



# ZIMBABWE COALITION ON DEBT AND DEVELOPMENT

2020  
ANNUAL  
REPORT



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# Foreword

The year 2020 started with the news of COVID-19 - a global pandemic which made the whole world sneeze and shiver.

For poor and vulnerable citizens in countries with constrained economies such as Zimbabwe, the effects of the pandemic are devastating to both lives and livelihoods. The different measures recommended by the World Health Organisation such as social distancing, washing of hands and the lock down to reduce the rate of transmission disrupted the socio-economic reality for many citizens.

Whilst lockdown measures sought to flatten the transmission curve, they had serious ramifications on livelihoods. A large population in Zimbabwe struggle daily to access clean water whilst 90% of the working population is in the informal sector. The greater working poor depend on public health care and the realities were scary to say the least.

As the pandemic kept unfolding and the government together with the different stakeholders continued to implement different interventions both for the sake of lives and livelihoods through social safety nets for those that lost their sources of income, the citizens remained in precarious situations without many options.

At the organisational level, ZIMCODD had to grapple with this new reality and learn the new normal by doing. ZIMCODD intensified and reinvented its virtual working platforms. This new way of working had its own challenges, but it brought with it vast opportunities for digital advocacy and ensured that public resource management issues remained a top priority in the citizen's conversations and remained on the agenda of duty bearers. Through these platforms we ensured that public accountability could not be deferred because of a global pandemic which was further declared a national disaster.

The COVID-19 resource tracking was paramount and ZIMCODD launched a weekly resource tracker which kept citizens abreast with resources coming in and allocated to the fight against COVID-19. This ignited citizen's agency which raised the cost of mismanagement of public funds and provided citizens an opportunity to influence resource allocation towards critical services and needs.

It is also important to mention that this annual report themed *"Celebrating 20 years of People driven Social and Economic Justice in Zimbabwe"* concludes the year that marks ZIMCODD's 20 years of existence. Our collective experience from the last 20 years are crucial in the reflections that we share in this edition and with our new strategic plan we hope to do and achieve more for the communities that we serve.

I salute my national Board for continuous engagement and giving direction in order for ZIMCODD to occupy a very critical space in 2020.

Our local structures and Social and Economic Justice Ambassadors (SEJAs) played a critical role when we could not reach communities. They self-organised and mobilized their communities and shared critical information that allowed us to remain visible in the communities that ZIMCODD operates in. I thank these foot soldiers for social and economic justice!

ZIMCODD staff that was on the frontlines in defending both citizens and livelihoods was exceptional. Migrating to new ways of working was not easy but their dedication and appetite for results during the pandemic kept ZIMCODD going.



Janet Zhou  
Executive Director





# Chairperson's Remarks

2020 was a strange year, COVID-19, a global pandemic, obviously added grease to the pole that developing countries, Zimbabwe included, are trying to climb to ensure the realisation of UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Before COVID-19, the country's public service delivery, upon which the majority poor rely on, for access to education, health, and clean, safe and potable water, was in shambles. More Zimbabweans have been trapped into poverty and the inequality gap has been widened consequently. The weight of our mandate as ZIMCODD became a massive weightlifting exercise. Amid limited resources to respond to the eminent threat posed by the pandemic, shameless corrupt public and private actors; were like the real hyenas, fattening their pockets from scarce public funds. Measures to contain the spread of COVID-19, redefined our work like never, with the digital space becoming a bottom bar for promoting transparency, citizen participation and accountability. Intense heat and pressure create diamonds and I am excited to say that ZIMCODD acquitted itself during the strange and difficult year. Innovative ways of work were adopted like the COVID-19 public funds online tracker and the organisation took the lead role in helping Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to adjust to new ways of working. Let me take this opportunity, to thank our stakeholders, funding partners, communities, Parliament, media and government for the overall support they provided to fuel our advocacy tank. Of course, the nature of our work is denominated by conflict, which we view as a healthy process in the quest to hold more to account on how public resources are generated, allocated, spent and accounted for to promote the progressive realisation of the socio-economic rights enshrined in our Constitution. Let me conclude by thanking the ZIMCODD board, especially the staff members who continue to work under these stressful and risky conditions, which proves that we are a diamond movement that thrives under intense pressure and heat.

Mukasiri Sibanda

## ZIMCODD Governance

As per the ZIMCODD Constitution which calls for renewal of leadership every two years; the Coalition held Elective Annual General Meetings at regional and national levels. The process was done to renew leadership which had been ushered in at the last EAGM held in 2018. This year, the meetings could not be held physically due to the COVID-19 pandemic which did not only affect Zimbabwe but the world at large. ZIMCODD adapted to the new norm by holding the EAGMs online via ZOOM. The meetings were held as follows: Eastern Region (30 November 2020), Southern Region (1 December 2020) and the Northern Region (2 December 2020). These AGMs ushered in new regional committees in Harare, Mutare and Bulawayo with newly elected Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons coming on board following the end of tenure for the previous Committees' leadership. On the 15th of December 2020 ZIMCODD held the National Elective AGM which saw the uncontested election of Mukasiri Sibanda (Chairperson) and Nomalanga Ncube (Vice Chairperson) for a second and final term. The sectors also seconded their representatives to the board during the meeting with some outstanding cluster representation which will be coordinated by Secretariat before the incoming board's first seating. More than 40 organisations representing the different clusters attended the online EAGM.

# WHO WE ARE

The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) is a socio – economic justice coalition established in February 2000. Its mandate has been to facilitate citizens` involvement in making pro-people public policy. ZIMCODD views indebtedness, the unfair global trade regime and lack of democratic people-centred economic governance as root causes of the social and economic crises in Zimbabwe and the world at large. Drawing from community-based livelihood experiences of its membership, ZIMCODD implements programmes aimed at delivering the following objectives;

- To raise the level of economic literacy among ZIMCODD members to include views and participation of grassroots and marginalised communities;
- To facilitate research, lobbying and advocacy in order to influence and promote policy change;
- To formulate credible and sustainable economic and social policy alternatives; and
- To develop a national coalition and facilitate the building of a vibrant movement for social and economic justice.

# Where we work.

ZIMCODD's headquarters are in Harare, with regional offices in Bulawayo. There are committees and livelihoods assemblies in Mutare, Chipinge South (Checheche), Goromonzi, Binga, Gokwe, Gwanda and Matobo.

ZIMCODD is a member of regional and international networks working on Social and Economic Justice. In the SADC region, it is the Host of the Permanent Secretariat of the Southern African People's Solidarity Network (SAPSN) from January 2019, whose focus is to support the development of alternatives to neoliberal corporate led globalization, with a negative impact on national and regional policies. ZIMCODD had once hosted this vibrant regional network from 2003 – 2011 before handing it over to Malawi on the rotational secretariat basis. Currently it is host to the Zimbabwe Social Forum (ZSF) and through this platform; ZIMCODD aims to develop a vibrant space for reflective thinking, democratic debate, formulation and exchange of alternative ideas to the neoliberal agenda in Zimbabwe and beyond.

