

PUBLIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SITUATIONAL REPORT

NOVEMBER-
DECEMBER 2023



ZIMCODD
ZIMBABWE COALITION ON DEBT & DEVELOPMENT



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1. Introduction and Background

This Public Resource Management Situational Report (PRM SitRep), covers the period November and December 2023. It evaluates the use of public resources in Zimbabwe. Public resources in Zimbabwe entails minerals, water boards, roads, recreational facilities to mention but a few. Nevertheless, the administration of these resources have generated debate among the citizens who seek to hold the government account to its fiduciary responsibility. Allegations of public resources abuse have continued to gain traction with rent-seeking, nepotism and tenderpreneurship at the apex of the factors promoting resource abuse. Thus, in order to come up with an astute and comprehensive study, a survey was undertaken in 57 districts across the country and actionable recommendations were prescribed based on the findings raised.

2. Objectives

The PRM SitRep seeks to satisfy the following objectives:

- To bring to light how public resources are utilised.
- To present citizens' perspective on the utilisation of public resources through Human Interest Stories/cases.
- To assess public service delivery under the prism of Gender Responsive Public Service Delivery (GRPSD).
- To promote participation in economic governance from local to central government.
- To proffer actionable recommendations that can promote national development and growth.

3. Methodological Framework

The PRM SitRep made use of the mixed method research methodology including a survey, observation, key informant interviews and focus group discussions to generate alternative policy recommendations informed by the findings, Human Interest Stories (HIS) were used to reinforce study findings. The research areas comprised of fifty-seven (57) districts as illustrated in Figure 1 below which shows the study catchment area.

Study Catchment Area



Source: Primary Data Compiled by ZIMCODD



4. Public Resource Management Situational Context

The public resource context for November and December was overshadowed by the 2024 National Budget allocations which become the epicentre of resource discussions. An assessment of how the government carried out its allocations shows deep vested interest which scintillates through the politics of public resources. Politics and resource allocations are intertwined, Harold Lasswell described politics as “who gets what, when and how” while David Easton regarded politics as the “authoritative allocations of values”. Therefore, going forward with the above submission, politics is about the allocation of public resources and the governance of those resources thereof. Thus, the politics of public resources has also reached astronomic levels. A review of the 2023 national budget allocations and 2023 national budget resource utilisation as depicted in the 2024 national budget attest to this verdict. At the apex of the 2023 national budget allocation is the Ministry of Education, followed by Health and Agriculture. Ironically, through an expenditure analysis framework it can be deduced that, there was a negative correlation between budget allocation and expenditure. Thus to mean, allocations did not translate to effective disbursement and utilisation. The politics of public resources is also witnessed by government`s failure to meet the prescribed international benchmarks for service delivery in the 2024 national budget. This is evidenced by figure 2 below which shows ratified international benchmarks and allocated resources.

Fig 2: 2024 Budget Allocation VS International Benchmarks

Sector	International commitment	% Total budget 2022	% Total budget 2023	% Total budget 2024
Education	20% Dakar Declaration (2000)	13.4%	14.02%	17.75%
Healthcare	15% Abuja Declaration (2001)	14.9%	10.5%	10.84%
Water & sanitation	1.5% Ethekekwini Declaration (2008)	0.20%	3.17%	1.17%
Transport & Infrastructure	9.6% AU Declaration (2009)	6.5%	3.2%	14.6%
Social Protection	4.5% Social Policy for Africa (2008)	2.1%	1.12%	4.12%
Agriculture	10% Maputo Declaration (2003)	13.3%	8.05%	7.39%

Source: Compiled by ZIMCODD from the National Budget Statements

A reflection of the resources allocated for social protection shows that, the government is not sincere in redressing the humanitarian crisis being experienced in the country. A trend analysis of social protection allocation from 2017 shows that the government has not managed to satisfy the 4.5% international benchmark. In 2017 0.50% was allocated, in 2018 0.77%, in 2019 0.73%, in 2020 3.88%, in 2021 1.30%, in 2022 2.10%, in 2023 1.20% and 4.12% in 2024.

