registered with the Institute of Safety Management. The Institute had 250 registered

practitioners. The human resource risks identified were: Repetitive Stress injuries, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), electromagnetic radiation, alcohol and drug dependency, dread diseases (heart and cancer), violence at the work place, sick building syndrome, occupational injuries, outside environmental risks, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), retrenchment and downsizing, retirement and pipelining (succession planning ), unethical behavior (dishonesty, corruption), stress, workplace bullying, reward and recognition, alignment ( processes, structures and human resource policies), sexual harassment, statutory risks, information technology, efficiency of employees (competence, capacity and capability), poor Leadership, low self – esteem, non empowerment, work-aholism, de-motivation, absenteeism, family dynamics, discrimination and occupational diseases.

Stramrood (2008) concluded that among the 30 risks identified, the top 10 organizations were likely to face in a hierarchical order were: efficiency of employees, poor leadership, stress, statutory risks, de-motivation, alignment (processes, structures and human resource policies), HIV/AIDS, occupational injuries, retirement and pipelining and unethical behavior (dishonesty, corruption).

Those rated as medium risks were repetitive stress injuries, alcohol and drug dependency, dread diseases (heart and cancer), outside working environmental risks, post traumatic stress disorder, retrenchment and downsizing, workplace bullying, reward and recognition, sexual harassment, discrimination, information technology, non empowerment and absenteeism.

The low risks that Stramrood(2008) identified not likely to occur in an organizations were sick building syndrome, sexual harassment, violence in a workplace, electromagnetic radiation occupational diseases, work-aholism, low self esteem and family dynamics.

Stramrood (2008) study's strength is that it highlights a number of human resource risks faced by different organizations and it was conducted in South Africa which has similar conditions to that of Zambia. This research benefited from the literature because it sought to find out the human resource risks faced by Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child. However, the findings of Stramrood (2008) study raises methodological issues for instance the instruments of data collection thus questionnaires for the study were electronically sent to the respondents and

some questionnaires were not responded to. This can be seen from the small sample size of 35 human resources Practitioners from 35 companies out of 250 companies registered with the Institute of Safety Management. Stramrood (2008) also acknowledges the fact that “possible limitations with the data relates to the sample size...” (Stramrood, 2008:45). Hence, the findings can be questioned. Stramrood (2008) study investigated mainly organisations that were involved in businesses that were considered to have higher risks like those in mining and construction industry. Furthermore, the study only interviewed human resources risk managers and did not interview the workers to get their views regarding the human resource risks in those organizations. Unlike the Stramrood study, the current research interviewed both the managers and the workers in the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health which is a public service institution and self administered questionnaires were used. This research further sought to find out the reasons for the rating or ranking of the identified human resource risks by the respondents in the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health.

Meyer, et al (2011) conducted a similar study to that of Stramrood(2008) entitled *Human resources risk management: Governing people risks for improved performance* and concluded that the human resource risks that organizations were likely to face in order of magnitude were; employee retention, skills shortages, poor leadership, lack of compliance with laws and rules, strikes and disputes, nepotism, remuneration problems, poor ethics, sabotage, high absenteeism, retirement and lack of succession planning and poor recruitment and selection. Meyer, et al (2011) study is very important to the current study because it also highlights a number of human resource risks faced by many organizations. However, Just like the Sramrood study, Meyer study looked at mainly financial institutions and overlooked the in the public service. The current study looked at the human resource risks in a public service institution.

In Zambia, Namangala (2002) conducted a study entitled *sources and patterns of stress among the teachers* and the researcher concluded that poor conditions of service and understaffing were the major sources of occupational stress among the teachers. This research benefitted from the literature because it sought to find out what were the human resource risks and their cause in the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health. Namangala’s (2002) study is different in that it only focused on one aspect of human resource risks, which was stress and this study however, attempted to establish broad human resource risks.

Another study was by Chabala (2005) entitled *The Safety of Mineworkers in Zambia: How Effective are the Law?* Chabala (2005) concluded that there were laws that regulate the safety of employees in the country but that due to none enforcement of the laws, the safety measures were left to the employees in the environment they operate from. This study by Chabala (2005) was beneficial to the current research because all organizations including Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health must ensure that employees operate in a safe environment. However, the Chabala (2005) study looked at the mining industry and focused on the aspect of safety in the work place at the expense of other human resource risks hence, this study therefore, attempted to establish the different human resource risks in the civil service.

Mwale (2011) conducted a study to assessed the practices and effects of training and development programs at Zambia Telecommunications Company (ZAMTEL) and concluded that ZAMTEL had training and development programmes in place, however the employees were selected for training and development based on favouritism. Mwale's study is very important in that it highlights the importance of training and development of employees in order to achieve the organizational intended goals. It further highlights that training programmes should be based on needs assessment in order to afford all the employees an equal opportunity to be trained which consequently motivates employees. However, the Mwale study did not attempt to identify the various human resource risks faced by public sector institutions and their mitigation measures which is the focus of the current study.

#### **1.7.3.1 Categorization of Human Resource Risks**

Political instability, natural disasters (floods, earthquakes), labour regulatory laws, terrorism, electromagnetic radiation and family dynamics have been identified as risks inherent in the environment (Ernst and Young, 2008; Stramrood, 2008; Kaplan and Mikes, 2012). While those internal risks which an organization can control are; repetitive stress injuries, HIV/AIDS workplace policy, alcohol and drug dependency, dread disease, violence at the workplace, sick building syndrome, occupational injuries, outside working environment risks, post traumatic stress disorder, retrenchment and downsizing, retirement and succession planning, poor ethics, stress, workplace bullying, reward and recognition, alignment, sexual harassment, efficiency of employees, poor leadership, low self – esteem, non empowerment, work aholism, demotivation, absenteeism, discrimination, occupational diseases, employee retention, skills shortages,



sabotage, information technology and poor recruitment and selection(Stramrood, 2008;Meyer et al, 2011).

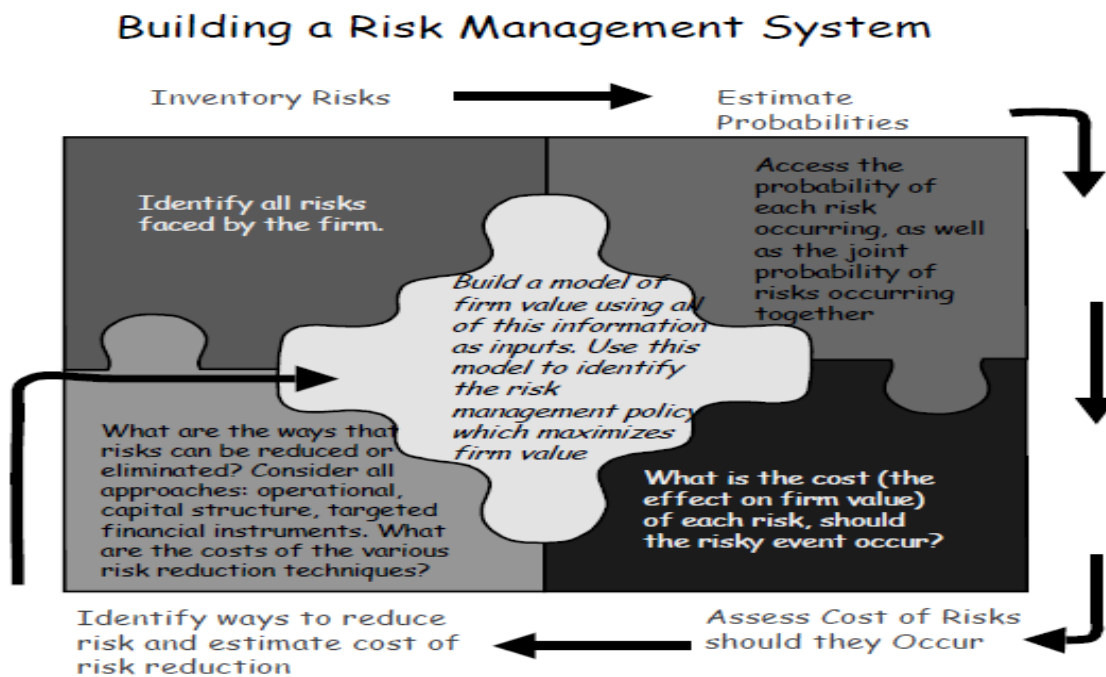
#### **1.7.4 Strategies for Mitigating Human Resource Risks**

The Committee of Sponsoring Organisations of the Treadway Commission (1992) created a framework for managing risks. The framework consists of five components and these are; control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information and communication and monitoring. The control environment is the foundation of mitigating the risks. It focuses on people, the unethical and moral values established by an organisation's leadership team and competence. It emphasizes that people are the organisation's key determinants of its success or failure. Risk assessment ensures that mechanisms exist throughout the organization to identify, manage and mitigate risks. The control component provides policies and procedures that should be established and adhered to in order to ensure that all actions of an organization support the achievement of defined goals. The information and communication component provides that information and communication should occur at all levels up, down and across the organization. It requires that the information must be timely, accurate and complete to support the achievement of stated goals, while the monitoring component entails that the whole process must be monitored in order to recognize and make necessary adjustments during the course of operations. Meyer, et al (2011) notes that the organization needs regular human resource audits, with an emphasis on clear reporting lines, and evidence of actions it has taken to address human resource risks. This provides the basis for reacting timely to risks.

Organizations must have in place an effective process of identifying risks, measure their potential impacts against a varied set of assumptions and do what is necessary to proactively manage them. Different risks need to be evaluated to see which ones impact significantly on an organization and this process includes analysis, quantification and prioritizing the identified human resource risks pertaining to the processes, conditions and activities performed within the working environment, as well as the external environment (Stramrood, 2008). Management assess whether the right mitigating measures are being taken.

The risk migrating techniques that organizations normally adopt are risk avoidance, risk reduction, risk retention and risk transfer. Risk avoidance involves physical risks that may have catastrophic consequences, if not managed properly. Here an organization will try to prevent the

risk totally. Risk reduction involves loss prevention and loss control efforts by minimizing the risks to acceptable levels. This technique will reduce the severity of the consequences and frequency of exposure to a particular risk. For risk retention, the cost of trying to avoid or reduce the cost may be too much in comparison to the actual or potential loss, hence, an organization tolerates the risk and will cope with the consequences should something happen. Risk transfer involves insuring the risk by contracting in or outsourcing the particular risk to an insurance organisation (Stramrood, 2008).



*Figure 2: Risk Management System*

Source: Vedpuriswar (2007)

Once the risks are identified, they are ranked on some rating scale that captures their importance, severity or probability of each risk occurring. The risk rating scale of high, medium or low is used and resources are then allocated accordingly to manage, mitigate or eliminate the identified risks. Organizations choose different ways of mitigating the human resource risks (Committee of Sponsoring Organisations of the Treadway Commission, 1992). The above framework assists with the assessment of the risks and the likelihood of occurrence and significance of impact.

Deloach (2000) notes that there is no one risk management model that fits all the organizations but certain key framework components must exist. First, managers of any organization should

establish risk management as part of strategic planning. Secondly, organizations must determine all the assets, including human resources at optimal value. Thirdly, risk assessment process must be well defined and the organization trained to incorporate risk management into day to day management practices. This is supported by Meyer et al (2011) who argue that managers should ensure that key staff members in their organisations have the proper training and education for managing risk. They include the board, managers and other key staff members and management affected directly by risks in the organisation.

Fourth, risk management system provides for a broad discussion of risks across the organization and once the risks are identified, they are managed in accordance with accountability levels established within management structures.

Once risk assessment has been conducted, every organization is supposed to use a number of techniques such as risk avoidance, risk reduction, risk retention and transfer to address human resource risks. Risk avoidance involves risks that may have catastrophic or major consequences, if not managed properly and an organization tries to eliminate them completely. Risk reduction aims at minimizing the risk to acceptable levels. This might be in terms of severity or frequency of exposure to the risk. For risk retention, an organization tolerates the risks and is able to cope with the consequences and risk transfer involves transferring of a risk to another institution such as insurance company. The technique an organization chooses to mitigate the risks depends on the frequency, probability of the occurring and the impact of its occurrence.

### **1.7.5 Consequences of Not Mitigating Human Resource Risks**

The inability by the organizations to recruit, retain and make productive the human resources makes it difficult for such organizations to meet their intended objectives, if they do not have measures to mitigate such risks. A lack of proper HR risk management contributes to poor governance because businesses often use a reactive approach to HR management with no or little regard for managing risk (Meyer et al, 2011).

### **1.7.6 Conclusion**

The literature revealed has shown that all organisations, whether public or private, face human resource risks that affect the achievement of the set goals and objectives. When an organization has a clear understanding of these human resource risks, their magnitude and the options for

response an organization will put in place mitigation measures. According to the reviewed literature, some studies have been done on human resource risks, however, these studies did not focus on the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health to determine the human resource risks at human resources risks. Hence, it was imperative to fill in the gap in literature.

## **1.8 Methodology**

### ***1.8.1 Study Design and Study Site***

This study was a case study of MCDMCH Headquarters based in Lusaka, which used both quantitative and qualitative methods. A case study is a detailed examination of an event or series of related events that the analyst believes exhibits the operation of some identified general theoretical principles (Mitchell in Taylor et al, 2011). The main purpose of a case study is to know precisely the factors and causes that explain the complex behaviors of a unit and the place of the unit in its surrounding. This method gives enough information about the unit being studied (Ghosh, 2002).