# Our goal

The goal of the ZIMCODD 2020-2023 Strategic period is "To contribute towards sustainable social and economic justice in Zimbabwe"

Socio-economic justice in Zimbabwe anchored on a vibrant people-based movement

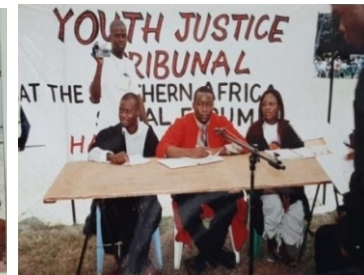
# vision

# Why we Exist

To take action against the debt burden and socio-economic injustices through movement building and alternative policy formulation.



# Celebrating 20 years of people driven social and economic justice







Glen View Constituency Indaba



# Introduction

This publication presents a summary of the work carried out by ZIMCODD in 2020. Crafted under different themes and focus areas, the document seeks to provide a sneak peek into the work of ZIMCODD as well as an indication of some of the key results that have been achieved by the organisation during the year 2020.

# Our Annual Reach

Although 2020 was characterised with some restrictions that meant we could not implement some of the activities as we had planned especially physical activities, ZIMCODD still managed to reach out to various stakeholders, partners and stakeholders in its various activities. A summary of our reach out is provided in Table 1 below:

Activity	Total Pax	Female	Male	Youth	PWDs
Community Radio Activities	2748	1747	1001	814	64
COVID Conversations	19 597				
Public Finance Management (PFM) Indabas	938	388	550	642	
Constituency Indabas	1588	883	755	634	
Provincial Alternative Mining Indaba (PAMI)	112	43	69		
Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba (ZAMI)	149				
AMI	31	13	18	11	
Tax Justice Webinar	400	205	195	400	
Fight Inequality Picketing	95	88	7	27	
Awareness Raising Meeting on Inequality	235	169	66	101	
Residents Associations (RAs) and Social Economic Justice Ambassadors (SEJAs)	292	148	144	103	
Tertiary Institutions	222	109	113	222	
Social Networks	679	560	119	201	
Pre Budget Seminars	116	87	79	116	
Women and youth at SADC People's Summit	292	182	110		
SADC Youth Public Speaking and Debate	38				
Policy Indabas	262	137	125	132	
Debt Policy Dialogue and Lunch	201	110	91	91	
Constitutional Amendment Bill No 2 Dialogue	45	18	27	17	
Media Sensitization on the Economy We Want	44	14	30		
SEJA Led Activities	9452	6013	3439	3644	218

Table 1: Activity Reach out of ZIMCODD initiatives in 2020

## Research & Evidence Gathering

ZIMCODD in 2020 provided nuanced analysis of public debt and proffered alternatives to debt management in Zimbabwe through its comprehensive research and evidence generation. Within the year under review, ZIMCODD developed 7 research papers<sup>1</sup> which unravelled the impact of Zimbabwe's public debt on various facets of the economy and how public debt hinders the realisation of social and economic justice in Zimbabwe. Through these debt papers, ZIMCODD made a call for Zimbabwe to adopt a debt management policy; to promote tax justice; to rethink debt and gender justice and to consider domestic resource mobilisation as a sustainable alternative to the debt crisis. The launch of the research papers and presentation of the same at the annual Debt Management Conference held in partnership with AFRODAD did not only raise economic consciousness among citizens to realise the importance of citizen action in debt management. It also strengthened ZIMCODD's working relationship with strategic partners<sup>2</sup> in the debt discourse who agreed that inclusive, transparent, and widely consultative debt resolution strategies are the best way to tackle the debt fiasco. Rural women have become conversant with the current trends and developments in the mining sector. This was achieved through the research titled a "Gendered Approach to Fiscal Transparency and Accountability in Local Extractives" which focused on Arcturus Gold Mine.

Through its research, ZIMCODD noted that Public Debt Management in Zimbabwe has remained precarious with the high and unsustainable debt levels recorded in the country. According to the 2021 Budget Statement, of the total debt amount, external debt was valued at US\$8.2 billion and domestic debt was ZWL\$12.5 billion, way above the SADC and Public Debt Act thresholds. Zimbabwe is incontestably in debt distress which has impacted on its creditworthiness, raised the country's risk profile and has resulted in massive disinvestment. Debt distress has had disastrous social and economic consequences which have been a major drawback on the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in Zimbabwe. It is critical for citizens to note that the fiscal and monetary policies that the country pursues are largely shaped by the country's indebtedness with a case in point being the Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP) whose life is coming to an end this December 2020.



<http://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-Injustice-Of-Sovereign-Debt-In-Tax-Regimes-In-Zimbabwe.pdf> <http://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Impact-of-Public-Debt-on-Service-Delivery-in-Local-Authorities.pdf>  
<http://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-Social-and-Economic-Implications-of-Public-Debt.pdf> <http://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Debt-Justice-and-Gender-Justice-in-Zimbabwe.pdf> <http://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Nexus-between-Corruption-and-Public-Debt.pdf> <http://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Case-for-Debt-Management-Policy-1.pdf> <http://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Opinion-Paper-on-RBZ-Farm-Mechanisation-Scheme.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Parliament of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, ZADMO, development partners, civil society, media and academia.<sup>44</sup> 14 309452 6013 3439 3644



The Austerity for Prosperity programme implemented by the government under the TSP was meant to prioritise debt repayments while cutting on social spending. The austerity measures further compromised public service delivery, poverty reduction and infrastructure development as the government made a deliberate decision to cut expenditure on education, health, water and sanitation and social services. More worrisome to note for 2020 has been the dilapidated state of Zimbabwe's health sector in the face of the global COVID-19 pandemic which subjected Zimbabwe to overreliance on external support to boost the much-needed isolation and testing centres. Given that unsustainable public debt constrain the ability of the state to provide social services, let alone responding to shocks and emergencies, such as COVID-19, it is clear that poor debt management undermines the realisation of social and economic justice in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the subject of public debt and its management is unavoidable for a country such as Zimbabwe.

