



*Investing in People
For Social and Economic Justice*

THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Case of Chitungwiza, Goromonzi and Norton

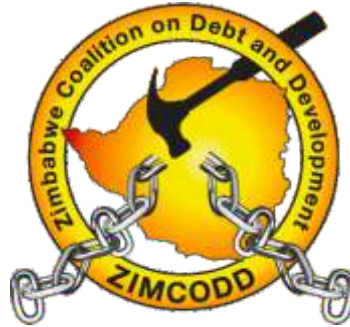


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A baseline Study Report Commissioned by



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Published By ZIMCODD

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The exclusion of women in economic governance has a multiplicity of effects on them, such as lack of accountability and non – fulfillment of social and economic rights enshrined in the Constitution. In order to enhance the participation of women and girls in Goromonzi Rural District Council (Goromonzi) and Harare Metropolitan Province (Chitungwiza and Norton) through demanding accountability and engagement with duty bearers in public resource management (PRM)² for the fulfillment of social economic rights, ZIMCODD conducted a baseline survey to determine the levels of inclusion or exclusion of women and girls. The main objective was to ascertain the level of women and girls' understanding of key economic governance issues and engagement of the Auditor General (AG) on local authorities.

Local level government structures are closest to the people and determining how citizens at this level participate in all affairs affecting them and how local government generates and uses resources is critical in realizing social and economic rights and freedoms. Using the interactive model of public participation, which covered five key areas which ranged from publicity initiatives, public education, public input and interaction and finally public partnership, this survey, noted that women *passively participate* in public resource management processes in the three localities.

The socio-economic class of women, their religious beliefs, political preferences, level of education and other demographic aspects such as age and location are differences which determine their levels of understanding, participation and engagement with public resource management processes. In all the areas, women are confined to low income earning livelihood options such as informal trading, poultry, mushroom and egg production. They are faced with similar challenges as residents when it comes to accessing services from their councils. While most women have been socialized into the traditional roles that are based on patriarchal values which confine them to the private spheres and not the public sphere, this survey noted three broad obstacles to women's effective participation:

Political Obstacles: the masculine models of political activities at local level and within party

² *Public Resource Management is viewed as the efficient use of public resources for the fulfilment of socio-economic rights.*

structures and processes hinder women to voice their concerns. Systemic collaborations and constructive engagement is hindered by masculine competitive engagements and this marginalizes women and their concerns.

Socio-Economic Obstacles: play a significant role in enabling women's participation. Unemployment and poverty has a women's face in these localities. The participation of women is constrained by poverty for instance, in Goromonzi District the poverty prevalence ranges between 61% and 72% in all the wards³. This study noted that, when women participate in public spheres, their main concern is survival and they have no choice but to spend much of their time trying to meet basic needs of their families.

Ideological and Psychological Hindrances: range from the traditional roles of women which emphasize women's primary roles as mothers and housewives therefore restricting them to those roles. Violence against women in private and public spheres, takes away their confidence and this limits their levels of participation and engagement.

In spite of the obstacles, noted, the study noted the following key findings which provide opportunities for positive action measures to increase the participation of women in public resource management and their levels of understanding of key technical issues. The existence of informal institutions and social networks in Goromonzi, Norton and Chitungwiza where women are already organized and belonging to livelihoods assemblies, residents associations, women's health rights forums can serve as building blocks and as spring board towards economic governance issues.

Collective action through the use of numbers is central in this regard. In Goromonzi for instance, more than 450 women are already organized into these associations, half that number exists in Norton and Chitungwiza combined. Well-designed training and capacitation programmes of women leaders and women as citizens within these areas will ensure an increase in their levels of engagement. Broadening coalitions and networks within these localities and the effective use of information to promote effective public debate on public resource management. Media exposure visits can document best practices and also cite key challenges that women do face.

Breaking the gendered obstacles will require that men are viewed as allies as they hold positions of power as head of families, political and religious leaders and as brothers and husbands. Men's

³ *Zimbabwe Poverty Atlas ,ZIMSTATs, August 2015*

attitudes and behaviors are crucial in the debate and in the design of gender – related strategies that ensures that rigid gender norms are challenged and transformed, and public spaces are safe for women to participate freely.

The study recommends area appropriate interventions that are all inclusive of all women to address the issues of diversity amongst women. The development of quality simplified materials on economic governance processes should be prioritized. Working with political party structures and key stakeholders in ensuring that trust building initiatives are undertaken remains critical. Strides must be made towards working with formalized local government structures and ensuring that collaborations are promoted; best practices of engaging women such as ward based meetings in Norton are documented and replicated with a view of ensuring that women meaningfully and effectively participate in public resource management processes in order to enhance transparency and accountability.

2 INTRODUCTION

This research was commissioned by ZIMCODD to establish the levels of the participant's understanding and participation in the public resources management process that includes the AG's reporting, national and local budgeting as well as best practices related to these processes. The specific objectives of the research were:

1. To develop an appreciation of the level of women and girls' understanding of public resource management in the target areas of Goromonzi, Chitungwiza and Norton,
2. To identify opportunities that need to be utilized and gaps that need to be filled in in designing capacity development initiatives for women in the target areas;
3. To provide recommendations to solution holders in the targeted districts on the issues they need to focus on in order to fill gaps in their PRM processes, basing such recommendations on both views and lived experiences of women and girls on the ground and experiences of practices from other comparative national, local and international case studies.