### **1.8.2 Methods and Techniques of Data Collection**

#### ***1.8.2.1 Sample Size***

The sample size of 120 respondents was selected and respondents were interviewed using a self administered questionnaire. Due to inadequate resources and time researchers normally draw a sample from a population from which they make inference or draw conclusions. The population refers to an entire group of persons or elements that have at least one thing in common (Phiri, 2006). Normally, “the population for a study is that group of (unusually people) about whom we want to be able to draw conclusions” (Kasonde-Ng’andu, 2013:35).

#### **1.8.3 Sampling Procedure**

A total of 110 participants who were the employees of the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health were randomly selected while, 10 senior management staff were purposively selected as key informants.

#### **1.8.4 Instruments of Data Collection**

The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data from 120 participants.

The study collected both primary and secondary data. Interviews were conducted using a self administered questionnaire which also functioned as an interview guide to collect the primary data from the key informants. Secondary data was collected through desk research from various sources such as text books, internet and other relevant publications on human resource risks. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher.

### **1.8.5 Data Processing and Analysis Methods**

Quantitative data was analyzed using a Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and excel sheet to generate frequencies and tables while qualitative data was analyzed thematically.

### **1.8.6 Limitations and Challenges of the Study**

It is important to note that MCDMCH is represented in all 10 Provinces across the country, and due to financial inadequacy, limited time and incomplete sampling frame, the study focused on the ministry headquarters based in Lusaka. Hence, the findings may not give the complete picture of the human resource risks in the ministry. It was also difficult to find all the officers in their office as some of them were in the field, as the result the researcher had to make several trips to interview the participants.

## **1.9 Organisation of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter one gives background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, conceptual framework, literature review and methodology of the study. Chapter two presents the organizational structure of Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health. Chapter three identifies the types of the human resource risks faced Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health. Chapter four discusses the mechanisms that have been put in place to mitigate the risks and the consequences of not mitigating the risks. Chapter five presents the conclusions and gives recommendations.

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## **CHAPTER TWO: ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE OF MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH.**

### **2.1 Organisation Structure**

The Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health is headed by the Chief Executive Officer who is the Permanent Secretary. At the time of the study, the Ministry was in the process of being realigned. The realignment was the result of the new Government's vision to improve service delivery and efficiency. Hence the Department of Mother and Child Health and the Department of the Registrar for Non Governmental Organisations were introduced. "This evolution was necessitated by the need for the nation to begin to holistically deal with extreme poverty and health issues by using existing community structures in a more integrated and coordinated manner" (Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health, 2013:5). The Department of Cultural Affairs was moved to the Ministry of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs. According to the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health (MCDMCH) (2013a), the Ministry has three main focus areas of responsibility and these are:

- a) *Social Development*, which focuses on human development process where issues of poverty alleviation, literacy improvement socio-economic empowerment and widespread community mobilization for development shall constitute the main areas of concentration;
- b) *Primary Health Care*, which focuses on reducing maternal and child mortality. In addition, this involves reducing the high incidence and prevalence of diseases.
- c) *NGO Coordination*, which involves the coordination and registration of non-governmental organisations and enhancing the transparency, accountability and performance of Non-Governmental Organisations.

The Ministry's core objectives are:

- 1) To empower the low capacity households in order to improve their productivity and livelihoods.
- 2) To provide social assistance to incapacitated individuals and households in order to reduce extreme poverty.
- 3) To provide quality maternal and child health services in order to reduce maternal and child mortality.

- 4) To provide preventive and curative health services in order to reduce the high incidence and prevalence of diseases.
- 5) To facilitate the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructure and equipment for effective delivery of primary health care and social protection services.
- 6) To provide functional literacy to the community in order to reduce illiteracy levels and improve livelihoods.
- 7) To effectively mobilize and manage financial, administrative and logistical support services in order to enhance the operations of the Ministry.
- 8) To plan, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of policies and programmes in order to ensure the attainment of Ministerial goals and objectives.
- 9) To rehabilitate, care and protect Juveniles and children in need in order to reduce delinquency and promote their well-being.
- 10) To manage and develop human resource in order to enhance the operations and performance of the Ministry.
- 11) To promote efficient operation of Non-Governmental Organizations in order to enhance transparency, accountability and service delivery.
- 12) To rehabilitate and capacitate persons with disabilities in order to enhance equitable participation in national development (MCDMCH, 2013a).

The Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health has six Departments namely; the Department of Community Development, the Department of Social Welfare, the Department of Human Resources and Administration, the Department of Mother and Child Health, the Department of the Registrar for NGOs and the Department of Planning and Information.

### **2.1.1 The Department of Community Development**

The department's main objective is to provide socio-economic empowerment to low capacity communities and individuals in rural and urban areas of the country. Those targeted include; women's groups, vulnerable members of the community in need of livelihood skills, communities undertaking community initiated projects, illiterate vulnerable members of the community, vulnerable farming households/individuals and voluntary community based organizations (CBOs) implementing community development projects (MCDMCH, 2013a). The

Department of Community Development has a representation in all 10 provinces and 104 Districts.

The department also has skills training centers in the ten provinces where it provides skills training in metal fabrication, carpentry and joinery, bricklaying and plastering, tailoring and designing and food and nutrition. The Department of Community Development also offers training for diploma and certificate courses in community development for both in-service and pre-service students at the Kitwe and Monze Community Development Training Colleges.

In implementing the above programmes, the department facilitates formation of women's clubs and associations, provides leadership and entrepreneurship skills training, provides cash grants, equipment and materials, facilitates capacity building activities in self improvement projects among vulnerable women, promotes the participation of vulnerable women in developmental activities, promotes food security at household level in order to reduce poverty and enhance household nutrition, mobilizes communities to improve their quality of life through undertaking self-help programmes, facilitates service delivery at community level through creation or strengthening community based organizations (CBOs) and other community structures; and creates a favorable social economic environment for sustainable development of communities by promoting local community action (MCDMCH, 2013a).

### **2.1.2 The Department of Social Welfare**

The department was established after the Second World War in the 1950s, mainly as a response to the problems of settling and rehabilitating persons demobilised from the war. However, over the years, the responsibilities of the department have grown both in complexity and magnitude, primarily due to factors such as increased prevalence of diseases such as HIV and AIDS which has contributed to the number of orphans and vulnerable children, increasing levels of poverty both in rural and urban areas, making individuals and households overwhelmed and unable to cope with demands, hence the need for social safety nets and various forms of public assistance (MCDMCH, 2013a).

The department provides both non-statutory and statutory services. Non- statutory services include the following programmes:

*Public welfare assistance scheme (PWAS)*; which is aimed at providing basic necessities to the most vulnerable in the form of food, clothing, shelter, education and health care support and repatriation, among others.

The Social Cash Transfer Scheme which is aimed at providing assistance in form of cash to households that have limited self-help potential due to various economic hardships. This programme was being implemented in 19 realigned districts of Kalomo, Zimba, Monze, Kazungula, Chipata, Katete, Sinda, Serenje, Chitambo, Zambezi, Luwingu, Milenge, Chiengi, Kaputa, Nsama, Shang'ombo, Sioma, Kalabo and Sikongo. The Department of Social welfare scaled up the programme in 2014 to 31 more districts and these are Gwembe, Livingstone, Petauke, Mambwe, Senanga, Nalolo, Lukulu, Mitete, Mporokoso, Chilubi, Mungwi, Itezhi – Tezhi, Lusaka, Luangwa, Kitwe, Lufwanyama, Ndola, Luanshya, Chavuma, Mufumbwe, Chinsali, Shiwang'andu, Isoka, Mafinga, Mwense, Samfya, Mwansabombwe, Lunga, Nchelenge, Kawambwa and Chipili. By 2018 all the 104 districts would be covered by the social cash transfer programme (MCDMCH, 2013b).

Care for Older Persons this programme is aimed at caring for destitute persons aged sixty (60) years and above. Ideally older people are supposed to be kept by their children or relations but in most cases these senior citizens have been neglected, hence government uses the institutionalization of the older persons as a means for last resort. Besides giving them basic social services, they are kept in communal rooms due to inadequate resources to be able to build more institutions, hence they lose the privacy (MCDMCH, 2012).

Social Protection Fund is aimed at assisting vulnerable individuals and households with capital to run business ventures or income generation activities to cushion them from hardships for sustainable development.

Medical Social Work facilitates provision of appropriate interventions of counseling, placement of abandoned children, family tracing, home follow-ups, referrals to appropriate support services and repatriation of discharged patients. The department also pays for medical fees for incapacitated patients who fail to pay for themselves.

Under Prison Welfare, the department provides counseling, guidance and other services to persons in prison and their families to help them cope with the situation and make reintegration into the family and community easier after serving the prison sentence.

Places of safety, disability services, secondary / tertiary bursaries education support service and marriage counseling are other services that are provided. Non-statutory services refer to services provided by the government without reference to any Act of Parliament, which can be provided by the private sector, NGOs or individuals (MCDMCH, 2012).

Statutory services include adoption which provides a permanent home, legal protection and security to children in need of care. Foster care provides temporally legal protection and security to children in need of care and such children are normally kept in orphanages. Correctional and probation services deal with children that fall in conflict with the law. The department has Nakambala Approved School based in Mazabuka for the males and Insakwe Approved School in Ndola for the females. The department also seconds staff to Katombora Reformatory School which is run by the Zambia Prisons Services to provide counseling and other casework services to the juveniles. The Anti-Gender Based Violence Act No. 1 of 2011 and the Anti-Human Trafficking Act No. 11 of 2011 provide the legal guidelines regarding gender based violence and human trafficking (MCDMCH, 2012).

### **2.1.3 The Department of Human Resources and Administration**

The department of human resources and administration has the following functions: Developing strategies to identify the human resources needs in the social protection and health sectors; advising on training needs and areas or disciplines in the social and health sector where training should be enhanced. This is to ensure a link between training and requirements on the ground; developing strategies to retain ministry personnel; developing mechanisms to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of human resources in the social and health sectors with the aim of:

- a) Ensuring the availability of functioning systems for human resource planning, development and management at all levels.
- b) Attending to all logistical and administrative support needs like transport, secretarial services, stationary, office superintendence and cleanliness, maintenance and servicing of equipment to facilitate operations.
- c) Payroll management and establishment control.
- d) Institutionalising Performance Management Systems in the Ministry; and
- e) Ensuring the rehabilitation and maintenance of motor vehicles and equipment (MCDMCH, 2013a).

The Department has also five units under its jurisdiction namely; Accounts Unit, Internal Audit Unit, Procurement and Supplies Unit, Food Management Unit and Registry Unit.

**a. Accounts Unit;**

The main functions of the Accounts Unit are to manage the financial resources to ensure efficiency and process payments to ensure timely execution of programmes in the Ministry.

**b. Internal Audit Unit;**

Its functions are to ensure that prudent use of the resources in the Ministry by providing internal controls to financial management. They scrutinize any payment in the Ministry before it is passed.

**c. Procurement and Supplies Unit;**

The Unit is in charge of all the procurement of goods and services in the Ministry.

#### **2.1.4 The Department of Mother and Child Health (MCH)**

The department has two major programme components of mother health, and child health and nutrition. MCH is responsible for management and implementation of all primary health care services relating to mother and child health, encompassing all first level hospitals, except those with training institutions, as these are run by the Ministry of Health. The department performs the following specific functions:

- Primary health care.
- Community mobilization.
- Child health services.



- Maternal health services.
- Outreach activities.
- Provision of integrated services.
- Health promotion and health education.
- Reproductive and adolescent health.
- Public health programmes.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health has retained the functions of managing all 2 level and 3 Level hospitals and all training institutions (MCDMCH, 2012).

### **2.1.5 The Department of the Registrar for NGOs**

The Department of Registrar for Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) was created after the enactment of the NGO Act No. 16 of 2009, to provide for the coordination and registration of nongovernmental organizations operating in Zambia. This was due to the fact that a number of the NGOs were being created in an uncoordinated manner and hence needed legislation to coordinate them. In addition, some of these pieces of legislation were outdated and not meeting current needs, hence, it was difficult for government to coordinate the existence, location and activities of NGOs. The department's core areas of operation are registration, inspection, documentation and administration. The department is headed by the registrar (MCDMCH, 2012).

### **2.1.6 The Department of Planning and Information**

The Department plays a pivotal role in coordinating the development and implementation of sectoral policies, programmes and plans from the respective departments within the ministry. It has a strong linkage with the overall national direction and government vision on that particular sector at a macro level (MCDMCH, 2012).

## **2.2 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the organizational structure of the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health which is critical in the reduction of extreme poverty and communicable diseases across the country. In 2011 the ministry was realigned to facilitate new government's vision of improving service delivery and efficiency. MCDMCH has six departments at the ministry headquarters namely; Community Development, Social Welfare,

Planning and Information, Human Resources and Administration, Mother and Child Health and the Department of the Registrar for Non Governmental Organisations.

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## **CHAPTER THREE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON RESPONDENTS AND KINDS OF HUMAN RESOURCE RISKS THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH FACES.**

### **3.1 Introduction**

As already eluded to in the previous chapters, every organization faces human resource risks of some kind. This study investigated the kinds of human resource risks the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health faces. The respondents in this regard were the actual subjects on which the research was based.

Results from the field revealed that most of the participants 103(85.8%) knew what human resource risks were. Very few participants 17(14.2%) indicated that they did not know what human resource risks were.

Interestingly, 103(85.8%) of the respondents further reported that the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health faces the challenge of human resources risks. While 17(14.2%) of the respondents indicated that the ministry does not face human resources risks. It is, therefore, clear from responses that the majority of the participants are aware that the ministry faces human resource risks. Participants were asked to list the human resource risks the ministry is facing. A number of them were brought out by the respondents, including: repetitive stress injuries, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), electromagnetic radiation, alcohol and drug dependency, dread disease (heart and cancer), violence at the work place, sick building syndrome, occupational injuries, outside environmental risks, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), retrenchment and downsizing, retirement and pipelining (succession planning ), unethical behavior (dishonesty, corruption), stress, workplace bullying, reward and recognition, alignment ( processes, structures and human resource policies), sexual harassment, statutory risks, information technology, efficiency of employees (competence, capacity and capability), poor leadership, low self – esteem, non empowerment, work holism, de-motivation and absenteeism.