Women, youth and other vulnerable groups bear the burden of the negative economic effects of unsustainable debt as the Government's ability to finance social welfare related expenses is curtailed. When Zimbabwe was hit with the novel coronavirus, ZIMCODD conducted a research<sup>3</sup> titled Zimbabwe COVID-19 Response Mechanism to explore the possible socio-economic effects of the COVID19 pandemic on Zimbabwe and to recommend a resource mobilisation model that the Government can pursue in its efforts to fight the pandemic. To respond effectively to COVID-19, Zimbabwe needed both financial and non-financial resources. As such, the government had to engage in a resource mobilisation drive to ameliorate the negative social and economic effects of the virus and this saw domestic and external businesses and development partners coming on board to support Zimbabwe's COVID-19 response. Learning from cyclone Idai, ZIMCODD established that the government failed to provide leadership in coordinating the resource mobilization efforts from the general citizenry and there was no formal report back process by Government to the public on how the resources mobilized for the disaster relief efforts were utilized (ibid). With these lessons, ZIMCODD embarked on an initiative<sup>4</sup> to track the mobilisation, allocation and expenditure of COVID-19 earmarked resources to ensure transparency and accountability on COVID-19 funds. In light of the second wave, it is important for the government to establish a system for monitoring and accounting for all resources mobilised towards the COVID-19 fight. Among other successes of the COVID-19 resource tracking initiative, ZIMCODD celebrates its strategic secondment to Pillar 8 of the COVID-19 Response Logistics, Procurement and Supply Chain Management Committee; publishing of COVID-19 resources mobilised through media although more needs to be done; unearthing of the COVIDGATE scandal; Commitment by the government to audit COVID-19 donations: <https://www.herald.co.zw/ag-to-audit-covid-19-donations> and becoming a reference point on public expenditure tracking.

<sup>3</sup> <http://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-Response-Mechanism.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Tracker-Issue-37.pdf>

Since independence to date, the government of Zimbabwe has actively used fiscal policy to manage the economy, with taxation, government spending, external debt and internal debt being the major fiscal policy instruments used. However, the country has experienced mixed fortunes in terms of economic performance. To assess the effectiveness of some of these policies, ZIMCODD in 2020 conducted a Citizen Happiness Index Survey which targeted 7 districts.<sup>5</sup> Through this survey, it was observed that 77% of respondents are not happy while 19% are somewhat happy and just 4% are very happy with the status quo as evidenced by the results on overall happiness. The 2020 Open Budget Survey was another knowledge product of ZIMCODD that demonstrated the need for citizen participation in national and local budget processes and the role of the state in ensuring needs-based budget and gender responsive budget processes. Together with other campaigns and advocacy initiatives, the Open Budget Survey informed citizens' key asks when they engaged duty bearers during the 2021 pre-budget consultative meetings. The launch of the 2020 Open Budget Survey at Crown Plaza where parliamentarians, civil society and academia made substantial inputs in shaping ZIMCODD's advocacy work around the open budget analysis. The launch further strengthened the coalition's working relationship with the Parliament, (through its Portfolio Committee on Budget, Finance and Economic Development) towards promoting fiscal transparency and accountability.

ZIMCODD is greatly concerned with the assumption of debts such as the RBZ Debt, and the state restructuring of legacy obligations, which among other factors, have contributed to the ballooning of domestic debt. Some of the key demands put forward by ZIMCODD in its opinion paper include the need for parliament to further interrogate the RBZ Debt Assumption Act of 2015 and redress the farm mechanisation debt injustice; and for the government to be guided by debt sustainability and debt transparency principles in all borrowings. It is also worrisome to note how resource backed loans have deepened Zimbabwe's debt burden. Resource backed loans have been very appealing to Zimbabwe whose external debt has affected the injection of foreign capital flows into the economy which forced the Government to rely on China for development finance through contracting external loans on commercial terms that are collateralized by mineral exports and other natural resources. In an opinion paper on Resource Backed Loans, ZIMCODD recommends the government to borrow transparently by publishing contract terms; to include loans on the national budget balance sheet and to invest productively.

Zimbabwe is in a debt crisis and the resolution of the debt requires a multi-stakeholder approach involving government, business, civil society and academia. The following are some of the recommendations from ZIMCODD's research on debt:

- Advocacy for debt justice to be scaled up by citizens through a vibrant grassroots-based debt movement;
  - An independent and comprehensive debt audit for Zimbabwe to inform an effective debt management framework;
  - There is a need for independence of the Debt Management Office;
  - Debt transparency where the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development guarantees full disclosure of all relevant information regarding loan agreements, debt repayments and debt management; and
  - Upholding constitutionalism in loan contraction. Section 117 and Section 315 of the Constitution which provides that the procurement of goods and services by the state and all institutions and agencies of government at every level must be effected in a manner that is transparent, fair, honest, cost-effective and competitive.
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# Digital Information and Knowledge Sharing



In 2020, ZIMCODD took the lead in strengthening digital platforms for programming and enhancing public participation in strengthening transparency and accountability in public finance management in Zimbabwe. This entailed significant utilisation of virtual collaborative platforms, digital media, infographics, animations, illustrations, flyers and skits. Importantly, the communications efforts within the year under review standardised brand-ZIMCODD and ensured a new look and a new feel across all products and services associated to the organisation.

ZIMCODD designed and conducted weekly surveys/polls to establish public views on burning current affairs. Polls are a widely successful way of gathering near precise information on general public inclination which is useful to enhance the quality of ZIMCODD programming. As such, polls are a triangulated research instrument including a close ended question and open-ended explanation for richer understanding. The most popular poll managed to accrue a total of 2,600 votes and 44,000 impressions. Find at: <https://twitter.com/zimcodd1/status/1285514701695311881?s=213>

One of the Key platforms for ZIMCODD is the website. The ZIMCODD website <http://zimcodd.org/> is a strategic digital platform that affords the organisation to present information and communication with target constituents world-wide. The platform presents live tracking data on COVID-19 Resource utilisation in Zimbabwe the with landing page on link <http://zimcodd.org/covid-19-resource-tracker/> to the Resource Tracker.

At the beginning of the year ZIMCODD's twitter page had 6 913 followers. At the time of reporting, the followers have increased to 9 528. This is an increase of 38%. There has also been a marked improvement in all indicators for the same number of tweets. This can be attributed to the use of visuals and hashtags which ensure content is richer and reaches the right group of people. For the same number of tweets, in July, ZIMCODD managed to achieve over 100% improvement on followers, profile visits, mentions and tweet impressions. The same impact has been recorded for Facebook. In February 2020, the ZIMCODD's Facebook page had a total of 1 974 followers. To date, the following has improved to a total of 4,745. This is a significant increase of 140%.

One of the success stories in the use of digital platforms in the sharing of information was the use of video skits. Under the campaign of disseminating information around Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 2, ZIMCODD developed a skit with The Comic Pastor. The clip paralleled a house head who makes arbitrary debts that affect the whole household without any consultation with the proposed amendment which meant that (among other things) government could borrow and take loans without having to go through Parliament. The skit was well received and managed to amass 134 000 views; 4 500 likes and 183 comments on Facebook. Watch at: <https://fb.watch/31qNP93H-7/>



# Gender justice

Gender justice is central to ZIMCODD's work and programming as women constitute 52% of Zimbabwe's population. Gender equality is critical for prudent public finance management. ZIMCODD in compliance with the constitutional provisions for gender equality enshrined in sections 17, 56 and 80 implements programmes whose focus is on women empowerment through its various economic literacy programmes. As convener of the Fight Inequality Alliance, ZIMCODD also mainstreams gender as part of its efforts to support the Sustainable Goals number 5 and 10 respectively to promote and reduce inequalities in all its programming.