2.1 Methodology

Areas covered and selection of the participants:

1. **In Goromonzi**, interviews were conducted in ward 16, with members of the Goromonzi Livelihoods Assembly (LA) and Solidarity Economy Groups (SEGs). ZIMCODD has been working with women in ward 16 of Goromonzi from Musonza, Yafele, Mudzudzu and Chinyika villages since 2015. These women are mostly involved in vending and farming activities. Key informants were from the Treasurer's Office of the GRDC and Simukai Rural Residents Trust.
2. **In Chitungwiza**, interviews were conducted with women from wards 1, 7 and 8 coming from the various women's groups which work with ZIMCODD as Social and Economic Justice Ambassadors (SEJAs). These women are mainly informal traders and members of the Chitungwiza Residents and Ratepayers Association (CHIRRA). Key informants were mainly ZIMCODD SEJAs and Councillors from wards 1, 7 and 8.

- 3. Norton** – ZIMCODD has been working with the Norton community (ward 1 to 11) and women who are mostly vendors and residents were interviewed. The later (residents) belong to the Norton Residents Alliance (NORA) and this is the most visible community based organization for residents in Norton and women actively participate in the alliance. Key informants were public officials form Norton Town Council.

Methodologies used:

This baseline survey took into consideration, primary data from project participants and secondary data from the project documents produced by ZIMCODD which is already working in these areas⁴. Combinations of participatory research methodologies were used to collect information. These included focus group discussions, interviews with key informants and the reviewing of secondary data sources⁵. In Goromonzi, Chitungwiza and Norton women-only focus group discussions were held with women who comprised vendors, farmers, cross border traders and health rights activists for women and girls. The questions sought to ascertain the level of understanding and appreciation of public resources management in the target areas and how women are participating in the three project areas.

2.2 Inception Meetings

To get a clear picture of the programme an inception meeting was conducted between the consultant and the ZIMCODD Programmes Director and this led to the development of research survey tools and guidelines and the adoption of the final work plan to roll out the survey. It was agreed during this meeting on the available resources, the time frame that this survey will take available data sources, the participatory rapid assessment technique, the research sampling methods, mapping of key informants and different stakeholders working with women in the three areas. The meeting ensured that adequate expertise is availed for conducting the study.

⁴ ZIMCODD has worked with women vendors in these areas, under the Organising Vendors for Social Change (OVESOC) project.

⁵ These included, ZIMCODD inception meeting reports, consultative meeting reports with local authorities, Norton, Goromonzi and Chitungwiza Annual Budget reports for 2016 and the Auditor General's Audit Reports.

Table 1: Research Respondents

	Chitungwiza	Goromonzi	Norton	Total
Focus Group Discussion	15	16	12	43
Key Informants Interviews	4	3	3	10
Questionnaires	10	12	13	35
TOTAL	29	31	28	88

2.3 Desktop Reviews

A desktop review of the programme documents was made at the beginning of the research in order to get the context and objectives of the project. Project documents were availed by ZIMCODD, which included the project proposal that outlines the statement of the problem and the justification for the intervention and the proposed activities to be implemented⁶. The Auditor General's Reports were also reviewed which covered the three localities as well as the Norton Budget Overview for 2017. Reports from Simukai Rural Residents Trust, Norton Residents Alliance and Chitungwiza Residents and Ratepayers Association were also reviewed.

The information obtained from the desktop review informed the design of key informant interview questions, questionnaires and focus groups discussion questions.

2.4 Focus Group Discussions

Three focus group discussions with women were conducted in Chitungwiza, Norton and Goromonzi. The focus group discussions were structured in a open participatory platform, wherein women brainstormed on issues affecting their participation in public resource management. The focus group discussions also listed the forms of participation and the levels of participation of women and some of the innovative ways that women can do in order to address the challenges of participation.

⁶ *The Women Engagement in Economic Governance (WEEG): Influencing the realization of Social Economic Rights through transparent accountable public resource management in Zimbabwe.*

Table 2: Focus Groups Participants

Years...	18 - 25	25 - 35	35 - 45	45 - 55	Above 55	Total
Goromonzi	3	7	3	3	-	16
Norton	2	3	4	2	1	12
Chitungwiza	-	5	8	2	-	15
Total Participants	5	15	15	7	1	43

2.5 Key Informant Interviews

Interviews with key informants were conducted using semi structured questions with 3 key informants for each of the areas. In Goromonzi, interviews were conducted with the Treasurer, the Auditor, and the Coordinator of Simukai Residents Trust. In Norton the Town Secretary, Acting Director of Finance and Director for Housing were interviewed. In Chitungwiza, three councilors were interviewed and the Chairperson of the Chitungwiza Residents and Ratepayers Association, a ZIMCODD SEJA. Key information was obtained on the levels of understanding and participation of women in public resource management at local level and also at national levels.

2.6 Limitations Of The Research

The following were the limitations of this baseline survey:

- 1. Time constraints:** The participants who are women are pressed with livelihood issues as they are mainly vendors and meeting them during business hours means they are moving away from their sources of income. The times given for meeting the key informants failed to take into consideration the resource constraint of travelling back and forth to these areas.
- 2. Resources:** The long walking distances covered by women participants in Norton and Goromonzi to the venue of the meetings were a deterrent as transport and food allowances were not availed.
- 3. Number of women reached:** This survey would have benefitted greatly if the numbers of women reached was increased to ensure that different wards and localities are covered. That all inclusive approach would have taken views of women in different social

settings such as professional women, women with disabilities and women involved in the usage of different council facilities.

