



Investing in People for
Social and Economic Justice in Zimbabwe

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BREAKFREE

The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development Newsletter

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ZIMCODD ENHANCES WOMEN IN ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Clarity Sibanda

ZIMCODD's struggle for social and economic justice has this year seen the organisation reaching out to more than three hundred women drawn from Goromonzi, Norton and Chitungwiza in a project that seeks to address the engrained exclusion of citizens, particularly women, in economic governance related issues.

Through the Women Engagement in Economic Governance (WEEG) project, ZIMCODD sought to enhance public participation in economic governance by educating citizens on how to participate in budget making processes and enhance engagement with duty bearers in Public Resources Management (PRM) so as to realise social and economic rights.

According to statistics women in Zimbabwe constitute 52% of the country's population hence their exclusion results in exclusion of the 'majority voice', thereby defeating a critical element of democracy. In Norton, women raised issues such as poor service delivery and lack of consultation by the City Council when implementing policies and the 'hot issue' was council's intention to purchase a 'top of the range' vehicle for top management at the



Edutainment: Savanna Trust depicting the challenges faced by women due to poor service delivery

expense of service delivery. The Council acknowledged that there were indeed some areas which were facing poor services though they had engaged private players to help improve service delivery. On the issue of the car's purchase, the council defended the move saying, the money had been drawn from different sources and not from the ratepayers.

The council was however applauded for adhering to the Government's directive as it managed to allocate 64% towards service delivery and 36% to employees' salaries as indicated in its 2017 Norton budget.

In Chitungwiza, the relationship between residents and the Town Council had for

several years been strained and filled with mistrust. During meetings, residents admitted that their leaders were not consulting them during the budget making processes and were not accessing information such as the 2017 budget.

Chitungwiza Town Council however assured to avail to ZIMCODD SEJAs the 2017 Budgets which had become a bone of contention in that area. Finance Director for Chitungwiza Municipality admitted that in the past, the local authority had not been paying attention to residents' needs during budgeting processes.

Interestingly, during the 2017 National Budget, the Ministry

of Local Government and Ministry of Finance rejected the submission of the local authority's budget on the grounds that there was no proof that residents had been consulted hence the municipality had to go back to the residents for consultations. The Finance Director acknowledged that citizens

voices remained crucial in any policy making process.

The project managed to fulfil the anticipated impact of creating a vibrant social movement led by women who are able to influence public resource management policies thus curtailing corruption and promoting accountability.

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ECONOMIC LITERACY AMONG STUDENTS; An Essential Component

By Terry Mutsvanga

University of Zimbabwe (UZ) Faculty of Social Studies Dean, Professor Charity Manyeruke has urged students to participate in national economic development issues as well as contributing towards developmental ideas that can benefit the country.

Speaking at a public lecture on Public Finance Management (PFM) organised by the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) at the UZ recently, Professor Manyeruke said it is important that the young people discuss issues of national development and get expert advice from different stakeholders.

“These platforms are very important and enable us to get expert knowledge from organisations such as ZIMCODD which are working on a diversity of issues such as public finance management. This information will enable us to remain relevant as an

institution and will also create awareness among you as students because I believe knowledge is power” she said.

ZIMCODD Policy Research and Advocacy Officer, Mr Tinashe Gumbo said students should raise their voices guided by the Constitution to demand their social and economic rights. However, students argued that some sections of the constitution clearly weakens citizens' powers to claim their social and economic rights.

“For instance the right to education, health, clean and potable water are followed by a caveat that the provision of such services must be “within the limits of the resources available”, added one student.

During the meeting, ZIMCODD Board Member Mr Mukasiri Sibanda also presented the 2015 Auditor General (OAG) Report Analysis, done by ZIMCODD to the students and commended the AG for producing the reports on time adding that the Office has



been instrumental in exposing maladministration and abuse of public funds in some State Owned Enterprises (SOEs). He added

that citizens must participate in pushing for implementation of the audit recommendations and also use the whistle blowing

facility to report corruption and abuse of public resources and thus economic literacy remains pivotal amongst all stakeholders.



MATOBO SMALL SCALE FARMERS EMBRACE COMMAND AGRICULTURE

By Precious Luphahla

At least 160 Matobo small scale farmers who are also ZIMCODD members are set to benefit from wheat command agriculture after demanding to be included in the scheme. According to the Grain Millers Association of

Zimbabwe (GMAZ), Zimbabwe wheat output has been projected at 200 000 metric tonnes from about 60 000 metric tonnes.

According to the Government, Command Agriculture is a nationwide programme designed to

ensure self-sufficiency in the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe introduced in the 2016-2017 farming season. Small scale farmers in Matopo have acquired fertilizer, diesel and other farming inputs to enable them to partake in the wheat winter programme.

Farmers argue that in previous years, they were disadvantaged and could not challenge the partisan distribution of farming inputs such as fertilizers and farming equipment. However, a new era has unfolded as they can now challenge the status quo as a result of the awareness

raised by organisations such as ZIMCODD on the need for equitable sharing of national resources as enshrined in the Constitution's founding values and principles.