ZIMCODD has in the year 2020, conducted research in collaboration with its partners to promote gender sensitive programming in public financial management. As part of its initiative to strengthen Community Activism in the Extractive Industries, ZIMCODD in partnership with FES produced a report entitled, "A gendered approach to fiscal transparency and accountability in local extractives communities with a focus on Arcturus Gold Mine. The Debt and Gender Justice paper was produced under the Economic Governance initiative. The above-mentioned research was produced to ensure gender equality in the extractives industries which are characterised by inequality and patriarchy. Apart from the extractives sector, ZIMCODD through its research noted that gender inequality is much more pervasive and entrenched in rural communities. Rural communities are more gender insensitive and promote harmful cultural practices like gender-based violence in its various forms, inter alia, early childhood marriages, forced marriages, domestic violence and subjugation of women. These practices limit the participation of women in development processes as they remain confined to domestic chores and responsibilities.

Patriarchal attitudes have exacerbated poverty in rural areas as women, who work long hours, are involved in unpaid care work, are paid less for more work than men and have time poverty because of double responsibilities. Challenges of low educational attainment, unemployment, harsh economic climate and the absence of women voices in decisions that affect them were observed during the implementation of all ZIMCODD programmes in 2020. ZIMCODD made a deliberate effort to target more women from all walks of life through its Citizen-Driven Public Resource Management (CDPRM) for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods programme with support from IM Swedish and Women Economic Literacy & Empowerment #FeminomicsZW initiative in partnership with the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). Women and Youths had the opportunity to attend the virtual Annual Southern African Development Community (SADC) People's Summit themed "Women & Public Resources Management: Lessons and Experiences Sharing", under the CDPRM.

The 2020 SADC People's Summit provided a platform for rural women and youth informal traders, vendors, small holder farmers in rural areas in the SADC region to share lessons and experiences in public resources management. The summit was attended by duty bearers, civil society organisations across the 11 sectors of ZIMCODD (inclusive of the women, youth, informal traders, people with disabilities, to mention a few) and members from the academia.

ZIMCODD under the Women Economic Literacy & Empowerment #FeminomicsZW programme conducted pre-budget and post budget meetings to empower women with knowledge on issues pertaining to the national budget, national economic governance as well as public policy documents to enable them to demand transparency and accountability from duty bearers in the management of public funds. The meetings were convened to encourage women and youths particularly from the marginalised areas like Chikomba, Goromonzi, Matobo, Zvishavane and Gokwe to continue with their social accountability role as citizens at both local and national levels. ZIMCODD wrapped up the year by conducting the Debt and Gender Justice workshop in Bulawayo. The workshop was attended by government officials, civic bodies, members of the academia, women and men. Members of Parliament that were present requested that members from all parliamentary portfolio committees should be trained on debt and gender justice so that they can perform their oversight role over public resources from a gender perspective.

ZIMCODD managed to successfully mainstream gender in its programmes throughout the 2020 period. It empowered women and youths who are often marginalised and more vulnerable in society by ensuring that they were part of the online and in-person meetings through provision of data and transport costs. During the period under review, ZIMCODD witnessed a substantial increase in the participation of women in all its projects. Women in rural areas of Chipinge and Goromonzi applauded this increased participation of women during the Live Radio Conversation on the CDPRM conducted by Chengeto / Issues Pane Nyaya. The programme was aired live on Capitalk and Star FM. The same conversation was repackaged and replicated on Diamond FM, Nyaminyami and Hevoi Radio Stations.

It is evident that in 2020 ZIMCODD was on a drive to promote women empowerment in public resources management through its various programmes. It has designed exciting programmes which will ensure increased reach and conscientisation of women in marginalised areas on effective public financial management. In 2021, radio listening clubs for women will be unveiled in Chipinge, Matopo, Binga, Goromonzi and Gokwe to mention but a few. Women will also attend the SADC summit to influence regional and local public management policies. ZIMCODD will in 2021 continue to build resilience and adaptation strategies to assist women to cope with climate change and COVID-19 impacts.

# Legislative and Policy Reforms

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the Government of Zimbabwe enacting a number of Statutory Instruments and putting in place strict measures aimed at containing the spread of the pandemic. Since the implementation of a national lockdown which came into effect on 28 March 2020, about 18 Statutory Instruments have been published. On the 20th of August 2020, the government published a more holistic Statutory Instrument S.1.200 of 2020 namely Public Health (COVID-19) Prevention, Containment and Treatment) (National Lockdown) (Consolidation and Amendment) Order, as the governing legal instrument establishing provisions of the national lockdown, exemptions and enforcement regulations.

Additionally, 2020 started with a move to amend the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No.20) 2013 through the Amendment Bill No.2 published in the Government Gazette by the Speaker of Parliament on 17 January 2020 in line with Section 328 (3) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. This is the second attempt by the government to amend the Constitution. The first amendment was Amendment (No.1) Act of 2017 which sought to change the procedure for the appointment of the Chief Justice, the Deputy Chief Justice and the Judge President of the High Court. These appointments are now made by the President after consultation with the Judicial Service Commission. The proposed Constitution Amendment Bill No. 2 was widely criticised by different sections of society. Although there is nothing wrong in amending the constitution as long as it is to correct defects which are identified through application and practice. Amendments must not undermine the basic features of the Constitution and must not advance short term political interests.

# Constitutional Amendment Bill No 2 and Public Finance Management in Zimbabwe

Constitutional Amendment Bill No.2 has far reaching implications on Public Finance Management (PFM) in Zimbabwe. Of particular interest to the work of ZIMCODD, are Clauses 17, 18 and 23 which have implications on the management of public funds. Clause 17 and 18 of the Bill seeks to introduce the Office of the Public Protector. The role of the Public Protector will be to enquire into matters of mal administration in the public service and provide remedial measures. This office, if adequately resourced and autonomous, may promote fiscal discipline, especially in the public sector where successive Auditor General's Reports have revealed recurring financial malpractices and general non-compliance. Whilst Clause 23, seeks to amend section 327 (3) of the Constitution by removing Parliament's power to approve an agreement which is not an international treaty but concluded by the President or under the authority of the President. This implies that if the proposed amendments are enacted into law, Parliament will no longer be required to approve agreements entered into between the State and "foreign organisations and entities"

Section 327(3) of the Constitution provides that an agreement which is not an international treaty but which (a) **has been concluded or executed by the President or under the President's authority with one or more foreign organisations or entities; and (b) imposes fiscal obligations on Zimbabwe; does not bind Zimbabwe until it has been approved by Parliament.** As such, Clause 23 is aimed at diluting the powers of Parliament in debt management. The principles of PFM in Zimbabwe are well laid out in Section 298 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which provides that public funds must be expended transparently, prudently, economically and effectively and that public borrowing and all transactions involving the national debt must be carried out transparently and in the best interests of the country. Furthermore, the Public Debt Management Act [Chapter 22:21] sets a ceiling on the total debt that can be contracted by the Government of Zimbabwe in any given situation. Section 11 of the Public Debt Management Act [Chapter 22:21] provides that public debt cannot exceed 70% of the Gross Domestic Product, if the amendment is approved such a ceiling could be exceeded if parliament is not involved in loan approval.