4. Involvement of stakeholders: In all the areas covered, there exists, other community based organizations, such as residents associations, women's rights groups, who would have shared their views on the lack of participation of women. Public officials from Chitungwiza refused to be interviewed as there are no good relations between the council and the residents. The officials were also skeptic about disclosing information which they felt could find its way to the different media houses.
5. Research studies that exist focus more on the participation of women in politics and key decision making structures, specific studies on participation in public resource management by women is limited. This limitation provides ZIMCODD, with an opportunity to innovatively work with women around their participation in public resource management.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

3

The exclusion of citizens, especially women, in economic governance processes and issues is engrained in Zimbabwe. Women who constitute 52% of the population should play a critical role in ensuring that their voices and concerns are heard in all processes that relate to the management of public resources. Public interest in economic governance issues is generally low because of the technical issues involved in public resource management processes. This baseline report noted limited capacity and interest amongst women to engage with public resource management processes in the three localities.

Citizen participation, which should be viewed as a process which provides private individuals with an opportunity to influence public policy decisions should be viewed as a key component of democratic decision making processes at local government levels. Public involvement is a means to ensure that citizens have a direct voice in public decisions and the facilitation of citizen's participation and involvement in making public policy and practice pro – people and sustainable is at the core of ZIMCODD's work. In Norton consultative stakeholder platforms are created in all the wards, especially on the budgeting processes, this is not so in Chitungwiza municipality and Goromonzi Rural District Council. Assessing therefore the participation of women and girls, provides a platform of reflecting on ways of citizen engagement and participation in public resource management. Addressing the gendered barriers that women face in these localities is critical in ensuring that the technical economic governance terms and processes are simplified for women to understand and meaningfully engage with local authorities.

Zimbabwe's legal and policy frameworks⁷ that govern the management of public resources are very clear on the institutions that are supposed to focus on transparency and accountability in the management of public resources. Lack of the involvement of citizens in these institutions, especially women and girls, is viewed as costly and expensive and results in ineffective and inadequate levels of transparency and accountability. In order to ensure the effective participation women, they need strategic capacitation which address their limited capacities and allow them to analyze expenditures, sources of income and assess Auditor General's reports. Information on public funds generation and utilization needs to be disseminated to the general

⁷ *The Constitution of Zimbabwe, the Public Finance Management Act, the Audit office Act and the Finance Act provides clear legislative and institutional frameworks that make up the public financé management system for Zimbabwe.*

citizens who are the tax and rate payers and the most important stakeholders. This clear lack of a voice for citizens in general and women and girls in particular results in high levels of vulnerabilities. The achievement of social and economic rights as enshrined in Chapter 4 of the Zimbabwean Constitution becomes a dream for many women and girls due to this level of poor resource management processes. The use of new revenue collection strategies such as the use of mobile money payments was introduced in Chitungwiza and point of sale machines in Goromonzi and Norton all in an effort to ensure easy payment processes. These new ways of making payments whilst they are aimed at enhancing revenue collection have resulted in double billing of residents and the meaningful involvement of women.

The elimination of attitudes, stereotypes and practices based on patriarchy that reinforce women's assumed roles and inferiority when it comes to economic governance issues remains critical to ZIMCODD's work of ensuring that those who are marginalized participate effectively in developing economic and social alternatives. ZIMCODD's current work in Goromonzi, Norton and Chitungwiza involves addressing the ingrained exclusion of citizens, especially women, in economic governance. This exclusion has a multiplicity of effects such as lack of accountability and non – fulfillment of social and economic rights enshrined in the Constitution of Zimbabwe. This baseline survey intends to establish the levels of understanding and participation of women in economic governance through the demanding of accountability and engagement of duty bearers in public resource management (PRM) for the fulfillment of social economic rights.

Premised on the rich theory of citizen participation, wherein, Cogan and Sharpe (1986, p.84) identified five benefits of citizen participation in all planning processes, which entails:

1. Information and ideas on public issues
2. Public Support for planning decisions
3. Avoidance of protracted conflicts and costly delays
4. Reservoir of good will which can carry over to the future decisions and
5. Spirit of cooperation and trust between the agency and the public

All of the above five are central to the assessment of the participation of women in public resource management which is key to the attainment of their social and economic rights. A great deal of literature exists on the subject of citizen participation, this baseline survey premised its approach by adopting, Cogan, Sharpe and Hertzberg' concise overview given in the book, *The Practice of State and Regional Planning* (So, et, l, 1986 p.283 -308) which clearly emphasized the perceptions of stakeholder and planners in the development of any public participation programme. The participation of citizens can offer a variety of rewards to citizens, these can be intrinsic to the involvement (through the very act of participation) or instrumental (resulting

from the opportunity to contribute to public policy).

Assessing the participation of women in economic governance processes was premised on Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation which helps determine the success of citizen engagement. In this model, the disparity between the planner and the participants' expectations is minimal, if expectations are different, conflict is probable. Conflict is avoidable because its source is in conflicting expectations rather than conflicting demands.