In addition to the above, participants reported facing human resource risks relating to employee retention, skills shortages, lack of compliance with laws /rules, strikes/disputes, nepotism, remuneration problems, poor ethics, sabotage, high absenteeism, lack of succession planning and

poor recruitment/selection. Other human resource risks identified by participants include limited training for the officers.

In addition to mere identification of the human resource risks the ministry is facing, participants were asked to rate the human resource risks into high, medium and low risks, as presented in table 1 below.

*Table 1: Ranking of risks in terms of impact on the achievement of ministerial goals and sustainability.*

Type of Risk	Rating							
	Low		Medium		High		Total	Total
	Freq.*	(%)	Freq.	(%)	Freq.*	(%)	Freq.*	(%)
Repetitive stress injuries	21	17.5	42	35.0	57	47.5	120	100.0
HIV/AIDs	42	35.0	38	31.7	40	33.3	120	100.0
Electromagnetic radiation	57	47.5	30	25.0	33	27.5	120	100.0
Occupational diseases	78	65.0	34	28.3	8	6.7	120	100.0
Alcohol or drug dependency	54	45.0	50	41.7	16	13.3	120	100.0
Dread diseases (cancer and heart disease)	54	45.0	49	40.8	17	14.2	120	100.0
Violence in the place of work	42	35.0	22	18.3	56	46.7	120	100.0
Occupational injuries	60	50.0	43	35.8	17	14.2	120	100.0
Sick building	60	50.6	42	35.0	18	15.0	120	100.0
Outside working environment risks	50	41.7	56	46.7	14	11.6	120	100.0
Post traumatic stress disorder	45	37.5	54	45.0	21	17.5	120	100.0
Unplanned Retirement / Lack of succession planning	30	25.0	40	33.3	50	41.7	120	100.0
Poor ethics/Unethical behavior (dishonest or corruption)	23	19.2	63	52.5	34	28.3	120	100.0
Stress	11	9.2	51	42.5	58	48.3	120	100.0
Work place bullying	64	53.3	27	22.5	29	24.2	120	100.0
Reward and recognition	19	15.8	61	50.8	40	33.3	120	100.0
Alignment	18	15.0	61	50.8	41	34.2	120	100.0
Sexual harassment	70	58.3	20	16.7	30	25.0	120	100.0

Discrimination	47	39.2	31	25.8	42	35.0	120	100.0
Statutory risks/ lack of compliance with laws	60	50.0	33	27.5	27	22.5	120	100.0
Efficiency of employees	18	15.0	70	58.3	32	26.7	120	100.0
Information technology	23	19.2	58	48.3	39	32.5	120	100.0
Poor leadership	23	19.2	50	41.7	47	39.2	120	100.0
Low self –esteem	38	31.7	54	45.0	28	23.3	120	100.0
Non-empowerment	27	22.5	38	31.7	55	45.8	120	100.0
De-motivation	7	5.8	56	46.7	57	47.5	120	100.0
Work-aholism	36	30.0	59	49.2	25	20.8	120	100.0
Political instability	90	75	20	17	10	8	120	100.0
Absenteeism	40	33.3	38	31.7	42	35	120	100.0
employee retention	34	28.3	50	41.7	36	30.0	120	100.0
skills shortages	26	21.6	41	34.2	53	44.2	120	100.0
Natural hazards	105	87.5	15	12.5	0	0	120	100.0
strikes/disputes	76	63.3	20	16.7	24	20.0	120	100.0
Sabotage	41	34.2	55	45.8	24	20.0	120	100.0
Terrorism	87	72.5	26	22	7	6		100.0
Poor recruitment/selection of staff	29	24.2	24	20.0	67	55.8	120	100.0
Retrenchment/downsizing	86	71.7	30	25	4	3.3	120	100.0
Family dynamics	6	5.0	69	57.5	45	37.5	120	100.0
<b>Other HR risks identified</b>								
Limited Training		0		0	19	14.7	19	100.0

\*Frequency

### 3.2 High human resource risks

The study rated the following nine (9) risks as high in the ministry:

- i) Poor recruitment/selection of staff.
- ii) Stress.

- iii) De-motivation.
- iv) Repetitive stress injuries.
- v) Violence at the place of work.
- vi) Non-empowerment.
- vii) Skills shortages.
- viii) Unplanned retirement/lack of succession planning.
- ix) Absenteeism.

These findings are presented in figure 3 below.

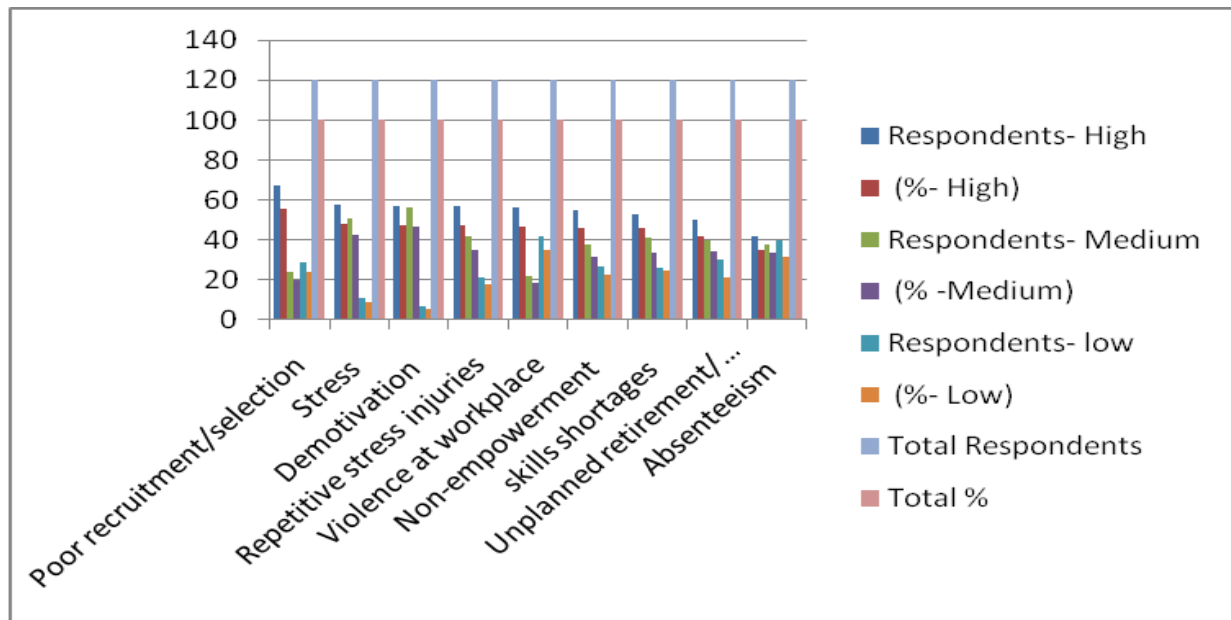


Figure 3: High human resources risks.

Poor recruitment or selection of staff emerged as the highest human resource risk the ministry was facing at 67(55.8%), while 51(24.2%) rated it as low and 29(20%) rated it as medium. This could be attributed to uncoordinated recruitment procedures that were taking place between the ministry and Public Service Management Division (PSMD) as highlighted by one of the respondents that:

*The uncoordinated recruitment process led to recruitment of officers with totally different expectations as they did not understand fully the operations of the ministry. Once such officers acquired the knowledge they would go for greener pastures.*

Cabinet Office (2003:7) states that subject to the provisions of the constitution of the Republic of Zambia, appointment to the public service shall be made by the President or by the Service Commission, acting in the name and on behalf of the President. Any other institution of government cannot appoint or recruit unless with delegated authority by the Service Commission. PSMD is, therefore, charged with the responsibility of recruiting civil servants on behalf of the President. One of the respondents indicated that:

*Sometimes, the ministry was not aware that PSMD was recruiting officers as they would just report to the ministry with appointment letters from PSMD. PSMD was also overwhelmed with work as there were so many officers in the ministry who needed confirmation into the civil service.*

This scenario has very serious implications on acceptability of officers because the respective ministry was not involved in the recruitment process. The conditions of service indicated that they should be on probation for six months (Cabinet Office (2003). Officers who have been working for longer than six months without being confirmed in most cases go for greener pastures because they get de-motivated. The ministry would therefore, be in a better position to identify the type of staff needed, qualifications and the challenges on the ground and how best officers recruited can be fitted within the ministry in terms of location.

Stress was the second highest human resource risk in the Ministry rated at 58(48.3%), while 51(42.5%) rated it as a medium and 11(9.2%) rated it as a low. This could be due to the fact that the ministry has a number of positions on its establishment that have not been filled. This has



resulted in the available officers being over-worked, meaning that they also work over the weekends in order to complete their assignments, as a result they also have no time for their families. According to Shemin (2009) employees should have time to spend with their families, friends and loved ones, if they are to be productive at work places and if they do not take weekends off, they are likely to have stress. Shemin (2009) notes that when the going gets tough at work and life demands exceed the employees' ability to cope, it becomes a threat to both physical and emotional wellbeing. Stress may result in memory lapses. Most staff would want to find means and ways of relieving themselves by absenting themselves from work. One of the ways to relieve themselves tends to be alcoholism.

De-motivation, like repetitive stress, emerged as a third high human resource risk rated at 57(47.5%).56(46.7%) rated it as a medium, while 7(5.8%) rated it as a low. From the findings it is clear that very few felt de-motivation has low impact on the performance of the employees. The majority indicated that the employees in the ministry were de-motivated, hence they were unlikely to perform well on their jobs. There are many possible reasons why staff in the ministry could be de-motivated. In the first place, de-motivation could be as a result of the delays in confirmation of officers in the ministry. As earlier mentioned, confirmation of officers is supposed to be done by PSMD. Secondly, salaries generally in most government institutions are low, as compared to private sector institutions and this is supported by Mutono (2010) who argued that the factors that affect the motivation of the workers were poor remuneration, conditions of service and promotion opportunities were the major factors that affected the motivations of the workers. These could be some of the de-motivating factors, not only in the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health, but also in other government institutions.

The other de-motivation factor reported by a respondent was the abolition of medical scheme. It was indicated that:

*Officers at headquarters previously had a clinic where they could go to when they were sick. However, this was abolished by the ministry in 2011.*

The other contributing factor was that it takes long for staff in the ministry to be promoted on acting position. Even when the issue is straight forward, PSMD takes ages and ages to write letters of promotion. For instance, one respondent indicated that:

*Up to now I have not been confirmed and I have served a number of years in Government. The Ministry wrote to PSMD regarding the same two years ago, however, PSMD responded indicating that there was some omission on the letter and the Ministry responded a year ago and up to now, the response is not forth-coming from PSMD. One wonders what process such a letter under goes to take a long period of time to be responded to.*

De-motivation of staff in the ministry could also be due to issues of appraisal as highlighted by one respondent that:

*Not all officers are appraised using the Annual Performance Appraisal System (APAS). The training of officers at headquarters in the implementation of the APAS which requires target setting based on the ministerial strategic plan was only done in 2013 and in the provinces and districts this has not been done. The ideal situation is that APAS forms should be used to appraise all staff every year in the Ministry of Community Development for purposes of promotion, incremental dates, training, demotion, as well as awards. However, this is not done, it is just on paper. In most cases, the only time the Ministry would request officers to complete APAS forms is when they have already decided on their own to promote and confirm staff.*

This has serious implications. One of them is that staff are not promoted and confirmed on time. Secondly, this trend has resulted in Labour Day awards being given on a rotational basis rather than on merit in the ministry.

Repetitive stress injuries and de-motivation had the same score of 57(47.5%) as high human resource risk, 42(35%) of the respondents rated repetitive stress injuries as a medium risk and 21(17.5%) felt it was a low risk. There are several factors that contribute to repetitive stress injuries for, instance, if employees use computers for a long period of time without screen protectors, they damage their eyes. The posture, when using the computers also contributes to this risk. This results when the office furniture, especially the chairs, are not properly adjusted. The effect would be back pains and general body pains. This, therefore, may be an indication that the ministry does not have screen protectors for the computers and adjustable chairs to ensure that the officers work comfortably.

Violence at work place was rated as a high risk at 56(46.7%) and came fifth, while 42(35%) rated it low and 22(18.3%) rated it medium. The findings could be as a result of the nature of work in the ministry of dealing with the poor and vulnerable people who are normally hungry and angry. Mostly, work in the ministry involves the provision of social services to the people and also the provision of primary health care. When there is violence, officers can be injured leading to negative operations of the organization. Similarly, violence occurs when officers work in fear. Therefore, they are likely to leave the institution and go where they feel their lives will be safe. Normally, when it comes to provision of social assistance, violence is from the clients such as those with disabilities who want to be helped. This category of clients always wants to receive assistance from the ministry, even after being given help several times, including empowerment funds. Yet the ministry has got so many other clients who need similar support. For instance, a respondent indicated that:

*The people with disabilities detained the Permanent Secretary in her office after telling them that the ministry had no more funds for empowerment. The police had to be called to calm the situation. At the same time, one of the Directors was beaten by one of the disabled client who felt that even after the ministry paid for his artificial limbs at the University Teaching Hospital (which was taking long to arrive from Germany), he demanded to be taken to South Africa for treatment, as most of the ministers were taken abroad for medical treatment.*

The above scenario is a clear indication that violence is taking place at the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health arising from the clients.