## Advocacy work by ZIMCODD around Constitutional Amendment (No.2) Bill

Following the Gazetting of Amendment No. 2, ZIMCODD embarked on a number of advocacy initiatives especially around Clause 23 which has repercussions on PFM in Zimbabwe. Particular attention was paid on its impact on debt management, transparency and accountability. ZIMCODD member organisations and local structures participated in and contributed to the public hearings and submissions that were made to Parliament. In February 2020, ZIMCODD tabled a [petition](#) before Parliament which objected to the removal of parliamentary veto power on agreements entered into by the Government on behalf of the people of Zimbabwe. In the petition, ZIMCODD stated that the removal of Parliamentary oversight will allow the government to enter into agreements without public scrutiny resulting in an increase in Zimbabwe's foreign debt and the possible mortgaging of the country's natural resources as collateral in trade, loan contraction and other agreements that bind the country. ZIMCODD recommended that Clause 23 must be severed from the Bill as it alienates the powers of Parliament in approving agreements with foreign organisations and undermines the role of Parliament in fiscal governance and Parliament's oversight and representative functions which are the hallmarks of effective governance.

Following a Public Finance Management Reform Indaba that was convened by ZIMCODD in Bulawayo, Hon. Kucaca Phulu took up the issues of the Constitutional Amendment No. 2 Bill to Parliament imploring the Minister of Finance and Economic Development to recognise the difference between a foreign entity or organisation<sup>6</sup> and an international organisation. During the first reading of the Bill on 9 July 2020, the Minister of Justice and Parliamentary Affairs committed to retract Clause 23 of the amendment and emphasised the role of Parliament in overseeing the Executive function and that "removing agreements with foreign organisations or entities beyond the scrutiny of Parliament defeats the principle of separation of powers, public accountability and good governance". In so doing, the Minister reaffirmed ZIMCODD's position regarding Clause 23.

<sup>6</sup> See the National Assembly Hansard 03 March 2020, Vol 46 No. 29



## Other Advocacy initiatives around Policy Reforms

In the wake of COVID-19, ZIMCODD issued a [Press Statement](#) urging the government and other players to ensure transparency and accountability in the mobilisation and utilisation of resources towards fighting the pandemic. The government was urged to disclose sources of funds (revenue and non-revenue) to allow for public scrutiny for enhanced public accountability. The government heeded the call and the Finance and Economic Development Minister disclosed all sources of funds in a [Press Statement on Fiscal Mitigatory Measures to Contain the Impact of COVID-19](#). The government now publishes COVID-19 donations in the Sunday Mail and it also made a commitment to audit all the available resources.

Furthermore, ZIMCODD conducted social media campaigns calling for the reconvening of parliament sittings during the lockdown period through virtual means to ensure that the institution plays its critical oversight role on public resource management during the lockdown period. Both the National Assembly and Senate resumed sittings allowing parliament to play its oversight role. Furthermore, the Parliamentary Portfolio Committees adopted virtual platforms to continue with their operations during lockdown period. The use of the virtual spaces has thus allowed the all-critical portfolio committees to be functional and exercise their oversight and scrutiny roles.

As a result of the work of ZIMCODD in strengthening parliamentary oversight, ZIMCODD was invited to provide oral evidence to the Public Accounts Committee which probed the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development on the Financial Adjustments Bill questioning its inadequacy and called for its adjustment. ZIMCODD also submitted a position paper<sup>7</sup> on the bill which detailed the constitutional illegality of the proposed bill and offered the recommendation to redress the situation.

ZIMCODD worked with the Portfolio Committee on Budget, Finance and Economic Development in an effort to strengthen its oversight role in public finance management. Following the presentation of the Budget Strategy Paper on 16 October 2020, ZIMCODD convened a reflective policy dialogue with the Portfolio Committee on Finance and Economic Development. It was at this meeting that concerns were raised over the delay in presenting the Budget Strategy Paper which is an important document which informs public consultations for the budget. Following the reflective meeting on the BSP, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development sought condonation in parliament for failing to table the document on time as stipulated in Section 141 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No 20) Act 2013 and section 11.1© of the Public Finance Management General Regulations 2019. [See more](#).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup>[http://zimcodd.org/sdm\\_downloads/position-paper-on-financial-adjustment-bill/](http://zimcodd.org/sdm_downloads/position-paper-on-financial-adjustment-bill/)  
<sup>8</sup><https://www.sundaymail.co.zw/citizens-views-must-not-be-an-alterthought>

As part of efforts to influence the 2021 budget for it to be more pro people, ZIMCODD mobilised citizens to participate through rights consciousness and awareness raising and influencing policy. The efforts were done under the People Led Budget Campaign which had 10 ASKS. The emphasis on a 'people-led' national budget arises from a shared sense within the ZIMCODD networks that an economic development trajectory based on market fundamentals; neo-liberal ideological orthodoxy and private sector led interventions will undermine the achievement of social and economic justice in Zimbabwe. ZIMCODD also convened pre- and post-budget dialogues aimed at enhancing social and economic justice in Zimbabwe. ZIMCODD will continue up scaling its advocacy efforts in order to influence legislative and policy reforms in Zimbabwe in a bid to achieve social and economic justice.

# Citizen Engagement and Empowerment

ZIMCODD acknowledges the critical role that citizens play in economic governance and developmental processes. Although the Constitution of Zimbabwe is clear on citizens' right to participate effectively in economic governance processes, the policy landscape does not provide a conducive environment for effective engagement. Further to that, citizen participation and engagement is generally low due to lack of knowledge amongst citizens. In the year under review, ZIMCODD continued with its efforts to bridge the gap and capacitate citizens with the necessary tools and information whilst creating platforms for engagement and dialogue between citizens and solution holders. Despite the challenges presented by the emergency of the COVID 19 pandemic and the general shrinking civic space, the coalition remained committed and resolute towards contributing to a sound public finance management system in Zimbabwe and building citizen agency for the same cause. ZIMCODD managed to stay afloat and it has become a reference organisation to issues pertaining tax justice, public finance management, debt as well as natural resource governance. The organisation has also become a resource centre for many civil society organisations and community-based organisations on the issues mentioned above. The coalition penetrated in almost all the districts of the country reaching out to the worst marginalized communities. Citizens in Harare, Mutare, Chipinge, Checheche, Penhalonga, Goromonzi, Zvishavane, Gokwe South, Binga, Kwekwe, Gweru, Lupane, Hwange, Bulawayo and Matopo and Chikomba were empowered on several issues across the five thematic areas which are movement building, trade justice and livelihoods, Public resource management, organizational development and domestic resource mobilization.