3.1 Key Findings From The Assessment Of Women And Girls' Understanding Of Public Resource Management

This section covers in detail the participants' levels of understanding and levels of participation in public resource management process that includes the AG's reporting, national and local budgeting as well as best practices in related to these processes. It explores the existing level of participation of women, with particular references to the three locations and opportunities existing for establishing best practices to upscale the involvement of women in economic governance processes. Differences where they exist in the three areas will be highlighted in order to make appropriate area specific recommendations and where cross cutting issues to the three areas are noted, they will be highlighted.

3.1.1 Levels Of Understanding Amongst Women On Public Resource Management

In all the three localities, platforms for women's involvement range from residents associations⁸, women's economic justice networks⁹ and women's health rights forums¹⁰. These women could not understand why the budget consultative meetings are important as there exists a great, "them and us divide" between the council officials and the residents. The national and local level budgeting processes are viewed as something that the council does annually and women could not relate to these processes as they just give an outline of the expected expenditures and incomes. Information obtained from key informants noted the following

⁸ Simukai Rural Residents Trust for Goromonzi, Chitungwiza Residents and Ratepayers Association for Chitungwiza and Norton Residents Alliance for Norton.

⁹ ZIMCODD has Social and Economic Justice Ambassadors (SEJAs) in selected wards in the areas and in Goromonzi for example, there exist five women's cooperatives working on poultry production, farming and gardening, savings, mushroom and egg production.

¹⁰ Utano Community Association in Chitungwiza works with women living with HIV in accessing treatment and information

1. In Norton, budget consultative meetings were conducted at ward level in all the 13 wards.
2. In Chitungwiza, no information was obtained relating to ward specific meetings on the budget consultative processes and in,
3. Goromonzi, one meeting was held at the community center a venue which women said is not conducive to serious deliberations as it is an open space with a lot of distractions.

The women interviewed in all the localities were not aware that the AG's report covers governance issues, revenue collection, management and debt recovery processes undertaken by their local authorities and while they could relate to how revenue is raised at local level, they were not aware of how they can use the report in the consultative engagements. The AG's Report was also not popular amongst the women due to language barriers as all versions are produced in English language, which segregates those with challenged literacy rates. Women as residents were very clear about how they are affected by policies undertaken by their local authorities:

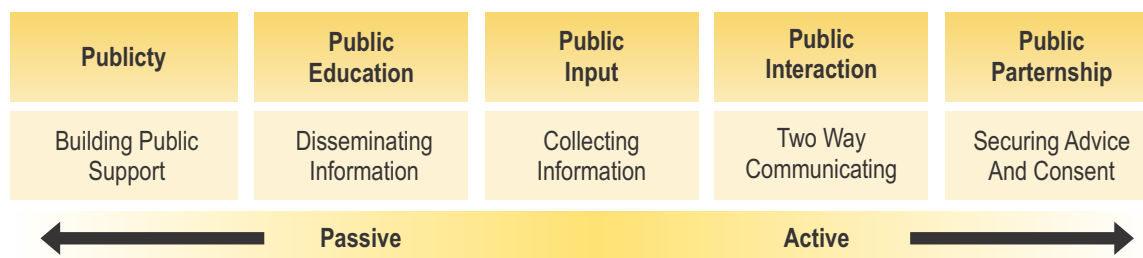
- In Chitungwiza, women residents questioned the public private partnership arrangements made for Chitungwiza hospital as service charges have become beyond the reach of pregnant women and ;
- In Norton , residents stated that capital projects for the rehabilitation of sewage works were supported through the financial assistance of World Hunger Heifer but the amounts were not disclosed and there is a danger of double reporting or the council contracting expensive loans in the name of the residents;
- In Goromonzi, women farmers who earned their livelihoods through tilling land for maize as well as livestock production in the Yafele village woke up to the realization that the farming and grazing lands were no longer theirs as it had been pegged away by the Goromonzi Rural District Council for sale to prospective private homeowners who are from other parts of the country.

Public officials did not view it as their role to be going out with information to residents and they viewed this as the responsibility of elected councilors, through the councilors meetings at ward level. Only one councilor from ward 7 in Chitungwiza conducts meetings fortnightly; however minutes of the meetings were not available to review the issues addressed in the councilors meetings and to assess if relevant information that enables women residents to act was disseminated. Relations between women residents and council officials should be improved through regular stakeholder meetings to promote a culture of dialogue and working together

without suspicion and accusations. The ward based meetings conducted in Norton should be replicated in all the localities.

3.1.2 Women's Participation Continuum

- using the participation continuum, which covers the five categories of participation:



- **Publicity Initiatives:**

In all the three locations, publicity initiatives that are designed to persuade and facilitate public support and the sharing of information and ideas that will allow women as citizens to effectively participate were minimal. Notices are placed in places which women do not frequent, such as beerhalls in Chitungwiza and Goromonzi in Norton, the town council places adverts in the national daily, The Herald¹¹. Women noted that, while this is commendable, the majority of women residents do not have money to buy the dailies and to submit in writing comments on the proposed changes. Women proposed ward based information dissemination strategies or the use of residents association to reach the public.

Public officials noted that for publicity initiatives the councils allocate resources to undertake road shows and participation in local level agricultural shows in order to disseminate information to residents and ratepayers. While this is commendable, the content of the shows and fairs still remain to be assessed the extent to which this information enable residents to meaningfully engage and contribute. All the councils have council properties in all these localities, the use of user friendly fliers, suggestion boxes and low cost technologies possible. New technologies have been used in Chitungwiza in collecting revenue through mobile payments and point of sale machines, women noted that, the same platforms can be used to disseminate information that help women residents engage with key issues.