According to the respondents, in terms of primary health care, harassment normally arises from relatives of patients who sometimes feel that their sick relatives are neglected. This happens mostly in clinics which are under-staffed.

Non – empowerment of staff, rated at 55(45.8%), was identified as the sixth high human resource risk in the ministry. 38(31.7%) of respondents rated it as a medium risk, while 27(22.5%) felt it was a low risk. Empowerment entails providing people freedom to exercise responsibility without restriction. The challenge on non – empowerment normally arises due to limited delegation and where delegation is exercised, officers are not given the opportunity to make decisions. Empowerment is a source of motivation. Motivation is concerned with the

strength and direction of behaviour and the factors that influence people to behave in certain ways. According to Armstrong and Murlis (2004) employees must have freedom to act, scope to use and develop skills and abilities to do challenging work and opportunities for advancement. Stramrood (2008) contends that empowered employees tend to be more effective in their work than those not empowered. Findings therefore, reveal that the employees at the ministry are not given full responsibility over their work to make decisions. This could also be the cause of demotivation as most decisions have to be made by senior management. Armstrong (2010) contends that some factors that lead to job satisfaction include comparatively higher pay, an equitable payment system, real opportunities for promotion, considerate and participative management, a reasonable degree of social interaction at work, interesting and varied tasks and a high degree of autonomy, control over work pace and work methods. This state of affairs, in turn overwhelms the management with work. The question managers should ask is whether they can trust someone else to do the job as well as they would do it themselves.

Skills shortages in the ministry came out as a number seventh high human resource risk with a score of 44.2%. 34.2% indicated it was a medium risk. 21.6% rated it low. All organizations need to have skilled labour available in order to achieve their intended objectives. Skills shortages can be linked to poor recruitment of staff. As explained above, recruitment of staff is done by PSMD which, in most instances, does not consult the responsible ministry. They recruit based on the human resources headcount that they conduct. This results in the recruitment of staff with inappropriate skills. Ashford in Mellvaine (2013) identified the loss of key talent, poorly engaged employees, and ineffective hiring and talent-management strategies as prime examples of human capital risk. Ashford argues that if you think about the financial meltdown of 2008, it was driven by human capital risks, major companies being brought down by the investment decisions of a few people. The struggle was to get healthy employees fill critical positions, even in the midst of high unemployment.

Unplanned retirement or lack of succession planning came out as number seventh high human resource risk facing the ministry, with the score of 50(41.7%) response, while 40(33.3%) of the respondents indicated that unplanned retirement or lack of succession planning was a medium risk and 30(25%) felt it was a low risk. From the findings, it is clear that unplanned retirement is

a serious problem in the ministry and those that rated it as a low human resource risk could have been from the human resource section. One of the respondents narrated that:

*Many employees were not aware of the retire dates as they are not given retirement letters by Public Service Management Division and some of those that are aware continue working because they want to earn a salary, not knowing that the money that they are earning is deducted from their pension.*

This normally happens when officers have not adequately planned to retire. The other reason could be that retirees take long to receive their dues. Hence some decide to stay on even when they know the consequences of working and getting paid after attaining retirement age.

The above state of affairs is acknowledged by the Secretary to Cabinet, Dr. Roland Msiska, who stated that retirees are currently suffering due to poor pension scheme (Zambia Daily Mail, 2014).

The ministry will have attrition of key staff due to resignations, transfers, promotions, retirement or death, hence the ministry needs to put in place a plan on how to fill these key positions. In case of any eventuality, potential employees to take up the key positions have to be identified. One respondent said that:

*Whenever the incumbent was not around in the key position, like Permanent Secretary, Director, there was always someone to act in the same capacity and this is one way of preparing staff to take up key positions.*

This, therefore, means that the ministry does plan for succession however, many employees are not aware that the ministry has succession plans in place.

Absenteeism in the ministry, was rated at 53(35%). 41(33.3%) felt absenteeism was a medium and 26(31.7%) rated it as a low risk. Although absenteeism came out to be a high risk, the respondents had a mixed feeling about it, as can be seen from the small margins between the different ratings. Unplanned absence or leave of employees from work has high cost to the institution, as the operations are disrupted. Employees create unscheduled time offs, starting with partial shift absence by arriving late, leaving early, or taking longer breaks and lunches than allowed. Workers also claim personal, sick or vacation time. Absenteeism decreases productivity of any organisation and stresses the few available staff, as they have to do extra work. As for the

ministry, it means that it cannot provide the much needed social protection and primary health care service to the extremely poor and sick.

The high risk of absenteeism could be due to de-motivation where awards are not based on merit. When work pressures go up, absenteeism is likely to go up as well. Employees tend to report being sick or having family commitments. Other incentives are none empowerment of officers, poor working environment and relationship with the unharmonious supervisors. Some of the questions to ask are: Are the supervisors putting too much pressure on their staff, or are the managers demanding beyond what is expected from their subordinates? In recent surveys, it was a surprise that a high number of employees cite “poor relationship with superiors” as the main reason why they choose to stay away from work. Employees, especially in junior positions, would rather not report to work in a bid to avoid confrontation with their demanding bosses or as an act of defiance. Other than to earn a salary, the other pulling factor why people seek employment is because of job satisfaction. This is also the reason why people change jobs or work environment. Some employees prefer doing the same thing over and over again and will not seek new responsibilities, while others find it boring to perform monotonous functions. But in both cases, absenteeism will occur when their level of satisfaction is lower than what they would accept in their daily work. An employee’s work attitude normally provides hints on the level of commitment he or she has towards their work. Employees are no longer interested in their work or success of the organization due to low morale. If employees have good work attitude, they will not take leave unless they will often plan well in advance so that proper delegation of duties can be arranged before that. On the other hand, should the employee have poor work attitude, then chances are they will misuse leave entitlements and may even have other issues like discipline and integrity. It is normally the junior employees who take unplanned leave (The Australasian Faculty of Occupational Medicine, 1999).

Nineteen respondents also identified limited training as another human resource risk. They indicated that some of them had wanted to go for training but they had not managed due to the fact that they were not allowed by management to do so. This could be due to the fact that for one to go for further studies the proposed course of study must be related to the job one is doing, or based on the needs of the organization one is working for. The proposed course of study must be able to add value to the current job of an employee. Many employees are not aware that their

advancement in training and development must be based on the job requirements and not individual requirements and preferences.

### **3.3 Medium Human Resource Risks**

The Sramrood (2008) study identified alcoholism and drug dependency, non empowerment, environmental risks, reward and recognition, discrimination and absenteeism as the top six human resource risks. In this study the participants ranked the following human resource risks as medium;

- i) Efficiency of employees.
- ii) Family dynamics.
- iii) Poor ethics/Unethical behavior (dishonest or corruption).
- iv) Alignment.
- v) Reward and recognition.
- vi) Work-aholism.
- vii) Information technology.
- viii) Outside working environment risks.
- ix) Low self esteem.
- x) Sabotage.
- xi) Post traumatic stress disorder.
- xii) Poor leadership.

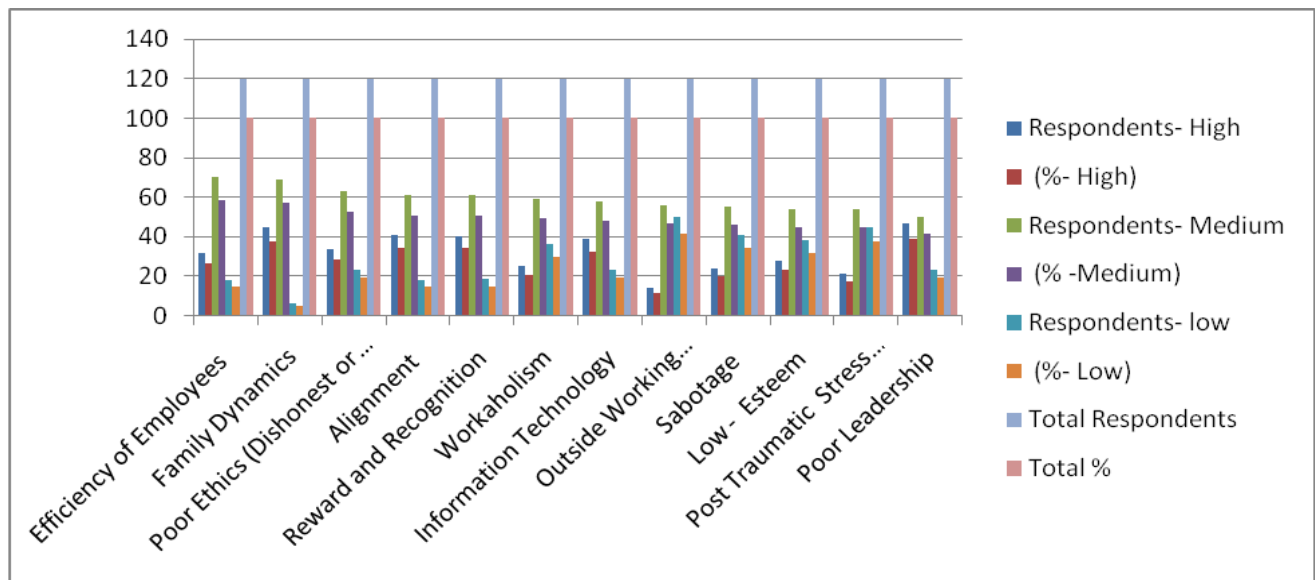


Figure 4: Medium human resources risks.

The majority of the respondents rated efficiency of employees as a number one medium risk at 70(58.3%). While 32(26.7%) rated efficiency of employees as a high risk and 18(15%) rated it a low risk. This entails that the ministry has already started feeling the effect of employees not performing their tasks on time. In order to improve efficiency of the workers, the ministry in 2013 introduced log books where they log in the time they report for work and knock off. However, this measure may not achieve the intended objective because if the workers are de-motivated, reporting for work early does not mean that they are performing well. Employees can report for work at 08:00 hours and then start surfing the web or socializing with co-workers. When employees are de-motivated, they lose confidence in management when they see little chance for their professional growth. As a result, there will be a decline in morale, which affects productivity. When the workers are motivated, they will be more productive. It is therefore, vital for employees to feel valued. In addition, by focusing on employees' well being, the ministry will reduce the likelihood of having to recruit new staff to replace a de-motivated workforce.

The majority of the respondents ranked family dynamics as a medium human resource risk in the ministry as a medium risk at 69(57.5%), followed by those who felt it was a high risk 45(37.5%) and 6(5%) ranked family dynamics as low risk. The findings therefore, suggest that the family has a greater impact on the performance of an organization. It can either have a positive or negative impact in that when their families are happy, there is a likelihood that officers will



perform better at work place and when there are problems at home, some family members are sick, workers' performance will be adversely affected, as they may even absent themselves in order to attend to family matters. The results could also reflect the views expressed by some respondents about the abolition of the medical scheme, where even family members of the staff were covered.

Poor ethics/Unethical behavior received a 63(52.5%) score of those who indicated that it was a medium risk, while 34(28.3%) indicated that it was a high risk and 23(19.2)% indicated that it was a low risk. The results show that unethical behavior, though rated high, is a matter of concern in the ministry and sooner or later the effects will be felt. Corruption is the act of giving or receiving a bribe or the misuse of public office for the private gain. Dishonesty and corruption range from administrative corruption to nepotism and procurement mismanagement and this can adversely affect service delivery, especially where the resources are scarce. Dishonesty could be as a result of low salaries, even after salary harmonization. MCDMCH is the key ministry in the provision of the social protection programmes and if the poor are to benefit from such programmes, there should be high integrity on the part of officers. Generally, there are acceptable standards of behavior expected from each and every employee of any organization.

Alignment was rated at 61(50.8%) as medium, 41(33.3%) as high and 18(15.8%) as low. The majority of the respondents rated the alignment risk as a medium risk in the ministry. Rewards and recognition and alignment both were rated at 50.8% as medium risks. Alignment deals with processes, structures and human resource policies. Alignment, although not one of the high risks, has the potential to affect the achievement of the organizational goals. The findings could reflect the reason why the ministry was being realigned at the time of data collection.

The study shows that rewards and recognition was rated as a medium risk at 61(50.8%), 40(34.2%) rated it as a high risk, while 19(15%) rated it as a low risk. This is a potential risk for the Ministry which needs attention. One of the reasons why this risk could not be rated as high by the majority is due to the fact that there is job security in government. However, Condrey (2005) warns that managers should be aware of the possibility that job security can motivate employees to stay with the organization, rather than induce them to be more involved in or more committed to their job.

Rewards and recognition are part of the motivation process for the workers. Rewards and recognition are both financial and nonfinancial in nature. They can contribute to the engagement and commitment of talented people by demonstrating that they are valued for their contribution and by operating fairly and consistently. Praising an employee for the job well done would definitely be a morale booster.

Rewards and recognition can be effectively be implemented through a properly designed performance appraisal system. Good performance and behavior should be rewarded to encourage the employees to even work harder (Armstrong, 2010 b).

Work-aholism was rated as a medium human resources risk at 59(49.2%), and those that rated it as low risk were 36(30%), while 25(20.1%) rated it at high. Although work-aholism did not emerge as a high risk at medium, it means that still some officers spent a lot of their time working, including weekends, even after knocking off at 17:00 hours. This could be due to the fact that not all the approved positions on the establishment were filled. Therefore, the officers find themselves all the time working at the expense of them spending some time with their families and friends. If the family is happy, it is likely that the officers will concentrate at work and achieve higher output. Actually people work because they want their families to be happy.