Despite the hard labor exerted by these farmers, some of them are concerned with the



difficulties they are likely to face in securing markets and have called on the Government to intervene. ZIMCODD work in Matobo began in November 2013 and a livelihoods assembly was officially formed in June 2014 to spearhead the

coalition's work in the area. The assembly represents Small Scale Crop and Vegetable farmers in the District who are also members of ZIMCODD. In the past three years, ZIMCODD has managed to provide training on thematic

areas covering development effectiveness, tax justice, trade and rural livelihoods, social and economic rights and social movement building among others. The small scale farmers indicate that they have benefited a great deal from the trainings.

Zimbabwe: Women's Participation in Budget Processes Must Be Improved ...

Rumbidzai Zinyuke

The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) under its project Women Engagement in Economic Governance (WEEG) has been raising awareness and urging women to participate in local council and national budget processes.

ZIMCODD has been advocating participatory budgeting to facilitate the involvement of women and girls in budgeting processes.

Addressing delegates during one such meeting in Chitungwiza recently, Z I M C O D D Communications Officer Grace Mugebe said women needed to be vocal and state

how they want to be included in budget allocations, be it in municipal budgets or the national budget.

"Let us not take our voice granted. Some of our concerns are heard and they can be addressed," she said.

She said excise duty on beer had been reduced twice before Government implemented the same measure for sanitary wear. And this only happened after women began active lobbying for the removal of tax on sanitary wear.

Participants at the ZIMCODD meeting noted with concern how women have been sidelined in governance and budget

issues despite being the most affected group by some of the decisions that are made in their absence.

“ Women's voices have not been heard because they have been trying to do things individually... ”

Emilda Mabidori, a member of the Chitungwiza Residents and Ratepayers Association (CHIRRA) said

Zimbabwean women need to be more active in developmental issues.

"As women, we need to take a more active role in budget processes so that issues that affect us can be resolved not just pushed to the side. Some of our councillors are letting us down; they do not take our concerns to budget consultative meetings so at the end of the day we find that very few issues to do with women make it into the council budget. We need to represent ourselves for us to be heard," she said.

Sheryl Chigwedere said youths in their communities have been labelled useless and are not listened to even if they have good ideas that can develop the community.

"For years, youth participation in budget issues has been very low. We have been tagged as young people with nothing to do, but we would like to take part in such important issues and be part of the decision making process. If our input is not taken into consideration, it makes it difficult for youths to be good leaders in the future," she said.

The low levels of engagement on budget processes has also been significantly felt in the rural areas where some women did not even know that they could participate in such processes.

Ms Sibongile Mataya of Goromonzi said women



Participants at the Chitungwiza Meeting

have in the past been told what had been decided when council came up with its budget without any of their input being solicited.

"Now we know that if we take part in these processes, we know how our money, which is collected from taxes, will work and how much will be used for projects that involve us as

women," she added.

Village head Kufandada Musonza said women need to unite and voice their concern as a unit and avoid individual contributions.

"Women's voices have not been heard because they have been trying to do things individually. If you do it alone it doesn't work. But

now that they are doing it in groups, their voices are bound to be heard," he said.

One of the best ways to achieve such success would be for women to participate during budget consultative meetings which are held every year before the final council or national budgets are drawn up.

Experts say budget hearings are one of the most direct channels by which the electorate can influence tangible local politics.

The foundation of participatory budgeting is that local government budgeting should not be treated as a piecemeal initiative, whereby residents

are involved at a later stage - but from the initial stages of the process.

Unfortunately, this is what has been happening in most council budgets across the country. Residents are only involved at a much later stage and most of their concerns are not included in the final budget.



1 The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development repealed Statutory Instrument 20 of 2017, which provided for the charging of Value Added Tax (VAT) at a standard rate of 15% on beef, chicken, fish, rice, potatoes, margarine and

mahewu. In terms of Statutory Instrument 26A of 2017, the goods are now exempt from VAT, which means that no VAT will be chargeable on the specified items.

2 Value Added Tax (VAT) is an indirect tax on consumption,

charged on the supply of taxable goods and services. It is levied on transactions rather than directly on income or profit, and is also levied on the importation of goods and services. This tax was introduced in 2004 to replace the former sales tax regime.

3 Government of Zimbabwe unveiled US\$4,1 billion budget for 2017 and below is a comparative schedule of the 2016 and 2017 budget allocations for selected sectors.



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF 2016 AND 2017 BUDGETS ALLOCATIONS FOR SELECTED SECTORS

Vote Appropriation	Total Budget: \$4 Billion	As % of Total 2016 Budget	Total Budget: \$4.1 Billion	As % of Total 2017 Budget
	2016	%	2017	%
Primary and Secondary Education	\$810'430'000	23.83%	\$803'771'000	19.6%
Home Affairs	\$395'854'000	11.64%	\$364'308'000	8.9%
Defence	\$357'665'000	10.51%	\$340'522'000	8.3%
Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development	\$145'089'000	4.27%	\$292'696'000	7.1%
Health and Child Care	\$330'789'000	9.72%	\$281'976'000	6.9%
Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology	\$304'235'000	8.94%	\$200'886'000	4.9%
Environment, Water and Climate	\$33'242'000	0.98%	\$40'100'000	1.0%
Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment	\$19'801'000	0.58%	\$17'192'000	0.4%
Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperative Development	\$6'363'000	0.19%	\$6'131'000	0.1%
Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development	\$13'113'000	0.39%	\$8'434'000	0.2%