¹¹ The Notice for the 2017 Annual Budget was placed in The Herald of 12 October, 2016, notifying residents of Norton in terms of Section 219 of the Urban Council Act (Chapter 29:15) that the council is going to fix the rates, rentals, fees, tariffs and other service charges in relation to 2017 budgets estimates and any objects or comments must be addressed in writing to the Town Secretary.

In Norton the council has budgeted for 2017, the employment of a public relations person show will be responsible to carry out publicity initiatives, and this should be replicated to other councils. Having council offices, open does not relate to disseminating information, clear publicity initiatives should be undertaken by the councils.

▪ **Public Education Programmes:**

The three local authorities were assessed on their levels of undertaking clear well-presented and complete information to their residents and it was noted by 80% of the women and girls respondents that this was not happening, and if it was, the avenues of reaching to residents were not friendly to women. Women vendors in all the localities, noted that, all the councils have municipal police details, who are available at all market places and bus terminuses, these can be used to educate citizens on service charges, initiatives by the councils, interests on rates and levies. This will require a total shift of approach and perceptions. In Norton women noted that, the council has male security personnel manning designated water points and this might pose as a threat to young girls fetching water at these points.

In Norton and Chitungwiza women residents noted that Mr. Paul Mangwana's legal firm, Mangwana Legal Practitioners was contracted by the Councils to collect outstanding debts for the council and this was not followed with proper consultations with residents through their councilors or residents association and this has resulted in the seizure of property and evictions of elderly widows and single mothers within these areas. However, in Norton the Council addresses the issue by cancelling the debt collector's contract after people raised the issue during budget consultations. In Chitungwiza, CHIRRA has taken up eviction cases with assistance from Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights and the Legal Resources Foundation.

Women residents in Chitungwiza also noted that public education programmes for basic services such as the water tanks that are provided in Chitungwiza and Norton to curtail the water shortages, have no clearly outlined time tables and this makes it difficult for women to plan in advance and access water from the tankers. The gendered impact of not availing this information in localities where water provision is erratic, leaves women and girls, walking distances and queuing for hours to access water from boreholes drilled by local churches (in Chitungwiza) or by UNICEF (in Norton).

▪ **Public Input Levels of Participation:**

In matters relating to usage of public resources and women residents' participation in decision

making to prioritize their concerns, this baseline survey noted through the women interviewed, that being invited they viewed their participation in meetings as a form of protocol and formality and not to seriously consider their views and concerns. In Norton, the council engaged residents to inform them of an already finalized public private partnership agreement with a German based firm to build, own and operate a water treatment plant in order to ease the water shortages. The move, women noted commodifies a basic commodity and a right in such a way that the poor are further marginalized into the poverty cycle thereby threatening the right to water itself. Women viewed the consultation as a way of informing them a possible increase in water charges because of the public private partnership agreement. Women residents were clear that Norton does not have adequate clean and portable water facilities especially in high density suburbs such as Katanga, Maridale and Johannesburg areas. Some residents have gone for as much as ten years without drinking water.

In Goromonzi women farmers and vendors noted clearly that in the meetings conducted, the public officials do not answer questions relating to critical issues such as the lack of systematic allocation of stands as they are done on an ad hoc basis and the challenges become complex when the allocations are done along partisan lines and questioning this will be viewed as anti – establishment. Women in Chitungwiza noted that notice periods for meetings are not standardized and in many instances women then find it difficult to attend these meetings. Public officials acknowledged the lack of a calendar of residents meetings and clear strategies of ensuring that they are notified of these meetings.

In all the three localities, women and girls were clear in their responses that they are not consulted on the results of the AG's findings within the local authorities. Concerns were raised about the lack of feedback on the sources of income for local authorities especially from estates, properties, housing, welfare and education. Internal controls were noted as a major issue wherein in the three localities; there was no clear outline of the yearly employment costs and the number of employees employed by these local authorities. Norton Residents Association noted that the employment costs of the council in 2015 amounted to \$3 108 321 out of a total expenditure of \$5 022 069 indicating that employment costs constituted 62% of the total expenditure¹². Simplifying information that enables women residents to engage with officials and also capacitate their associations to make critical analysis is important. The Norton employment expenditures were in clear violation of the Ministerial directive prescribing a ratio of 30:70. Thus the risk is that the council may not be able to cater for other operating expenses as

¹² *Report of the Auditor General of the Financial Year Ended December 31, 2015 on Local Authorities, Presented to Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2016*

a significant portion of collections would be going towards paying salaries, thereby compromising service delivery.

Officials from Norton indicated that their staff establishment has been reduced from three hundred and nine positions for 2017 compared to three hundred and seventy two in 2016 and this includes sixty seven government paid health staff. All vacant posts have also been frozen with the ultimate intention of abolishing them altogether¹³. If a participatory approach to public resource management is adopted, women and residents will have their input taken into consideration on the areas to cut back on staff, posts to freeze and those not to freeze. In Goromonzi and Chitungwiza retrenchment programmes have also been undertaken according to the councilors interviewed.