The respondents rated information technology at 58(48.3%) as medium, 39(32.5%) high and 23(19.2 %) as low risk. Although the ministry has managed to purchase some computers for use by the officers, there is still a number of workers who do not have access to them and this could be the reason why information technology was rated as a medium human resource risk. It was also noted that the officers were not trained on how to use the computers assuming that they knew how to use them. Those officers that had access to computers, indicated that the internet connectivity had improved tremendously, as they were now able to access the internet. The ministry has an IT specialist under the Department of Planning and Information who maintains the computers.

Outside working environment was rated at 56(46.7%) as medium, 50(41.7%) low and 14(7.6%) as high. The majority of the respondents rated outside working environment risks as medium. The general surrounding of the ministry was clean, and this can be seen from the relatively small margin between medium and low rating categories. The results could have been attributed to

poor waste management where waste is thrown onto the open dump area next to the offices. It was reported that the cleaning staff burn the waste in the open air as a security measure to destroy confidential information. See the picture below.



*Figure 5: MCDMCH dumping place*

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (2010), burning trash creates dangerous toxic smoke. This smoke has many tiny particles which can get deep into lungs, potentially increasing the risk of asthma, lung and heart disease, cancer, and other cardiovascular problems. People exposed to smoke are also believed to be at increased risk of pneumonia and other infectious lung diseases. The smoke typically contains “dioxins” which are highly toxic pollutants known to cause cancer. The greater the exposures for a prolonged period of time to the smoke incidence by the officers, the higher the risks of suffering from asthma, lung cancer and other heart diseases. As can be seen from the above pictures, the waste is burnt by the wall fence, creating the risk of weakening it, hence, the possibility of falling on the staff. As can also be seen from above, there were only two waste bins used to collect waste.

The respondents rated low self - esteem as follows; 54(45%) as medium, 28(23.3%) as high and 38(31.7%) as a low risk. The majority rated it a medium human resource risk, meaning that the

majority of the employees have moderate self esteem. The findings could be linked to demotivation and low morale, non empowerment of staff, poor recruitment and selection, rewards and recognition and other related risks that have been identified. Self-esteem involves self confidence, self respect which relate to values and integrity. Newday (2013) contends that values help us know what is important and help us gain clarity and focus in our lives. Values help decision making. The way one thinks about him/herself will have a greater impact on how to perform tasks. For instance, if one convinces himself/herself that one cannot perform some tasks, definitely he/she will fail. One cannot achieve more than what he/she thinks is worth.

Self-esteem is necessary because one must like, respect, and love himself/herself before can have those feelings for others. A persons' self-esteem is in direct correlation to their professionalism, the way they do things. That is, a person's ability to represent themselves appropriately, perform on the job and be a person with whom others can relate is an indication of their success in whatever they have selected to do.

The respondents rated sabotage at 55(45.8%) as a medium risk, 41(34.2%) as a low risk and 24(20%) as a high risk. Clearly this shows that sabotage is a medium risk in the ministry. Sabotage takes many forms. Employees may bring their fellow workers down by spreading false or negative rumors or withholding information so that only they are seen to be sources on key information when something has failed or gone wrong. This kind of behavior is exhibited where there is no team work. One respondent reported that "some employees tend to report false information about their co-workers, hide some personal files for some co-workers and hide information, especially to the new recruits and others pull out accountable documents from the files in order to implicate their colleagues so that they can be fired, so that they can be promoted to take up the same positions." The forgoing should be a serious source of concern for the ministry.

Post traumatic stress disorder was rated as follows: 54(45%) as medium, 45(37.5%) low and 21(17.5%) as high. The majority of the employees felt that post traumatic stress disorder risk is there at the ministry, though at a moderate level. This could be linked to violence at the work place which was rated as high.

The respondents ranked poor leadership at 50(41.7%) as medium, 47(39.2%) as high and 23(19.2%) as low risk. This implies that the risk is medium in the ministry, since the majority of the respondents ranked it as medium and the percentage of those who ranked it as high was very close to those who indicated that it was a medium risk. Leadership is about influencing other people to accomplish the organizational goals. It is clear from the findings that most respondents value the importance of effective leadership and could be attributed to several factors like non empowerment, de-motivation of staff, stress and other related risks.

Employees that have psychological support from management have greater job attachment, job commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement, positive work moods, desire to remain with the organization and job performance.

### **3.4 Low Human Resource Risks**

Stramrood (2008) identified sick building, sexual harassment, violence at work place, electromagnetic radiation, occupational diseases, retrenchment and downsizing, work place bullying, work-aholism, information technology, low self –esteem, family dynamics, post traumatic stress disorder and repetitive stress as low human resource risks. While this study identified the following listed risks below as low in order of magnitude from the highest to the lowest.

- i) Natural hazards
- ii) political instability
- iii) Terrorism
- iv) Retrenchment/downsizing.
- v) Occupational diseases.
- vi) Strikes/disputes.
- vii) Sexual harassment.
- viii) Work place bullying.
- ix) Occupational Injuries.
- x) Statutory risks/lack of compliance with laws.
- xi) Sick Building
- xii) Electromagnetic radiation.

- xiii) Alcoholism and drug dependency.
- xiv) Dread Diseases
- xv) Discrimination.
- xvi) HIV/AIDS.

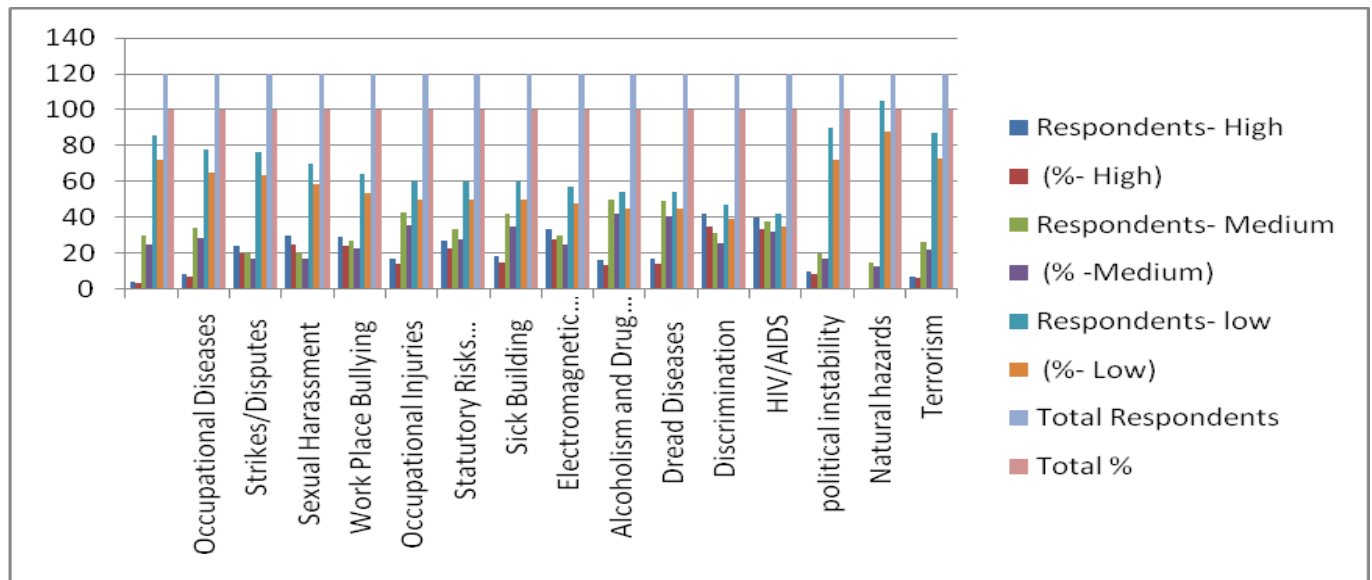


Figure 6: Low human resources risks

Natural hazards was rated as the lowest risk in the ministry at 105(87.5%), while 20(17%) rated it as a medium risk and 10(8%) rated natural hazards as a high risk. The findings reveal that there is a low probability of floods and earthquakes occurring in the ministry.

In terms of political instability, 90(75%) of the respondents felt it was a low risk. 15(12.5%) indicated it was a medium risk and none of the respondents felt it was a high risk. The findings entail that the political situation in Zambia is stable although there a numerous political parties.

As regards to terrorism, 87(72.5%) ranked it as a low risk and 26(22%) felt it was a medium risk, while 7(6%) indicated that it was a high risk. although issues of terrorism are becoming common in Africa, the findings reveal that there were low chances of terror attacks happening at the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health.

Retrenchment/downsizing was rated as a low risk at 86(71.7%), 30(25%) believed it was a medium risk, while 4(3.3%) rated it as a high risk. Retrenchment/downsizing was rated as the lowest risk in the ministry. The finding could be due to the fact that the ministry was already restructured, hence the participants did not think it was a major risk, though at the time the researcher was collecting data, the ministry was being realigned to incorporate the department of Mother and Child Health, which was initially under the Ministry of Health.

The participants rated occupational diseases at 78(65%) as a low risk, 34(28.3%) as a medium risk and 8(6.7%) as a high risk. From the findings, it is clear that occupational diseases were regarded to be a second lowest human resource risk in the ministry. These findings are consistent with Stramrood (2008) study which found that occupational diseases were rated as a low risk. The findings clearly reflect that the ministry has some measures in place of regular cleaning to reduce the effect of dust.

Strikes and disputes were rated as the third lowest human resource risk at 76(63.3%), others rated them at 20(16.7%) as medium risk and 24(20%) as high. This risk had a low variation between the respondents that indicated it as medium and high. The written rules and procedures regarding strikes and disputes in the ministry could have contributed to these results.

Sexual harassment was ranked, with a rating of 70(58.3%), while 20(16.7%) ranked it as a medium and 30(25%) ranked it as a high risk. The results indicate that sexual harassment is not a major threat at the ministry. The ministry has written rules in the terms and conditions of service which prohibit sexual harassment at the work place and this could have reflected the findings.

Respondents ranked workplace bullying as the fifth low risk at 64(53.3%), while 29(24.2%) rated it as high and 27(22.5%) indicated that it was a medium risk. The findings reveal that work bullying at the ministry is not a major risk. It is important to encourage team work in the work place, because where there is no team work, bullying tends to be rampant.

Occupation injuries were rated the sixth low risk at 60(50.0%) and 43(35.8%) rated it as a medium while, 17(14.2%) indicated it was high. The Ministry has managed to make the work environment as safe as possible from accidents or physical injuries that would result as the employees are performing their duties. Although the Ministry is housed at one of the oldest

infrastructure in the country which was formally Namibian Institute, the office environment is safe for the employees.

Statutory and lack of compliance with laws, just like occupational injuries were rated as number six risk at 60(50%). 33(27.5%) rated it as a medium risk and 27(22.5%) rated it as a high risk. The findings entail that the ministry has low chances of being taken to courts of law for the abrogation of the laws of the country regarding labour and industrial relations. The ministry is able to follow laid down procedures in dealing with labour related issues. Illegal dismissals and other factors that make organizations pay huge amounts in compensation should be avoided, especially in a country like Zambia, where the poverty levels are very high, so that the meager resources should go toward such calls.

Respondents rated sick building as number six lowest human resource risk the same as statutory risks/lack of compliance with laws and occupational injuries at 60(50%) in the Ministry. 42(35%) indicated that it was a medium risk while, 18(15%) rated it as a high risk. The findings reveal that the staff has lower chances of suffering from sick building and this could be due to the fact that all the buildings at the Ministry are well ventilated thereby allowing free flow of the air.

Electromagnetic radiation was rated seventh as low risk in the Ministry by the respondents at 57(47.5%), while 30(25%) rated it as high and 33(27.5%) rated it a medium risk. This finding is consistent with Stramrood (2008) who also found that this risk came out to be a low risk. Although the risk was reported to be low, the results could have been due to lack of awareness on the part of the participants on the dangers of electromagnetic radiations.

The majority of the participants rated alcoholism and drug dependency as a low human resource risk at 54 (45%), followed by 50(41.7%) of those who rated it as a medium risk and 16(13.3%) who rated it as a high risk. In its terms and conditions of service, the ministry prohibits anyone to be drunk or use intoxicating drugs while on duty and this measure is helping to address alcoholism and drug abuse. However, as can be seen from the findings, differences are not much, especially between those that said it was a low risk and those who indicated it was a medium risk meaning that some respondents still felt that there are employees who report for work whilst drunk. Therefore, for alcoholism and drug dependency to be reduced there is need



for continued sensitization on this danger to the officers themselves and also to the co-workers, which will in turn result in the attainment of organizational goals and objectives.

Dread diseases (cancer and heart diseases) are one of the low risk rated at 54(45%) by the respondents. 49(40.8%) rated dread diseases as a medium risk while 17(14.2) rated it was a high risk. The low rating could be due to the fact that the working environment is generally clean although they have a dumping site within the Ministry which needs urgent attention.

Discrimination was rated as a low human resources risk by the majority of the respondents at 47(39.2%). This was followed by high at 42(35%) and low at 31(25.8%). The findings reveal that the ministry has attempted to address this challenge by ensuring that all people are given an opportunity to be employed, as long as they have the necessary qualifications and skills. In its HIV/AIDS policy, for instance, the ministry states that “the Ministry will not discriminate or tolerate discrimination against employees or job applicants on grounds of HIV/AIDS status...and HIV positive employees will be protected against discrimination, victimization or harassment through the application of disciplinary and grievance procedures ” (MCDSS, 2006:2). Promotion is also based on performance, as was indicated by the participants.