While the government has failed to channel significant resources towards social protection, the following contextual issues remain worrisome and entrenches vulnerability and inequality:

- 7.9 million people are in extreme poverty
- 3.8 million rural people and 1.6 million urban people facing food insecurity
- 4.6 million Children with Severe Acute Malnutrition and 1.6 million children live in extreme poverty.¹
- 4.8 million children in need of BEAM assistance,
- 60% of rural girls and women encounter period poverty thus they lack access to menstrual supplies and education.²

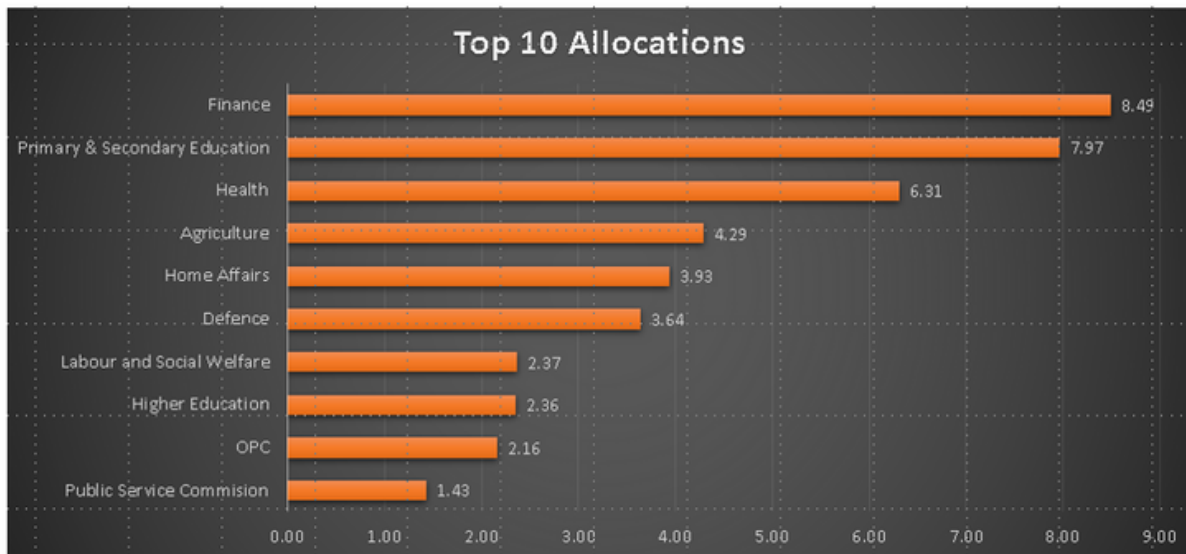
Women and children are disproportionately affected in all this. Thus, more resources should be allocated towards social protection.

Moreover, for the year 2024 the government must be commended for ensuring that primary and secondary education, health, higher education, agriculture, labour and social welfare are in the top 10 of sectors that were given more resources. Nonetheless, history has demonstrated that, good allocations do not necessarily translate to timely and effective resource disbursements. Fig 3 and fig 4 below shows top 10 and bottom 10 allocations in the 2024 national budget.

1. <https://borgenproject.org/child-poverty-in-zimbabwe/#:~:text=The%20State%20of%20Child%20Poverty%20in%20Zimbabwe%20Zimbabwe,as%20children%20account%20for%2048%25%20of%20the%20population>