▪ **Public Interaction Initiatives**

Public interaction initiatives increase the spirit of cooperation and trust. This survey wanted to find out the levels of interaction between the citizens, especially women and girls in ensuring there is effective public resource management. Goromonzi Rural District Council which covers approximately 9000 square kilometers has a rapidly growing population and it is a transition zone in many ways due to its proximity to Harare. 65% of the women respondents noted that the council's failure to maintain and repair roads, schools and clinics, let alone provide water, electricity administer land and provide other essential public services to the locals is worrisome. Women in Goromonzi noted that a top down approach is used by council officials and there are no avenues for meaningful cooperation that also take into consideration the gendered impact of council policies, a woman resident interviewed had this to say,

“When economic conditions deteriorate, it is women who suffer the most, with my husband unemployed, I am now the only breadwinner. Our rural homestead land was taken away by council and it was sold to people from the cities and other parts of the country that have money. As land becomes scarce, there has been overcrowding in the schools, at the local clinics and the fees at the clinics and the schools have been increasing yearly. It is us women who must find a solution, such as collecting water from open streams and wells, tilling the little land that is left and taking care of the household.”¹⁴

Public interaction initiatives such as meet your council or councilors are non – existent in

¹³ Budget Speech 2017, presented by the Finance Committee Chairperson Mr Maxwell Chiutsu, November 2016

¹⁴ Interview with the women informal trader and farmer in Goromonzi, 2016

Goromonzi and Chitungwiwa. Stakeholder ward based meetings do happen in Norton and these should be replicated in the other councils. Partnerships with community based organizations, schools, business associations, pastors' forums and political party structures will ensure that more public interactive initiatives are availed to women residents to engage with public officials. Through collaborations, the Norton Town Council in partnership with Australian Aid has trained ward development committees to ensure that there is improved interaction between the council and residents. This can be explored as a public interaction model although most women residents felt the drive is about income generation to the council and not with a focus on service delivery, especially in an area where water is virtually not supplied.

Residents also noted that radio programmes that are being run for local authorities by different Non-Governmental Organizations such Communities in Action in partnership with Star FM invited local authorities and councilors to live interactive programmes in 2016, wherein residents would call in. Women in the three localities acknowledged having listened to these radio programs but could not call in to air their views and concerns because of the costs of calling to the radio programmes.

▪ **Public Partnership Approaches**

Public partnership approach to citizen participation offers a much formalized way of ensuring that ultimate decisions are shaped by the input of every stakeholder, in all the three localities, this is glaringly missing. The survey found out that this level of engagement needs to ensure that legal requirements are met, citizens are clearly informed about the objectives and goals of each engagement, there is political will and support and citizen's views are an integral part of the decision making processes. Duty bearers should also receive adequate funding for effective citizen engagement and those affected by key issues are consulted in all these processes and clarity of roles and responsibilities is outlined.

Chitungwiza Town Council engaged women residents through their residents associations on ways to improve health care facilities and key issues around payments and payment terms were clearly outlined including the constant challenge of lack of water in these facilities. Increasing the participation of women and girls through this approach needs to be issue based and availed to the public in general and women and girls in particular the key resource persons with the information that can help citizens contribute meaningfully.

In Norton women informal traders are operating in areas without adequate water and sanitation facilities, the same problem exists in Goromonzi and if citizens are viewed partners in solving

their own problems, service delivery is improved. Prioritization of the allocations and usage of available resources is collectively done and monitored, without constant confrontations with residents.

3.2 Obstacles To Women's Participation: In Goromonzi, Norton and Chitungwiza

The representation of women in all the three localities is low ZIMCODD must undertake a mapping exercise of the women in leadership positions in all the three localities and also realize that the differences that exist amongst women will require different strategies of engagement, different groups of women differ in their needs, experiences and perceptions of social, economic and political realities. In turn these differences influence their preferences and interpretation of policy options and ZIMCODD needs to take this into consideration. Women who belong to residents associations are more concerned with service delivery issues and women who belong to women's health rights forums are more concerned about access to health facilities and services. The intersections of women's lives due to age, class, level of education, political preferences, religion should be important programming considerations because if these are not recognized they can stand between effective cooperation and advocacy.

In Norton, the Chairperson's report to the 2017 budget stated clearly the need for gender mainstreaming and the involvement of women as outlined by gender protocols and this should be applicable to all localities. ZIMCODD needs to ensure that women are active participants in determining development agendas in their communities through participating in how resources and allocated, used and accounted for. Women's participation still faces numerous obstacles which can be categorized into three areas:

- **Political Obstacles**

Women in all the three areas expressed that local government processes are dominated by men, who formulate the political rules and the prevalence of the “masculine model” of political life and the elected public officials makes participation of women difficult. The lack of party support, for example, limited financial support for women's organized platforms or wings in Norton and Goromonzi results in women failing to meaningfully support their own councilors who will represent them in local government. Lack of access to well-developed education and training

systems for women's leadership in general that capacitate them for effective engagement was cited as a challenge in Goromonzi.

- **Socio – Economic Obstacles**

80% of all women who were interviewed in all the three areas are into informal trading and small scale farming resulting in them being focused on addressing day to day livelihoods issues facing their households and do not therefore prioritize engagement with officials on public resource management issues. The high levels of unemployment in Zimbabwe have impacted on women who now bear the dual burden of domestic tasks and informal professional obligations. In Goromonzi women were once employed in vibrant commercial farms in the late 1990s and these are no longer as vibrant as they used to be.