HIV/AIDS came out as the last low human resource risk in the ministry, rated at 42(35%), followed by those who rated it as a high risk at 38(31.7%) and medium at 40(33.3%). The results are a reflection of the ministry having a workplace HIV/AIDS policy which addresses the issues of the epidemic, as reported by the respondents. One of the respondents reported that “one of the activities the ministry does in mitigating the effects of HIV/AIDS is by condom distribution in the staff toilets.” however, the percentage of those who said HIV/AIDS was a high risk is almost the same as to those who said it was a low risk, meaning that much stills needs to be done in ensuring that this epidemic is addressed.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The study has revealed a number of human resource risks that the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health faces. Those risks identified as highest in terms of magnitude were nine and these include; poor recruitment/selection, stress, de-motivation, repetitive stress injuries, violence at the place of work, non empowerment, skills shortages, unplanned retirement/ succession and absenteeism. Those that were rated as medium risks were

efficiency of employees, family dynamics, poor ethics/ethical behavior (dishonesty and corruption), alignment, reward and recognition, work-aholism, information technology, outside working environment, sabotage, low self esteem, post traumatic stress disorder and poor leadership. The low risks as identified by the respondents were natural hazards, political instability, terrorism, retrenchment/downsizing, occupational diseases, strikes/disputes, sexual harassment, workplace bullying, occupational injuries, statutory risks/lack of compliance with laws, electromagnetic radiation, alcoholism and drug dependency, discrimination and HIV/AIDS. Thus, the study has shown that, just like any organization, MCDMCH is not immune to human resource risks.

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## CHAPTER FOUR: MITIGATING HUMAN RESOURCE RISKS

### 4.1 Introduction

In today's complex and hypercompetitive organizational landscape, human resources are both strategic organizational resources and sources of organizational value creation and organisational performance improvements. Unless an organisation has human resource with special capabilities, it will remain at the bottom. No organisation can accomplish its mandated activities without human resource. It is the people that create and formulate organisational policies, plans, structures and procedures which guide operation. In fact without people, there will be no organisations.

Consequently, human resources need to be nurtured by putting in place measures that would safeguard them in any organization. However, it has been observed that in recent years, in some organizations, this resource is poorly managed. This chapter presents the findings on mechanisms the Ministry has put in place to mitigate the human resource risks.

### 4.2 Mechanisms to Mitigate Human Resource Risks

Findings from the field reveal that 50(41.7%) of the respondents indicated that the ministry has put in place mechanisms to mitigate human resource risks. While 70(58.3%) of the respondents reported that the ministry has not put in place mechanisms to mitigate human resource risks (Table 2).

*Table 2: Mitigation of human resources risks*

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	50	41.7
No	70	58.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From the findings, it is clear that the majority are not aware of the mechanisms that the ministry has put in place to mitigate human resources risks. If employees are not aware of the mechanisms put in place, then there is a gap, in that whatever mechanisms management attempt to put in place, employees will not appreciate them hence, they will not support them.

Respondents were asked to further indicate the mechanisms that the ministry has put in place to mitigate human resources risks. Findings from the field reveal that the ministry has put in place a number of mechanisms which include an HIV/AIDS work place policy, training plans, an annual performance appraisal system (APAS), retirement and succession plans and check in and out log books to reduce absenteeism.

#### **4.2.1 HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy**

The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS is increasing having an adverse effect on the operations of many organizations. HIV/AIDS affects human resource management, employee welfare, operation efficiency and customer relations. It is for this reason that MCDMCH has an HIV/AIDS work place policy in place to try and eliminate discrimination, raise awareness and give support to those affected and infected MCDSS (2006). HIV/AIDS is posing a great challenge to the ministry affecting its service delivery through morbidity and mortality of highly qualified and experienced staff thereby lowering the performance of the ministry (MCDSS, 2006). Work place HIV/AIDS policy provides practical steps to prevent discrimination of potential employees and also the serving employees on the basis of being HIV positive.

#### **4.2.2 Training Plans**

Respondents reported that the ministry has a training plan to ensure experienced and skilled personnel. This is clearly indicated from one of the respondents who responded that:

*“As far as I know, we have a training plan ...if your name has not been included on the training plan, you can hardly be allowed to go for training ...”*

To achieve the set goals and objectives, the ministry needs employees with necessary skills and knowledge. It is for this reason that the ministry developed training plans to develop its human resource in order to improve upon service delivery. Training and development is a continuous process in order to have present and future requirements of the job, it is not a once off activity. Training should be systematic in that it must be specifically designed, planned and implemented to meet defined needs. Armstrong (2009) submits that the purpose of any training plan is to help an organization:

- i) Identify training needs to avoid wasting valuable time, money, and energy on unnecessary training which will not add any value to an organization,

- ii) Decide what type of training is required to satisfy the identified needs.
- iii) Put in place budgets and resources required for training to be planned and allocated during the business planning period.
- iv) Implementation of training activities.
- v) Conduct training in a coordinated manner so that service delivery is not affected.

The ministry has a strategic plan in plan covering 2013 to 2016 from which departmental and individual work plans are drawn from. Therefore, the implementation of the training plans by the ministry is commendable, however there is need to sensitize and engage the staff in the development of these training plans as Bwalya (2005) submits that 65% of those public officials interviewed had no individual work plans.

#### **4.2.3 Annual Performance Appraisal System (APAS)**

Findings from the field further revealed that the ministry has put in place an appraisal system called Annual Appraisal Performance System (APAS). This is evident from the following response from one of the respondents:

*“...I think the Annual Appraisal Performance System the government introduced for appraising public workers is one tool that I know helps gauge the performance of staff...”*

Performance appraisal is a formal assessment of work performance, often seen as one way of determining present and future effectiveness of employees in an organization. Mckenna and Beech (2000) submit that performance appraisal is intended to create an opportunity for supervisors and their subordinates to share an understanding of what needs to be accomplished and to bring about the development of people in the short and long term. Walsh in Mate (2006) further notes that performance appraisal is the process by which a supervisor evaluates and judges the work performance of a subordinate. Performance appraisal is meant to provide the basis for rewards and recognition, promotion and training, among others. Hence supervisors should provide a feed back to the individual employee being appraised in order to enhance performance. Basically, people need to know how well they are doing on the job. Part of a supervisor’s job is to give employees feedback about their performance. When the supervisor tells employees that they are meeting or exceeding objectives, the employees know they are doing something right. When a supervisor tells employees that they are falling short of

objectives, the employees know they need to improve. Most people will try to improve when given a chance to do so.

From the field findings, though the ministry is implementing the APAS, it shows that much needs to be done due to the fact that APAS has not been implemented fully in the ministry. It is for this reason why some officers claimed that labour day awards, for instance, were given on a rotational basis, rather than bases on performance. This view is amplified by Bwalya (2005:13) who submits that 52% of the officials interviewed in public service institutions reported that their organizations did not reward good performance and Bwalya concludes that:

*“The mechanisms for rewarding good performance and sanctioning those who fail to meet performance targets are not strong and have not been firmly enforced.”*

The above is supported by Bwalya (2005) who conducted a research of 198 public officials and found that 67(33.8%) were not subjected to performance evaluation, while 99(50%) were. Implementation of a fair and transparent APAS is very important, as it motivates employees to work toward the attainment of the goals and objectives.

#### **4.2.4 Retirement and Succession Planning**

Findings of the study also revealed that the ministry has a retirement and succession planning. However, respondents felt that the ministry needed to do sensitization regarding retirement and succession planning so that the employees are ready especially for retirement. Retirement and succession planning is crucial as it helps in preparation for proper exit and replacement of employees in an organization.

#### **4.2.5 Log books**

Moreover, findings revealed that the ministry has in recent months introduced check in and out log books. One of the respondents indicated that: *“...the log book helps to know not only if employees have reported but also check whether they report on time for work....”* The check in and out log books are meant to reduce absenteeism, but the respondents felt this measure was ineffective, as can be seen from the rating of absenteeism as a high risk in the ministry.

As recommended by Stramrood (2008), it is important for every organization to put in place an effective process of identifying risks, measuring their potential impacts against a varied set of



assumptions and do what is necessary to proactively manage them. According to Stramrood, different risks need to be evaluated to see which ones impact significantly on an organization and this process includes analysis, quantification and prioritizing the identified human resource risks pertaining to the processes, conditions and activities performed within the working environment, as well as the external environment (Stramrood, 2008). Management assesses whether the right mitigating measures are being taken or not. However, findings from the field revealed that MCDMCH hardly conducts risk assessment. This implies that it has no means for knowing some human resource risks, nor means for reacting to some of the human resource risks.

### 4.3 Consequences for not Mitigating Human Resource Risks.

In today's world organizations that do not have mechanisms in place to mitigate the effects of human resource risks hardly have competitive advantage over other organizations and may be unable to achieve their intended goals and objectives (Deloach, 2000). This chapter presents and discusses the consequences of not mitigating the human resource risks in the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health.

Findings from the field reveal that 120(100 %) of the respondents indicated that there were consequences or costs associated with not mitigating the human resource risks in the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health ( see table 3 below). The findings reveal that the employees in the ministry are aware that there are costs associated with not putting in place measures to mitigate the human resource risks.

*Table 3: Costs of not mitigating human resource risks*

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	120	100.0
No	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Respondents highlighted a number of costs or consequences an organization can experience as a result of not mitigating human resource risks. Respondent (A) indicated *that “if the ministry does not have measures in place to mitigate the risks this would definitely affect productivity.”* Respondent (B) reported that *“if the ministry did not put in place measures to mitigate the human*

*resource risks, there may be loss of employees through deaths or transfers and resignations.”* Rependent (C) alluded to the fact that *“If no measures are put in place to mitigate the risks, it would affect productivity of the ministry and we have also seen employees dying.”*

Low productivity entails the ministry’s inability to accomplish its maximum capacity. In other words, the ministry risks not attaining its mandated goals as every organization today yearns to be as productive as possible, through a dedicated staff. Root III (2014) notes that the most critical resource an organization can have is its human resource which has distinctive capabilities. If employees are not well managed, an organization will have difficulties to attract and retain qualified and skilled people. Retention of high performing employees is critical for maintaining and enhancing an organisation's competitive advantage in difficult economic times.

The majority of the respondents indicated that the major cost or consequence for not mitigating the human resources risk is low productivity, meaning that, the ministry would not meet its set targets. It is very important to take care of the employees because if they are not managed well, they will leave for greener pastures and this will mean incurring more costs in recruitment and training of new employees. This view has been supported by Mind Tools (2014) who submits that losing valuable members of staff in any organization can result in loss of knowledge, disruption, lower collective morale, and the time and effort wasted in recruiting and training replacements. Mind Tools(2014) posits that it might take months or years to rebuild an organisation’s team once lost. The impact of human resource risks can be physical, mental, emotional and economical and this can be catastrophic. Nsutebu and Walley, (2001) and Noyoo, (2000) further note that the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health is under resourced as a result, it has been unable to respond to the multiple social problems in the country. Human resource managers in the ministry need to devote time, resources and effort to assessing and managing human resource risks.

Furthermore, one respondent pointed to loss of morale as one of the consequences for not mitigating human resource risks:

*“Self esteem or morale normally goes if employees are subjected to harsh conditions at work...you need to be adequately protected to work with high self esteem....”*

Loss of morale when staffs leave an organization or die is a critical effect that can result in low productivity. Root III (2014) alludes to the fact that morale suffers in a couple of ways when an employee resigns or transfers or dies. Root III states that “if the employee was well-liked, then that positive portion of the workplace environment is gone, and that will have a negative effect on morale and productivity. Another way in which morale and productivity are effected “... is the curiosity that causes rumors about an employee leaving. If it was a key employee, an employee with a lot of tenure or an employee that was well-liked, then the rumors regarding such departure could lead to other resignations that will continue to affect productivity” (Root III, 2014).

In terms of loss of experience, Root III (2014) argues that an employee that has been with the organisation long enough to become proficient in his job becomes a profit center for the organisation. Once that employee resigns, that experience is lost to the organisation. There is a gap between the moment the employee resigns and the time when the replacement employee gains the speed and dexterity for improved productivity. That gap of time will vary, depending on the organisation and the kind of job, but it can affect the organisation's bottom line in any case.

Furthermore, according to Girard (2014), there are cost factors associated with loss of employees due to death, transfers or resignations. Girard points out that not retaining an employee can cost more than many companies realize. They fail to factor in all cost elements. These costs include handling all aspects of existing employees, the advertising and recruiting costs to attract new employees, orientation and training costs for new employees, lost productivity from missing employees until the positions are filled and possible lower morale in departments when employees leave.

When it comes to customer service, an employee resignation, according to Root III (2014), means that the remaining employees need to find a way to make up for the departing employee's job, while a replacement is being recruited. Spreading out a workforce to cover an employee resignation means that it takes longer to answer customer calls, it can take longer to process customer requests and customers will not get callbacks on the status of their issue in a timely manner. Productivity drops as employees scramble to maintain a good level of customer service. Root III adds that in terms of employee relations, managers that resign their jobs leave behind

working relationships with their employees that will take months for a new manager to re-create. A manager understands her/his staff and knows how to get the most out of employees. When that manager leaves, the staff loses some of its motivation and must wait for the new manager to become comfortable in his position. As the entire organization readjusts to the new manager, productivity will suffer.

Respondents further indicated that absenteeism is one of the consequences of not mitigating human resource risks in an organization. It must be noted that absenteeism is one of the causes of low productivity in the workplace. If employees fail to reach an acceptable level of work attendance, then productivity levels would be jeopardized. For example, if the Plan International Zambia has an absence rate of 35%, contrary to ministry's absence rate of 45%, Plan International Zambia would have a higher productivity level than that of the ministry. This is so because programme deadlines may not be achieved because of the consistency of absentees throughout a specific period in addition to management experiencing problems with recruiting persons to fill positions on a temporary basis.

In many cases, it can be costly because some form of training in the area may be necessary, especially in highly skilled jobs. Absenteeism can obstruct important decisions from being made in the organisation. For instance, an important individual who should be present, may be constantly absent and may be one who plays a fundamental role in the decision making process. Hence, it would impose a threat on the organization's efficiency.