To mention a few of the activities implemented throughout the year are SEJA Led Activities, Constituency Indabas, Public Finance Management Reform Indabas, Rights Consciousness and Social Accountability Monitoring, pre budget seminars, Social and Economic Justice Activism Academy, Zimbabwe Alternative Mining Indaba, Community Resource Monitoring Agents workshop, tax justice webinars among other activities. Citizens were able to self-organize and engage relevant authorities on issues affecting their day-to-day living and key outcomes were recorded.

## Major Highlights of Activities and Outcomes

It is important to note that it is one thing to participate in economic governance processes and another thing to effectively engage with solution holders. ZIMCODD is of the view that effective citizen participation and engagement in economic governance issues is not a haphazard process, rather it's a systematic process that calls for an empowered citizenry armed with relevant, timely and necessary information. Through the SEJA Led Activities which begun in August 2020, the coalition has been thriving to build a social movement of women and youths that will be able to influence the enactment of pro-poor policies for the realization of socio-economic rights in Zimbabwe.

ZIMCODD has managed to capacitate and empower its SEJAS in various project areas to lead conversations on various economic governance issues within their respective communities. The SEJA led community dialogues have so far benefited over 6,000 citizens including women, youth and people living with disabilities as at end of 2020. Citizens received capacity strengthening on various issues such as budgeting processes, tax justice issues among other issues. As a result of these trainings, citizens were able to effectively participate in economic governance processes. For example, following the pre-budget seminars conducted in Gokwe, women and youth shared that their attitude and knowledge around citizen participation in both local and national budget processes greatly improved. The information gathered by way of focus group discussions bore testimony to this. Furthermore, during the focus group discussion, one woman testified that following ZIMCODD meetings, women are now empowered to contribute towards economic governance issues in public spaces. Putting it in vernacular, the woman said, "*Kupfurikidza nema meetings atakaitiswa neZIMCODD, vakadzi hatichatyi kutaura nezvemabatirwo ehupfumi hwenyika nezvebudiriro zvekuti vamwe varume vanogona kuendeswa kunovhiya mbudzi isu tikasara tichitaura.*" (As a result of the meetings facilitated by ZIMCODD, as women we have been capacitated and empowered on economic governance and development issues such that some men can be asked to do menial jobs whilst we lead discussions on policy issues.)

Furthermore, part of women and youths' confidence to participate in local and national budget processes is attributed to the incorporation of their submissions in the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Budget and Finance public hearings report. The uptake of citizens' recommendations is also attributable to ZIMCODD's successful lobby and advocacy work around the issue as informed by the successive Open Budget Surveys conducted by the coalition. An example is that more than 300 women and youth in Checheche were able to self-organise and attend the 2020 local budget processes and were able to put the meeting on halt through demanding minutes and feedback from the last meeting which the local council failed to provide. This revealed the extent to which citizens have been empowered to demand public accountability through social accountability monitoring mechanisms.

Some of the women who attended pre budget seminars are making remarkable contributions in their communities on budget issues in the context of devolution. One of the women, Mary Nyadome from Goromonzi District took part in the Goromonzi District training of village heads, chiefs headmen school heads, people living with disabilities, vendors, farmers, youth and women on ward-based planning in line with devolution. The main agenda was to facilitate open citizen input in community-based planning so that vulnerable and marginalized groups are included so Mary Nyadome was invited to be part of the action team which comprised of council officials. She participated in the training in Ward 19, 20 and 21 from 17 November 2020 to 21 November 2020. The outcomes of the meetings fed into Goromonzi District Strategic Plan of 2021-2025. As a Social and Economic Justice Ambassador, Mary also took the opportunity to capacitate residents on the importance of citizen participation in budget processes to ensure inclusivity and gender-sensitive public service delivery programs.

ZIMCODD also conducted trainings on social accountability which strengthened students in tertiary institutions to become vibrant activists with enhanced capacity to demand transparency and accountability as well as perform oversight and monitoring role in PFM. Tertiary students under the banner of Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) requested for a meeting with Parliamentary Committee on Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development to share challenges facing students in institutions of higher learning particularly the fees structure which was beyond the reach of many. In response, the committee invited the students and assured to take the issue to the relevant ministry to guarantee that students in Zimbabwe access education at tertiary level. Students also continued to engage with institutional leadership to demand socio economic rights, especially the right to access to quality education.



Students at Midlands State University through their leadership wrote a letter to the Registrar seeking the extension of the registration date from the 9th of March to the end of the month. The call for extension was necessitated by a lower number of students who had registered within the stipulated registration deadline. Their demand was met by the university as the registration deadline was extended to the 31st of March 2020. Students at Harare Polytechnic demanded for a safe learning environment through writing a letter detailing that the Institution must be disinfected before reopening as it was used as COVID-19 quarantine centre. Their resistance led to the postponement of the opening date and the government responded by availing funding for the disinfection.

## 2021 Going Forward

Amidst the shrinking operating space and unpredictable economic environment exacerbated by the emergency of the COVID 19 pandemic, ZIMCODD managed to record some key achievements throughout the year. The above-mentioned advocacy initiatives are but a few examples of the intensity of the impact made by the coalition. The coalition continues to thrive in building more momentum, impactful results and the fight for socio-economic justice in Zimbabwe remains unabated. On the government part, ZIMCODD wishes to see a 2021 fiscal year which is anchored on prudent financial management of public funds in order to guarantee the socio-economic rights of citizens. Government should effectively execute its mandate in line with the social and economic rights through taking practical measures in promoting, fulfilling and respecting the rights of citizens.

# **Southern Africa People's Solidarity Network**

ZIMCODO continues to contribute to the struggle for social and economic justice in the Southern African region by hosting the South African People's Solidarity Network (SAPSN). The network is a membership-based network of national movements and community-based initiatives working on debt, trade, structural adjustment, poverty and globalization in the SADC region. Its work is to coordinate and support pro-poor grassroots based collective actions and people's struggles against all forms of injustices, inequality and exclusion in Southern Africa. This approach is informed by the understanding that we live in a world of intersecting inequalities and thus there is a need to bring collective power and voices to bear on systemic and transnational causes of poverty and injustices. SAPSN's membership is drawn primarily from national movements and community-based initiatives working on debt, trade, structural adjustment, poverty and globalization in the SADC region. From working with small scale farmers, rural women, young people and activists impacted by democratic reversals, SAPSN has been rooted in an organic approach defined by strengthening rights awareness, building consciousness and collective capacity to organize, resist and proffer alternatives.