Eradicating poverty will have a positive impact on women's increased participation in public resource management in particular and broadly in the democratic processes in their areas. In Norton women suggested that council properties such as the Ngoni Community Hall and Ngoni Stadium should be availed to women at discounted rates for vending to improve their livelihood options. In Chitungwiza and Goromonzi women suggested that licenses and permits should be transparently allocated and the process needs to be clearly outlined to women as small shops were being charged the same charges with big shops and private colleges the same amount as small pre – schools.

The economic empowerment of women along with education and access to information will take women from the constraints of the household to full participation and engagement in public resource management. Special Economic Zones exist in Chitungwiza and Norton and these should give specific allocations for the participation of women who are living with disabilities, HIV, single mothers and widows

- **Ideological and Psychological Hindrances**

The traditional roles of women as mothers and housewives are still dominant in Goromonzi, Chitungwiza and Norton. A traditional strong patriarchal value system that favors sexually segregated roles does exist and women in all these areas, clearly stated that they are still expected to be good housewives and mothers to children. This clearly militate against their participation in public processes. Women spaces are clearly defined and in Goromonzi, women stated that, it is not their space to be asking a lot of questions in about budgeting processes, usage of resources and service delivery. Also women in Goromonzi with values affected by a rural set-

up, indicated that some men refuse their wives to participate in public meetings in fear that other men will propose love to them which will bring infidelity in the home. Therefore, most men prefer their wives to stay at home. They bemoaned how their once rural homesteads are being taken over by council and allocated as urban stands without their meaningful involvement.

Women in Chitungwiza and Norton asserted that it is still unacceptable for married women to participate effectively in public engagement processes; women should correspond to the undeclared male rules which state that women should not participate in public engagement processes. The ability to make decisions and implements them is not a gender – specific trait but a common human one. In other words it is as natural for a woman to participate on public processes as it is natural for a man to do the same.

Over and above the patriarchal based hindrances noted above, women lack confidence and they do not believe that their concerns and voices do count. In Chitungwiza, the difficult relations between women residents and public officials make it difficult for women to engage on economic governance issues. Women in all these areas are good campaigners, organizers and support – mobilizers, but fear sometimes prevents women from participating and engaging effectively on matters that affect their day to day living.

Positive action measures should be undertaken to ensure the effective participation of women in public resource management.

4 OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings above which covered levels of understanding of key economic governance issues and participation of women and girls form the basis of the following opportunities and recommendations:

a) Informal Institutions - Social Networks As Agents Of Change – and Capacitation Of Women and Girls To Effectively Participate

Societal actors have a direct hand in shaping the policy and institutional environment by advocating policies, designing interventions and implementing programs. In all the three localities, there exist vibrant residents associations and solidarity economy groups bringing together women to deal with livelihoods and issues facing residents. A mapping of these social networks where women belong is a critical step for ZIMCODD as these can diffuse information, such as sharing knowledge and simplified booklets on public resource management at local level or a citizen's guide to understanding the budgeting processes. Ensuring the participation of women in these already existing structures will provide as a springboard for collective action and can transform passive stakeholders into societal actors willing to engage on economic governance issues.

b) Constitutional Awareness on Socio- Economic Rights For Citizens

Chapter 4 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe makes provisions for social economic rights for citizens, but most women and girls are not conversant with these provisions as noted in this survey. Therefore there is need to undertake clear, well designed training and capacitating initiatives that link the constitutional provisions of Chapter 4 to poor public resource management as outlined in the AG's Reports. If women and girls are capacitated in their respective areas to connect legislative frameworks and key institutional processes and local level public resource management, their participation will be meaningful and effective. They will play an effective role in unearthing financial mismanagement and contribute to the plugging of the loop holes that cause illicit financial flows that prejudice the citizenry of their social and economic rights.

c) Collective Action: In Numbers There Is Power;

With more than 450 women in Goromonzi, half that number in Norton Goromonzi combined; ZIMCCOD has an opportunity of ensuring that their relative power in organized platforms is the key resource they can use to effectively and meaningfully engage in economic governance processes. Working therefore with women in numbers means their visibility, legitimacy, constituencies, social standing, social networks and ability to determine their spheres of influence will contribute to transparency and more accountable local authorities. Collective action will also draw women's private lives into the public arena thereby breaking down the gender related barriers driven by beliefs and practices that keep them out

d) Women Are A Heterogeneous Group;

In Goromonzi, Chitungwiza and Norton women differ not only in their endowments and access to opportunities but also in their ideologies and values. The interests of some women may be directly opposed to the interests of other women (some belong to ZANU PF some belong to the MDC formations), some women belong to the African traditional religious denominations, other do not in the urban areas such as Norton and Chitungwiza, class and educational levels intersect and these intersections create specific effects. ZIMCODD needs to realize that different groups of women differ in their needs, experiences and perceptions of social, economic, cultural and political realities and this has an effect on their preferences and interpretations of policy options they are willing to engage; as one woman interviewed in Norton stated;

"We know women who are occupying council owned properties that are leased to them but there are no records at the council offices of these lease agreements, and ghost workers on the council payrolls are a result of party politics"

ZIMCODD needs to recognize these intersections and devise strategies that ensure there is more cooperation amongst women to enable cooperation and sustained advocacy initiatives and realizing the common goals for women and their well-being.