Thus, staff should be engaged on productivity at all times to reduce absenteeism. This is supported by Insync Surveys (2012) who submits that not only does high employee engagement increase focus and efficiency, it decreases rates of absenteeism, because engaged employees care about what they do. Employees recognise the importance of their effort in contributing to the success of their employer. This means that employees consistently turn up to work and work well while they are there (Nahrgang, et al. 2011; Harter, et al. 2009; Gonring, 2008).

Moreover, respondents reported the inability to have a fully trained staff if human resource risks are not mitigated. Training is important within any organization as it directly relates to productivity. Training equips employees to be readily able to grasp the relevant skills for the task

they would be assigned. A group of untrained workers will get less work done as they have to informally train themselves.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

Human resources are strategic organizational resources. The ministry cannot accomplish its mandated activities without qualified and experienced human resource. It was revealed that there were costs associated with non mitigation of human resources risks and that the ministry had put in place measures to mitigate the human resource risks, although the majority of the respondents were not aware of the measures put in place. These mechanisms were HIV/AIDS work place policy, training plans, annual performance appraisal system and retirement plan, although the majority of the respondents were not aware that the ministry had put them in place.

The findings revealed that the employees from Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health were aware that there are costs associated with not putting in place measures to mitigate the human resources risks. The respondents highlighted a number of costs or consequences the ministry can experience as a result of not mitigating human resource risks and these costs were loss of employees through deaths or transfers and resignations. If employees are not well managed an organization will have difficulties to attract and retain qualified and skilled people. This will in turn reduce productivity. Human resource managers at the ministry need to devote time, resources and effort to assessing and managing human resource risks.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Summary of Conclusions**

#### **5.1.1 Identification of Human Resource Risks**

The study has revealed a number of human resource risks that the Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health face. Those risks identified as the highest were nine and these include; poor recruitment/selection, stress, de-motivation, repetitive stress injuries, violence at the place of work, non empowerment, skills shortages, unplanned retirement/succession and absenteeism. The study went further to investigate the reasons for the above ranking and revealed that;

- i) Poor recruitment/ selection was ranked as a high, number one risk due to poor liaison between PSMD and MCDMCH.
- ii) Stress was ranked as high due to work overload by employees, as some positions were not filled on the establishment.
- iii) De-motivation was ranked as high due to a number of factors; delays in the confirmation of officers who have served their probation period, low salaries in government even after salary harmonization, withdrawal of transport for employees and replacement with inadequate transport allowances, non orientation of new officers, abolition of a medical scheme and non implementation of the APAS for rewards and recognition as this is not always based on merit, especially awards for the labour day which are normally based on rotational basis.
- iv) Repetitive stress injuries was ranked as high due to improperly adjusted office furniture and lack of computer protective screens,
- v) Violence at the place of work was ranked as high due to the fact that some clients felt they were not given their entitlements and were beating up members of staff in the ministry,
- vi) Non empowerment of employees was ranked high as a result of employees not given maximum space and freedom to make decisions in their work especially when duty is delegated,



vii) Skills shortages was ranked as a high risk due to the fact that recruitment of staff is a responsibility of PSMD who in most instances do not consult the responsible ministry as the recruitment is based on the human resources headcount that is conducted,

viii) Unplanned retirement/succession was ranked as a high risk in the ministry due to the fact that some employees felt that there was no proper succession planning and some employees were not served with the letters of retirement on time and hence ended up continuing working thereby having the pension benefits cut to cover for the salaries they got when they should have retired, and

ix) Absenteeism was ranked high due to the high levels of de-motivation among employees.

The human resources risk that were ranked as medium include; efficiency of employees, family dynamics, poor ethics/ethical behavior (dishonest and corruption), alignment, reward and recognition, work-aholism, information technology, outside working environment, sabotage, low self esteem, post traumatic stress disorder and poor leadership.

i) When the employees are de-motivated, they do not perform to the expectation of the organization and this definitely affects their efficiency.

ii) The findings suggest that the family has a greater impact on the performance of an organization. It can either have a positive or negative impact; positive impact in that when their families are happy, there is a likelihood that officers will perform better at the work place and when there are problems at home, like sick family members, their performance will be affected, as they may even absent themselves in order to attend to family matters.

iii) Poor ethics or unethical behavior relates to dishonesty or corruption which is the act of giving or receiving a bribe or the misuse of the public office for the private gain. Dishonesty and corruption range from administrative corruption to nepotism and procurement mismanagement and this can adversely affect the service delivery, especially where the resources are scarce. Dishonesty or corruption ranking in the ministry, as a medium human resource risk could be as a result of low salaries even after salary harmonization.

iv) Alignment ensures that an organization has processes, right structures and human resource policies to support the successful implementation of its programmes. Alignment,

although not one of the high risks, has the potential to affect the achievement of the organizational goals. The findings could reflect the reason why the ministry was being realigned at the time of data collection, as the existing processes, structures and human resources policies may not be in support of the ministry's objectives.

- v) Rewards and recognition are part of motivation processes for the workers. The results could reflect the fact that the APAS system had not yet been fully implemented in the ministry, hence rewards and recognition were not always given on merit such as Labour Day awards.
- vi) Work-aholism, according to the findings, exists in the sense that some officers spent a lot of their time including weekends working. This could be due to the fact that not all the approved positions on the establishment were filled.
- vii) In terms of information technology, the study has revealed that although the ministry has managed to purchase some computers for use by the officers, they were not adequate to cater for all the officers in the ministry. Additionally, officers were not trained on how to use the computers. However, the study revealed that Internet connectivity is not a problem and the ministry has an IT specialist under the Department of Planning and Information who maintains the computers.
- viii) In as far as outside working environment risks are concerned, the study revealed that the general surrounding of the Ministry was clean. However, there is the problem of poor waste management where waste is thrown onto the open dump area next to the offices. It was reported that the cleaning staff burn the waste in the open air, as a security measure to burn confidential information which most of the times was burnt during the day when the officers are in the offices, thereby polluting offices with smoke which is harmful to human health.
- ix) Concerning low self – esteem, the study revealed that the majority of the employees have moderate self esteem. The findings could be linked to de-motivation and low morale, non empowerment of staff, poor recruitment and selection, rewards and recognition and other related risks that have been identified.
- x) The study revealed that sabotage is also a medium risk in the ministry. Sabotage takes many forms. Employees may bring their fellow workers down by spreading false or negative rumors or withholding information so that only they are seen to be sources on

key information when something has failed or gone wrong. This kind of behavior is exhibited where there is no team work. Some employees tend to report false information about their co-workers or hide information especially to the new recruits. Others pull out accountable documents from the files in order to implicate their colleagues so that they can be fired for them to be promoted to take up the same positions.

- xi) The study revealed that post traumatic stress disorder risks exist at the Ministry though at a moderate level. This could be linked to the violence at the work place from the clients.
- xii) In terms of poor leadership, the study revealed that respondents value the importance of effective leadership. However, poor leadership could be attributed to several factors like non empowerment, de-motivation of staff, stress and other related risks. Employees that have psychological support from management have greater job attachment, job commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement, positive work moods, desire to remain with the organization and job performance.

The low human resource risks that were identified include natural hazards, political instability, terrorism, retrenchment/downsizing, occupational diseases, strikes/disputes, sexual harassment, workplace bullying, occupational injuries, statutory risks/lack of compliance with laws, sick building, electromagnetic radiation, alcoholism and drug dependency, dread diseases, discrimination and HIV/AIDS. Thus, the study has shown that just like any organization, Ministry of Community Development, Mother and Child Health is not immune to human resource risks.

- i) Retrenchment/downsizing could have been rated a low human resource risks due to the fact that the ministry was already restructured hence the participants did not think it was a major risk, though at the time the researcher was collecting data, the ministry was being realigned to incorporate the department of Mother and Child Health which was initially under the Ministry of Health.
- ii) The study revealed that occupational diseases were rated as a low risk. This could be due to the fact that the ministry has some measures in place such as regular cleaning to reduce the effect of dust.
- iii) Strikes and disputes were rated as low human resource risk. This could be as a result of existing written rules and procedures regarding strikes and disputes which clearly

stipulate that all channels of dialogue shall be followed in the ministry before workers can resort to a strike or dispute.

- iv) The results indicate that sexual harassment is not a major threat at the ministry. The ministry has written rules in terms of conditions of service which prohibit sexual harassment at the work place and this could have reflected the findings.
- v) The findings reveal that work bullying at the ministry is not a major risk. This entails that team work is encouraged at the ministry because where there is no team work, bullying tends to be rampant.
- vi) In terms of occupational injuries, the ministry has managed to make the work environment as safe as possible from accidents or physical injuries resulting from employees performing their duties. Although the Ministry is housed at one of the oldest infrastructure in the country which was formally Namibian Institute, the office environment is safe for the employees.
- vii) Statutory risks and lack of compliance with laws is a low risk in that the ministry has low chances of being taken to courts of law for the abrogation of the laws of the country regarding labour and industrial relations. The ministry is able to follow laid down procedures in dealing with labour related issues. Illegal dismissals and other factors that make organizations pay huge amounts in compensation are avoided.
- viii) Electromagnetic radiation was rated as low risk in the ministry and this was due to lack of awareness on the part of the participants on the dangers of electromagnetic radiations.
- ix) Participants rated alcoholism and drug dependency as a low human resource risk partly due to the fact that in its terms and conditions of service, the ministry prohibits anyone to be drunk or use intoxicating drugs while on duty and this measure is helping to address alcoholism and drug abuse.
- x) Discrimination was rated as a low human resources risk. This was attributed to the fact that the ministry has attempted to address this challenge by ensuring that all people are given an opportunity to be employed, as long as they have the necessary qualifications and skills. Promotion is also based on performance, as was indicated by the participants.
- xi) HIV/AIDS came out as the last low human resource risk in the ministry. The ministry has an HIV/AIDS workplace policy which addresses the issues of the epidemic.

### **5.1.2 Measures to Mitigate Human Resource Risks**

The study investigated the measures put in place to mitigate human resource risks. The findings revealed that the ministry had put in place mechanisms to mitigate the human resource risks. These include HIV/AIDS work place policy, training plans, annual performance appraisal system and retirement and succession plans. However, it was revealed that the majority of the respondents were not aware that the ministry had put in place mechanisms addressing the human resource risks.

### **5.1.3 Consequences for Not Mitigating Human Resource Risks**

Furthermore, the study investigated the consequences of not mitigating human resources risks. The findings reveal that the employees are aware that there are costs associated with not putting in place measures to mitigate the human resource risks. Respondents highlighted a number of costs or consequences an organization can experience as a result of not mitigating human resource risks, including loss of employees through deaths or transfers and resignations, difficulties to attract and retain qualified and skilled people, loss of morale, customer service implications and low productivity.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Arising from the findings of this study, a number of recommendations have been made and these include the following:

- i) There is need for PSMD to liaise with the ministry whenever they are recruiting staff to ensure that the right staff is appointed. Thus, PSMD should be able to decentralize its operations since there are Permanent Secretaries in the ministries who can oversee the recruitment process of officers in respective ministries. There is, hence, need for PSMD in collaboration with the ministry to advertise vacant positions whenever need to employ arises. There should be a good job fit which means that the employees should possess the technical skills and knowledge for a particular position, as well as the psychological skills and emotional intelligence which relate to self-awareness, impulse control, persistence, self-motivation, empathy and social skill to do the job.
- ii) To manage stress, MCDMCH needs to pay special attention to the factors that are causing stress, especially work overload by ensuring that all vacant positions in the

establishment are filled. This will also ensure that employees have enough time to spend with their families and avoid bad relationships with supervisors.

- iii) De-motivation of employees is a serious challenge for the ministry and measures need to be put in place to address this situation. MCDMCH should ensure that officers are confirmed on time immediately after serving the probation period. Labour Unions should negotiate for increased salaries and transport allowance for public employees. MCDMCH should ensure that new officers are oriented or inducted before commencement of duty to avoid mistakes. MCDMCH should consider reintroducing the medical scheme for the employees. MCDMCH should reward and recognise employees based on merit at all times. Thus, MCDMCH should give labour day awards based on merit and enhance the Annual Performance Appraisal System (APAS) to provide the basis for rewards and recognition. The system should be seen to be fair by the employees and also give feedback. MCDMCH should recognize the fact that praise is an important kind of feedback. In monitoring employees, supervisors at MCDMCH should look for signs of excellent performance and let the employees know, in specific terms, that their good work is appreciated and that it benefits the organization. MCDMCH should further ensure that there is employee development that can increase goal commitment, organizational commitment and job satisfaction.
- iv) MCDMCH needs to provide screen protectors for all the computers and also adjustable chairs to ensure that the officers work comfortably. MCDMCH should also ensure that employees are sensitized on the dangers of using the computers continuously for 7 hours or more without taking a break as this affect eye sight.
- v) MCDMCH should protect its employees from all forms of violence in the workplace arising from the interaction with the clients, especially the disabled. Zambia Agency for Persons with Disability should sensitize its members on the need to be non-violent whenever they have a grievance. The government needs to increase funding towards programs such as the social cash transfer to adequately provide social assistance to the needy people since this programme has shown positive impact on the clients and the community at large. Increased funding would make it possible to roll out the programme to all the 104 districts as the programme was implemented initially in only 50 districts. MCDMCH should also ensure that medical personnel are protected from harassment by

members of the public by encouraging members of the public to find better ways of resolving complaints regarding medical personnel, rather than resorting to violence. MCDMCH should ensure that staffing levels in most hospitals and clinics are increased based on the staff establishment.