In 2020 the COVID pandemic inevitably became the central concern for SAPSN, both as it exposed and worsened multiple contradictions and deficiencies in the Region's policy and governance arrangements. More than 40 million SADC citizens in 13 countries are food insecure. At least four out of every ten SADC citizens do not have access to safe drinking water. A further six out of ten citizens in the SADC region cannot access adequate sanitation services in spite of the life-threatening dangers of COVID 19. Overwhelmed public education systems have left the majority of the Region's children out of school for months on end amidst a spate of lockdowns in multiple countries. COVID-19 heightened the burdens on a frail public health systems and demotivated health professionals leaving millions of citizens with inadequate healthcare. Income losses experienced by the working poor will likely result in the impoverishment of millions of SADC citizens.

Most countries in the region are at risk of debt distress whilst funnelling scarce public resources away from meeting needs to pay debts. Most of the Region is resource dependent and under diversified economies are headed for recession as victims to the double tragedies of inordinate debt and declining world market prices for primary goods. In many countries democratic conditions continued to decline albeit with notable improvements in electoral conditions in Malawi and Tanzania as well as stalling progress with reform processes in Lesotho. Military conflicts in Eastern DRC and Northern Mozambique persist and with them they bring death and destruction to civilian populations, whilst SADC governance structures repeatedly failed to facilitate durable peace despite multiple interventions. COVID induced lockdowns and emergency powers without clear check and balances or timeframes for the restoration of constitutional order have become a new frontier for government led abuse of rights.

The Southern Africa People's Solidarity Network successfully convened the 2020 SADC People's Summit in August 2020 culminating in the development of a popular policy platform urging 'a people centred post COVID response and recovery plan for Southern Africa.' Preceding national and thematic consultative meetings dubbed 'Road to Maputo processes' re-invigorated national and thematic platforms, occasioned the articulation of shared policy positions and enabled the mobilisation of representatives from across 13 SADC countries to participate in the Virtual SADC People's Summit. Post Summit policy influencing, strategic convening and member accompaniment initiatives have contributed to the advancement of key policy asks.

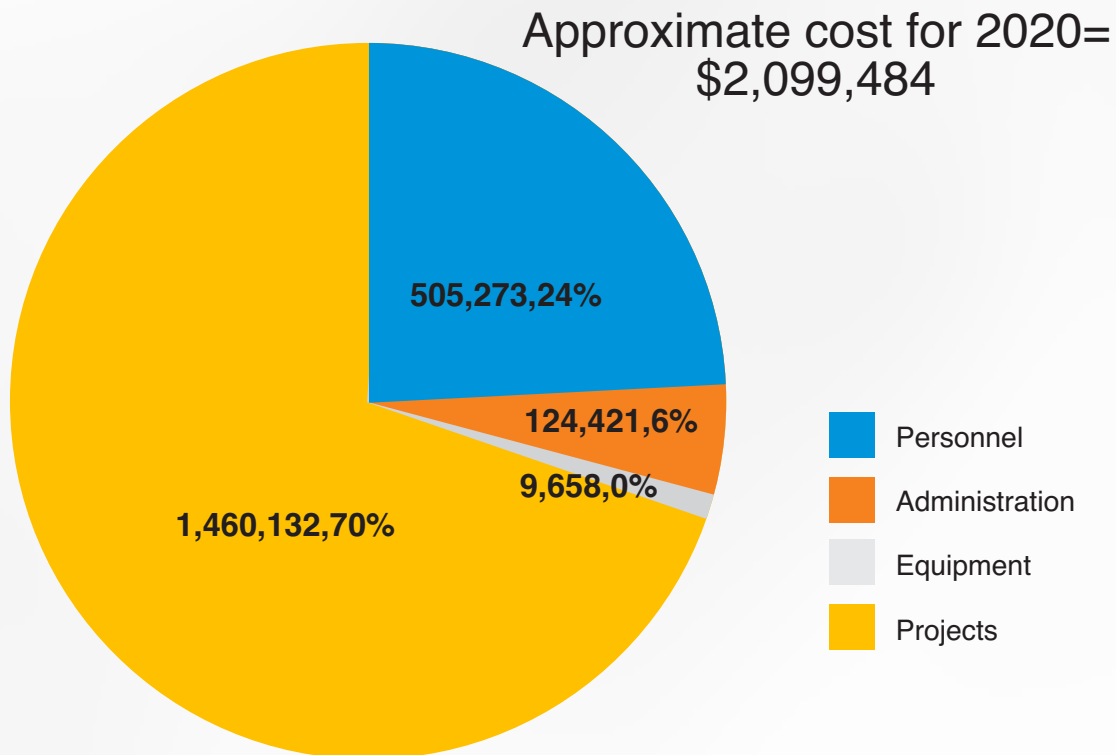
In its well-received Summit Declaration SAPSN decried the SADC Region's failure to mount a collective response to one of the greatest crises to hit the Region since the fall of colonialism and apartheid. At the same time the declaration highlighted the negative impacts of dominant policies in the Region insofar as they advance the harmful imposition of austerity measures, deregulation of economies, privatisation of public goods and services, opaque tax incentives to transnational capital and over-dependence on debt contraction and mineral extractivism which have weakened the Region's capacity to collectively address major crises like COVID-19.

Throughout 2020, SAPSN national and thematic structures united to press SADC leaders to work towards the realisation of social and economic justice utilising campaigns, solidarity actions, open letters, in-country gatherings, online Assemblies and strategic convenings to highlight the needs and demands of the Region's poor and marginalised.

- Firstly, SAPSN lobbied SADC leaders to do more to help the masses cope with the COVID pandemic by increasing the resources available to shore up overwhelmed public health, education, social protection and other key public services through a common, centralised SADC COVID Response Fund and coordination mechanism.
- Secondly, SAPSN continued to urge the reversal of unaccountable power, benefits, access and influence given to vested interests, foreign and domestic lenders, investors and donors.
- Thirdly SADC joined with solidarity partners and other progressive groups to call for the democratisation of SADC through the structured inclusion of non- state actors in regional COVID-19 response mechanisms and other decision-making platforms.
- Fourthly SAPSN national and thematic structures united to call attention to growing insecurity in the Region whilst highlighting the need for urgent SADC led efforts to utilise trade, aid, regional integration and other processes to achieve shared growth whilst addressing historical imbalance in the distribution resources and economic opportunities.
- Fifth, SAPSN worked to bring to the fore the Regional debt crisis in Southern Africa whilst urging SADC leaders to collectively engage multilateral Institutions to issue a moratorium on debt repayments to give SADC countries greater fiscal space to respond to the COVID pandemic



# Financial Report



During the year under review, the approximate cost for 2020 was USD2,099,484.00. The project support was the biggest component at 70% of the budget. The personnel and admin components were 24% and 6% respectively. The Equipment budget was very low during the year under review. This is because for projects that were continuing from the previous year, they had most of their equipment procured in the first part of the project which fell in 2019.