e) Men As Allies;

In the three localities there is need to ensure that the contributions of male actors towards the effective participation of women is harnessed as heads of families, leaders of religious groups,

political leaders, village heads and indeed as husbands and brothers they can continue to hold significant power over many aspects of women's lives. Men's attitudes and behavior are crucial in breaking the gender related obstacles that women face as they look for ways to participate effectively in public resource management. These men will effectively work towards eliminating patriarchal stereotypes that exclude women; a male chairperson of one of the residents association had this to say;

"gender roles are constructed and reconstructed – and must be questioned – by both men and women. Girls and women can contribute to traditional, harmful versions of manhood just as boys and men can contribute to traditional, restrictive versions of womanhood. True and lasting changes in gender norms will only be achieved when it is widely recognized that gender is relational, it involves men and women relating to each other"

ZIMCODD will need to explore the inclusion of men as allies and convey the idea that advances towards greater involvement of women is a public good beneficial to all. Using local data, research and testimonies in media and public platforms can facilitate greater policy changes within the communities and local authorities and frame gender equality - in relationships, in households, and in communities – as a public good for everyone. In the same regard, an opportunity of engaging with young people can shape social attitudes towards gender roles and gender justice. Well designed, deliberate re-orientation, gender sensitization and awareness – creations and transformations in key community structures should be explored.

f) Bringing gender into formal institutions and policies;

suing legislative mandate to ensure the effective participation of women

In all the local authorities there exist gender protocols which must be followed to ensure the effective and meaningful inclusion of women. ZIMCODD has an opportunity of ensuring that councils make it their best practice through formalized engagement of women towards effective public resource management.

Zimbabwe has very clear and legal institutional frameworks that govern public resource management, principal to this is the Public Finance Management Act (Chapter23:29) (PEFMA) enacted in 2009, an institutional frameworks which comprise of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoF), Office of the Auditor General (OAG), Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZMRA) and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ). ZIMCODD can play a critical role in ensuring that women and girls as citizens understand the mandates and functions of these

institutions to ensure transparency and accountability in the management of public resources. Information on public funds utilization should be disseminated in accessible and easy to read formats to women and girls who are the tax payers and the most important stakeholder. The simplification of these acts and frameworks will help women and their associations to engage on economic governance issues.

g) Simplifying Economic Governance Processes For Women and Girls and Breaking Political Polarization

The research noted that women and girls believe that economic governance issues are abstract, theoretical higher level issues which they cannot relate to. There is therefore need to ensure that simplified manuals in vernacular language, such as Shona and Ndebele are availed to women covering issues on constitutional provisions, public resource management processes and also ensuring that strategies for enhanced public participation, transparency and accountability in economic governance for the realization of social and economic rights are user friendly. Central to this simplification process is the need to ensure that better decisions are made at local authority level where the contributions of women and girls are incorporated. Fear of participating due to party politics barriers at local authority level should be dealt with through stakeholder engagement in the early stages of the project to ensure that the vision, objectives and aims of this intervention are clearly outlines and all fears are addressed. This will break the political polarization that exists amongst different political party supporters in these localities.

h) Unleashing The Power Of Information Through Working With The Media

Information raises awareness, shapes public opinion, builds a constituency and serves as a call to action and therefore the effective participation of women will stem from the information they are able to obtain in their localities. ZIMCODD needs to harness the power of women in all the localities and in a transparent manner, simplify issues specific to different localities and promote more effective public engagements forums, leadership consultative engagements to elected and unelected officials and explore the participation of women in multiple ways from multiple perspectives. Media exposure can engage stakeholders directly and influence their private beliefs that hinder the participation of women. Information campaigns through media briefings and tours to the localities contribute to breaking social norms, values and practices that act as obstacles to women. Media outreach initiatives can also serve broader educational purposes, the use of television, radio and newspaper platforms to disseminate information about how women are participating in public resource management processes in their localities can act as a strong strategy for mobilizing other women.

5 CONCLUSION

Beyond, just numbers, towards effective participation of women in public resource management in Chitungwiza, Goromonzi and Norton.

This report has shown that,

ZIMCODD should realize through its programming the importance of appreciating that the participation of women is not just about counting the number of women present at meetings. Going beyond numbers means if decisions are being made to benefit all members of society, it is important to take into account the broad experiences of all women. Women should be part of the process, patriarchal values, attitudes and practices that exclude women should be strategically addressed through working with men as allies. Cultural and religious beliefs coupled by economic impediments that continue to deny women ways of effectively participating in processes that guarantee their contributions to public resource management should be addressed. All gendered constraints and barriers should be meaningfully addressed.

Institutions of government; especially at local level; as reflected in Goromonzi in this survey, have been shaped by the assumption of unequal gender relations and on the basis of who (men) operates these institutions, Deliberate, institutional transformation engagement strategies should be undertaken by ZIMCODD in order to facilitate the changing of the material and social conditions of women and girls, their culture, their values, organization and styles if they remain as they are, they perpetuate inequalities and preserve privileges.

Women's presence in meetings enables them to have access to key information and access to local level government structures; they also learn how to work within them. What remains a serious challenge to ensuring effectiveness in public resource management is the need for targeted capacitation of women within their structures in all the three localities. Opportunities and recommendations made in this report should suffice.



*Investing in People
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