- vi) MCDMCH should empower its employees, which is very important and whenever duty is delegated it should go with responsibility. Employees should be given means to achieve their goals in relation to the job and must have a feeling that their contribution to the organization is important and should have full control over the decisions they make. Employees must have a say about decisions that affect the way they carry out their work and the roles of managers and immediate supervisors, who may act as mentors and coaches and especially for professional staff must have authority, responsibilities, and autonomy in their work. When employees feel they have meaningful input into their work, they are more likely to be engaged, to have higher morale, and to take pride in their organization. This, in turn, increases the willingness to make extra effort when required. Job empowerment is associated with increased psychological well-being, enhanced innovation, and organizational commitment. There should be a reasonable balance between empowerment and control. The aim must be to give employees the maximum space and freedom to act. But it is still necessary to ensure that their actions do not contravene policies and guidelines of an institution, meaning that there should be clear boundaries in terms of decision making.
- vii) There ministry should have a proper plan for replacement of officers who have attained the retirement age. The ministry, in collaboration with PSMD, should also ensure that individuals due for retirement are identified on time and served with retirement letters and they should be paid their dues as soon as possible. Replacement of exiting staff should be made on time to avoid disruption of operations. PSMD and MCDMCH should further explain the consequences of continuing to work once they have attained the retirement age. Organisations can benefit by addressing their employees' retirement adequacy, as it facilitates orderly retirement patterns and workforce planning. Demonstrating an organisational commitment and support to employees in the long term can also help to attract and retain staff. Workforce planning should be done with the same level of rigour and discipline applied to financial and operational planning. Human

resource managers need to describe how to find, recruit, develop and keep the required skills. They also need to re- skill the existing workforce in order to be abreast with new developments.

- viii) The high risk of absenteeism is worrying and the ministry should ensure that it addresses the needs of its employees who should be treated humanely. By introduction of the check in and out log books alone is not enough, de-motivators such as awards not based on merit and work overload should be avoided. When work pressures go up absenteeism is likely to go up as well. Workers need to be given leave to rest and this will also enable them to attend to other personal issues, including family matters. Employees will tend to report being sick or having family commitments when they are stressed or de-motivated. But leave should not disrupt the normal operations of the ministry. There should also be mutual respect between the supervisors and the juniors in order to have a workable solution by having realistic targets.
- ix) To increase efficiency of employees, MCDMCH should continuously train its staff and provide an enabling environment to increase productivity. MCDMCH can do such trainings through seminars and workshops, short and long courses at recognized colleges and Universities. Recognition of positive behaviour and providing words of encouragement to employees is also very important, as it ensures employees to feel appreciated and so they continue to work in the same way, and push to achieve even bigger challenges and objectives to help continually drive the organizational objectives forward. MCDMCH should also set realistic targets for the employees.
- x) MCDMCH should ensure family and work balance for the employees. The employees should have enough time to spend with their families. This can only happen when the work overload is reduced, hence the need for MCDMCH to fill in all the vacant positions to reduce work-aholism.
- xi) MCDMCH needs to continue sensitizing its employees on the code of ethics and also to engage the Anti-Corruption Commission in the sensitization process on the dangers of corruption.
- xii) In terms of alignment, MCDMCH should put in place adequate processes, structures and human resource policies to achieve the ministry's objectives.



- xiii) MCDMCH should fully implement the APAS to ensure that rewards and recognition are given on merit to encourage good performance. Recognition, rewards and incentives are useful to making employees feel their efforts are being appreciated and that they are valuable members of the team and organisation. This will discourage sabotage behavior among the employees who may feel are not cherished.
- xiv) In terms of information technology, MCDMCH should procure more computers which should have protective screens and train the officers on how to use them.
- xv) Waste management is very important in any community of people. Therefore, MCDMCH should ensure that it puts in place a proper waste management plan by engaging a waste management organisation and by procuring shredders for the officers to shred confidential information and to place enough waste bins from the current two that are being used, and collection of waste should be done regularly. Burning of the waste materials in the open air especially during the day when the officers are working should be avoided to prevent the risk of the employees suffering from asthma, lung and heart disease or cancer.
- xvi) MCDMCH needs to help raise the self-esteem of the employees by ensuring that they are motivated and take responsibility for their actions through involvement in decision making, and through some other non financial incentives like recognition, praise, promotion and financial incentives. Money, though not the only factor that can raise self esteem, is important to people because it is instrumental in satisfying a number of their most pressing needs. It is significant, not only because of what they can buy with it but also as a highly tangible method of recognizing their worth, thus improving their self-esteem and gaining the esteem of others.
- xvii) In terms of effective leadership, MCDMCH should have in house seminars or short courses on leadership skills for those in leadership positions and promotion into these leadership positions should be based on the capabilities and competencies among its workforce. Employees need to be given support and help to know what they need to do, how their work contributes to the organization and whether there are impending changes. Those in Leadership should be concerned with the mission of an organization at the same time be concerned with the welfare and commitment of its employees, they should also have time with subordinates to get feedback from both high performers and low

performers. There is need to encourage the low performers to perform better and to also promote teamwork as no organization can prosper where employees work in isolation. Therefore, MCDMCH should create conducive workplace where employees are respectful and considerate in their interactions with one another, as well as with clients and the public.

xviii) In terms of HIV/AIDS, Management at MCDMCH should be speaking openly about prevention of the disease at its meetings. Organisations should also provide medical schemes to its employees. Some of the activities for instance the ministry does are sensitization which seeks to stimulate sexual behavioral change, counseling and testing distribution of condoms in the staff toilets as a protective measure to stop the spread of the deadly disease (Keba Africa, 2011). These activities help to address discrimination and stigma in the workplace. The ministry has made tremendous strides in this regard and it should continue implementing such programmes. Those organizations that assume that since sexual relations do not happen at the workplace and that prevention measures are expensive and a drain on an organization's resources have grave assumptions which sooner or later will explode.

xix) Human resource risks can be overcome in the same way as other types of risks: acceptance, mitigation, avoidance or transfer. In MCDMCH human resource risk management should begin at the top with senior management, they should be concerned about human resource risk management and there should be a clear policy in this regard. They need to have risk assessment strategies in place, weigh the probability of the risks occurring, have checks and balance mechanism and what impact will it cause to an organisation and exploit the opportunities for improving performance. There should be zeal to anticipate and manage crises and not only to respond when a crisis has happened and a good monitoring and evaluation system is crucial. Risk management is a continuous process and it's not a once off activity. It is in this regard that managers should carry out risk analysis and put in place strategies to mitigate the risks

xx) The MCDMCH should be conducting risk assessment surveys on a regular basis. This will help to put in place proper measures to mitigate the risks thereby ensuring that there is high productivity. It is important for organizations to keep valued team members happy, effective and engaged at all times to avoid losing them, prevention is better than

cure. Employees need to be kept engaged, productive and happy by building trust in them so that they can feel confident discussing their jobs with their supervisors.

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## APPENDICES

### *APPENDIX 1: WORK PLAN*

<b>S/N</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>DATES</b>	<b>DURATION (WEEKS)</b>
<b>1</b>	Proposal Writing	01/04/2013 – 09/08/2013	5
<b>2</b>	Questionnaire Design	02/09/2013 – 29/09/2013	4
<b>3</b>	Data Collection	23/01/2014 – 14/03/2014	7
<b>4</b>	Data Entry	15/03/2014 - 21/03/2014	1
<b>5</b>	Data Analysis	22/03/2014 - 28/03/2014	1
<b>6</b>	Writing of the Draft Report	29/03/2014 - 30/04/2014	4
<b>7</b>	Writing of final report	01/05/2014 – 28/06/2014	8

## APPENDIX 2: BUDGET

Activity	quantity	Unit price	Total (ZMK)
Proposal development - printing of proposal, pages	28	2	56
Photocopying of 120 Questionnaires with 7 pages	120	0.25	2100
transport cost for data collection to and from field	62	40	2,480
<b>Meals</b>			
Breakfast	30	15	450
Lunch	30	20	600
<b>Sub Total</b>			<b>5,630</b>
Production of Dissertation			
Report Printing about 133 pages	4	5	2660
Stationery (reams)	6	35	210
<b>Sub Total</b>			<b>2870</b>
Contingency 10%			800
<b>Grant Total</b>			<b>9300</b>

## APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA  
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STUDIES**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

**TOPIC: MITIGATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES RISKS IN THE MINISTRY OF  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, MOTHER AND CHILD HEALTH: A CASE STUDY  
OF THE MINISTRY HEADQUARTERS FROM 2005 TO 2014.**

**Dear Respondent,**

My name is Manzunzo Zulu, I am a postgraduate student at the University of Zambia in the school of Humanities and Social Sciences. I am carrying out a study to enable me partially fulfill the requirements of the Degree of Master of Public Administration (MPA). You have been selected to take part in this research. Please give me a few minutes of your valuable time to answer the questionnaire. All the responses you will provide in this questionnaire will be highly confidential and will be purely for academic purposes. Therefore, please answer the questions as objectively as possible.

I thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.



## SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Sex status?  
☐ Male  
☐ Female
2. What is your job position in the ministry?  
☐ Senior Management  
☐ Middle Management  
☐ Junior Officer
3. How long have you been working this ministry?  
☐ 1- 5 years  
☐ 6-10 years  
☐ 11-15 years  
☐ more than 15 years

## SECTION B: HUMAN RESOURCE RISKS

4. Do you know what human resource risks are?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No  
If No please proceed to question 7.
5. If yes, do you think the Ministry of Community Development faces the challenge of human resource risks?  
☐ Yes  
☐ No
6. How would you rate the human resource risks in the Ministry? (Low, medium or high).

Ranking of risks in terms of impact on the achievement of organisational goals and sustainability	Rating			Reason(s) for the rating
	Low	Medium	High	
Repetitive stress injuries: Repetitive stress injuries - result when employees spend long time performing the same				

actives. For instance, the use of computer may result in eye strain or back injuries				
Human Immunodeficiency virus and Acquired immune Deficiency Syndrome HIV/AIDs				
Electromagnetic radiation – there are various ways by which it occurs, for instance, the use of computers, overhead power lines, cell phones, electrical wiring and other electrical appliances.				
Occupational diseases are normally illnesses associated with smoking and passive smoking.				
Alcohol or drug dependency creates risks to the individual as well as the co-workers. People may be killed and also fail to perform duties				
Dread diseases (cancer and heart disease) are normally as a result of stress due to increased job overload.				
Violence in the place of work that is harassment can happen from co-workers or clients/customers				
Occupational injuries are injuries associated with the work environment. employees can be prenatally injured or even killed due to unsafe acts as they are performing their duties				
Sick building is illnesses that affect				

workers in the office buildings.				
Outside working environment risks relate to the surroundings areas where the work is being done.				
Post traumatic stress disorder it is an anxiety problem which can result when a person's safety or life is threatened.				
Retirement and succession planning if not planned can have a negative effect on the organization as there will be staff gap and retiring staff might leave without their benefits which may lead to litigations and there would be no staff to take over the operations.				
Poor ethics/unethical behavior (dishonest or corruption) this can cripple business if not controlled.				
Stress is a psychological and physiological response to events that upset the personal balance in some way. For instance, if the work demands for an individual exceed the ability to cope.				
Work bullying is usually seen as acts that mentally hurt or isolate a person from workplace.				
Reward and recognition these relate to monetary and non monetary methods chosen to reward, compensate and recognize employee's contribution to the organization.				
Alignment risks relate to the policies,				

procedures and structures that should be developed in order for the organization to function properly.				
Sexual harassment relates to the sexual advances, requests for sexual favours at a place of work.				
Discrimination consideration based on other factors than on merit for example in recruitment or promotion based on racism, patronage, nepotism or prejudice.				
Statutory risks/ lack of compliance with laws are regarded as those risks that organizations or employees face when they do not comply with a country's labour and industrial legislation.				
Efficiency of employees relate to the quality of work produced with minimum or no wastage of time, money or human resource.				
Information technology relates to computer based management of information.				
Poor leadership may arise when operational staff is promoted into leadership positions without necessary leadership skills.				
Low self –esteem happens when a person does not a positive perception				

about himself/herself and this will have an effect on the organizational goals.				
Non-empowerment means that employees are not given the power to do their jobs or their ability to make decisions is restricted.				
De-motivation is a lack of human emotion or need that makes a person take action. There is lack of eagerness to satisfy specific needs.				
Work-aholism can be described as someone who is having a focused relationship with work that excludes time for other activities like, self nurturing, friends and love relationships.				
Absenteeism is the unscheduled absence of employees from the workplace				
employee retention				
Skills shortages, a situation where an organisation may have right number of employees who do not have the relevant knowledge and experience to perform the duties.				
strikes/disputes,				
Political instability				
Natural hazards (floods, earthquakes )				
Terrorism				
sabotage,				

Poor recruitment/selection of staff.				
Retrenchment/downsizing				
Family dynamics- when work and family is not balanced productivity tends to suffer.				

Other risks, please specify and indicate also whether low, medium or high-----

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### **SECTION C: MECHANISMS FOR MITIGATING HUMAN RESOURCE RISKS**

7. Do you know the mechanisms that the ministry has put in place to mitigate human resources risks?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

8. If yes, what mechanisms have been put in place to mitigate human resources risks in the ministry?

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### **SECTION D: CONSEQUENCES OF NOT MITIGATING HUMAN RESOURCE RISKS**

9. Do you think there are costs for not mitigating human resource risks?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

10. Please indicate the consequences associated with not mitigating human resource risks in your ministry?

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.....  
.....

### **SECTION E: WAYS OF MITIGATING HUMAN RESOURCE RISKS**

11. Suggest appropriate ways of mitigating human resources risks in the Ministry.

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