The COVID-19 environment had a huge impact on implementation of activities and impacted burn rates in return. This was due to the prevalence of COVID19 restrictions that did not allow in person activities to be held. The organisation was however very quick to notice the environmental shift and started capitalising on virtual meetings. ZIMCODD however managed to accelerate activities starting July 2020 when some level of physical activities was allowed. This acceleration helped the organisation to improve its burn rates by over 50% of the burn rates achieved between March and June 2020 during the compulsory lockdown period.

# 2020 Resources, Publications & Statements



<http://zimcodd.org/strategic-plan/>



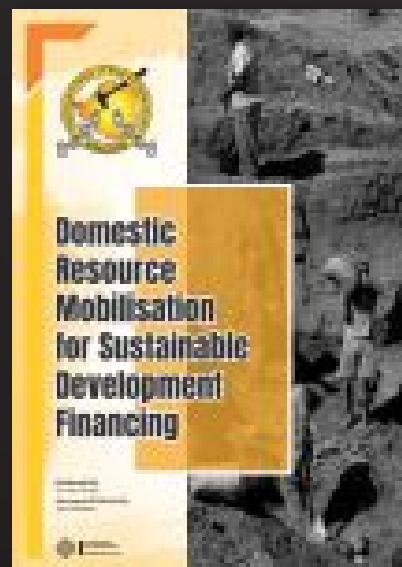
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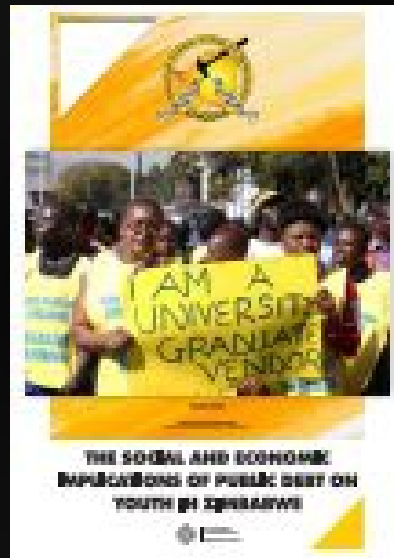
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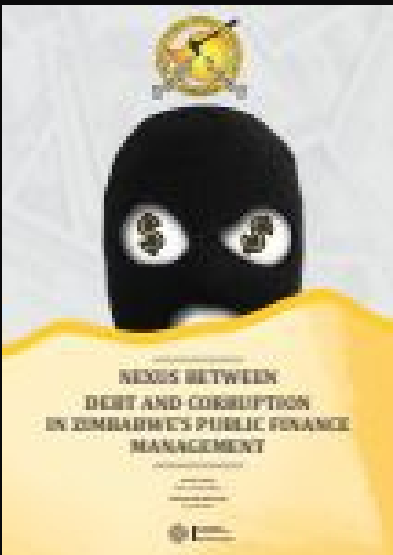
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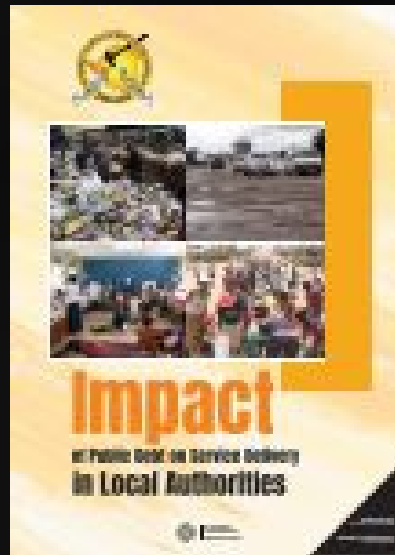
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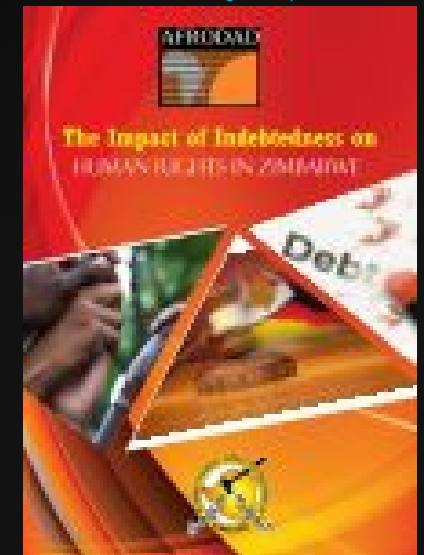
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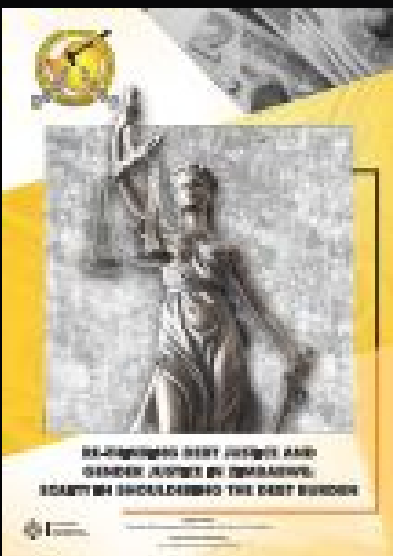
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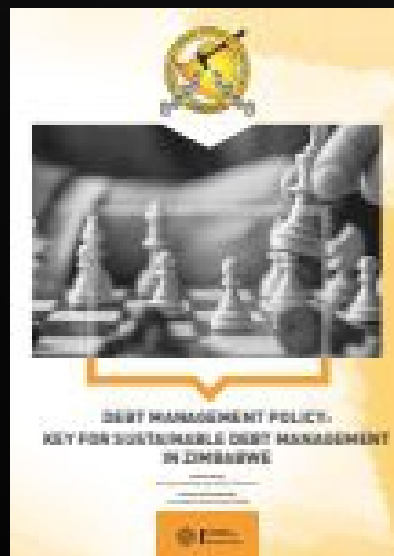
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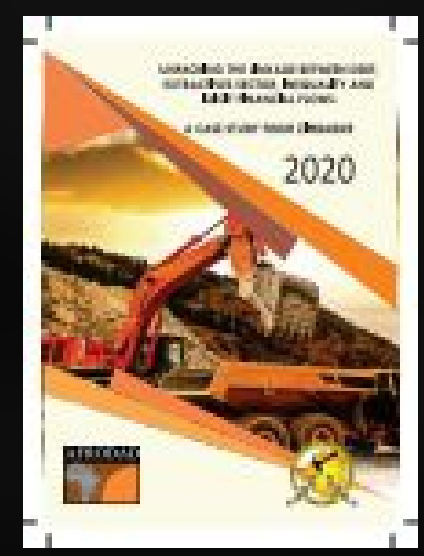
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# MEET OUR TEAM





# With many thanks to our Partners





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