

Children with disabilities receive help from Spanish NGO

By Nthambeleni Gabara

MAKHADO – While it is commonly felt that specific needs of people with intellectual disabilities fall outside the ambit of development in communities, a Spanish non-governmental organisation (NGO) Clam per la Dignitat embarked on

a project to build classrooms for the Madombidzha Special School.

According to the chairperson of the organisation, Mr Edison Fananas Lanau, about 40 intellectually disabled children are going to benefit from the new six-room building. He added that, when finished, there will be three

blocks with three classrooms each and a toilet. He said that each classroom could accommodate 8 to 10 pupils.

There is also a building for teachers, staff members and visitors and a large dining-room with a kitchen. He added that the dining-room could also be utilised as a hall for playing when it rains or

for meetings with the parents.

Apart from other blocks, there is a complementary building with showers, toilets, and a storeroom for the garden tools as well as a polyvalent room.

According to him, one of the reasons for getting involved in the project is to create awareness with certain society members who still regard children with disabilities as incapable, ill and a burden on society, and to develop their abilities so that they can become independent.

He added that when children with disabilities are born in poor families, they grow up believing that their disabilities are an economic and social curse and

a burden on their families as well as to the entire community. "These children are unable to defend themselves, are often alone at home and are undervalued by friends and relatives. When they grow up, they become disempowered adults who are unable to take decisions, solve problems or to take initiatives," he said.

Maria Hernandez Clua (architect) said that all the children from the area would be admitted at the school, adding that they would first complete the two dining rooms and three classrooms.

The architect said that the Spanish NGO has collected funds from its members in Spain

and Germany. "More funds have been collected from Fundacion Ordesa, Ajuntament de Sant Just, Ajuntament de Castellbisbal, CCD to mention but few," she said.

Lanau, who first came to South Africa in 1998, said that this initiative of building the new school for the disabled children is the brainchild of five local community members who once visited Spain for a month.

The local contractor for the project, Mr Walter Mhangwani from Tshikota, had created jobs for at least 10 people from both the Tshikota and Madombidzha settlements.



Members of the Spanish NGO, with some of the workers photographed at the site of the project.