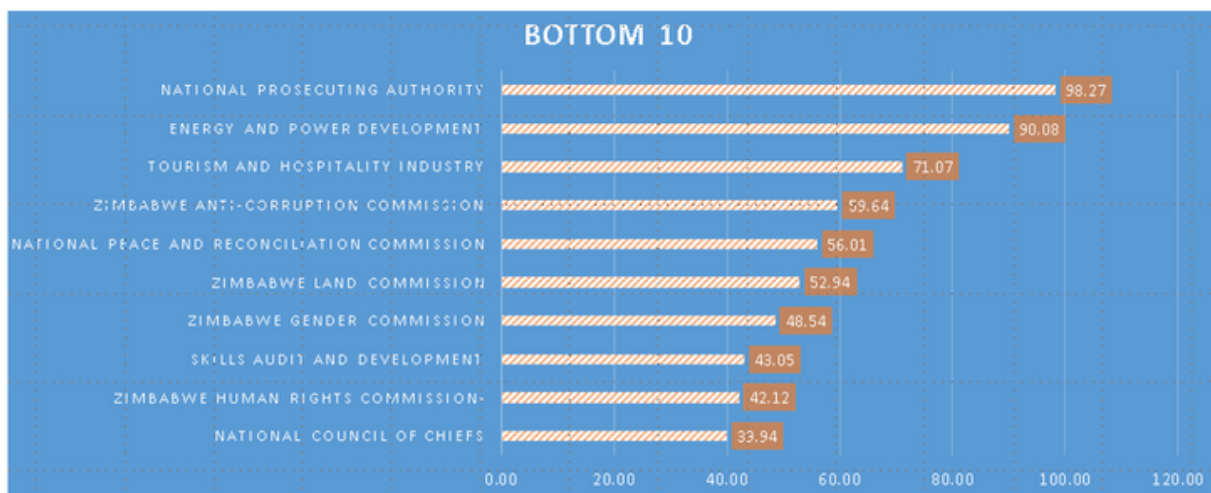
2. <https://www.techwomen.org/girls-education/vheneka-khanyisa-eliminating-the-shame-of-period-poverty>

Fig 3: Budget Allocation Top 10 (ZWL Trillion)



Compiled by ZIMCODD from the 2024 National Budget

Fig 4: Budget Allocation Bottom 10 (ZWL Trillion)



Compiled by ZIMCODD from the 2024 National Budget

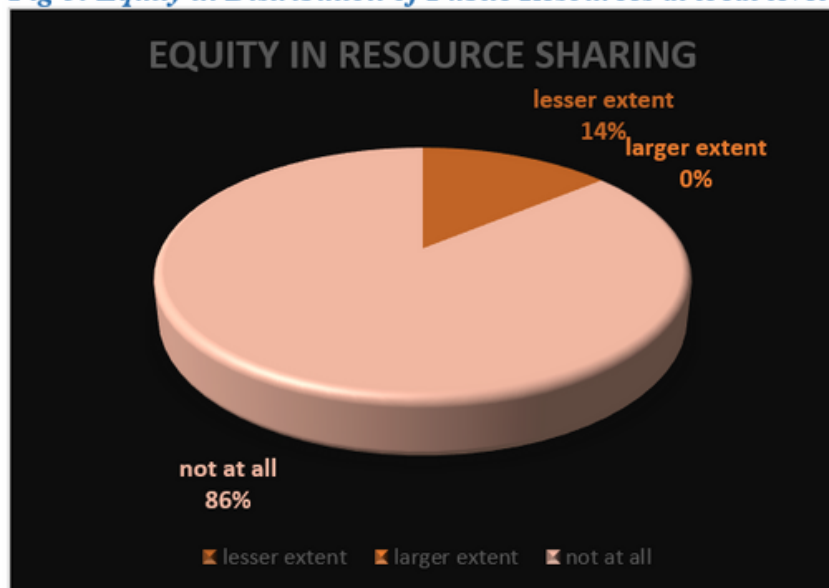
5. Public Resource Management Survey Findings

Grand corruption continues to bedevil economic recovery efforts for many countries. The correlation between corruption, human rights and democracy continue to be echoed internationally. Across the globe, there is a clarion call to accelerate the fight against corruption (grand and petty) if countries are to stop human rights abuses and democratic decline. In Zimbabwe, citizens lament that the management of public resources has for a long time been marred by corruption. Corruption in Zimbabwe has devastating effects on the ability of poor people to access basic services as corruption affects all sectors of social and economic life. Against this background, this section assesses the management of public resources by the lower tiers of government in fulfilling the government's fiduciary responsibility in fifty-seven districts in Zimbabwe. This report is ZIMCODD's call for prudent public resource management which is at the core of delivering better public infrastructure and improving lives of citizens

5.1 Equitable distribution of public resources

The survey conducted in 57 districts of the country reveals a worrying trend when it comes to the distribution of public resources at the local level. Inequalities in public resource allocation have persisted as 86% reported that the benefits of public resources are not equitably distributed while only 14% reported that to a lesser extent public resources are equitably distributed, thereby violating the principles of equity. The graph below is illustrative:

Fig 5: Equity in Distribution of Public Resources at local level



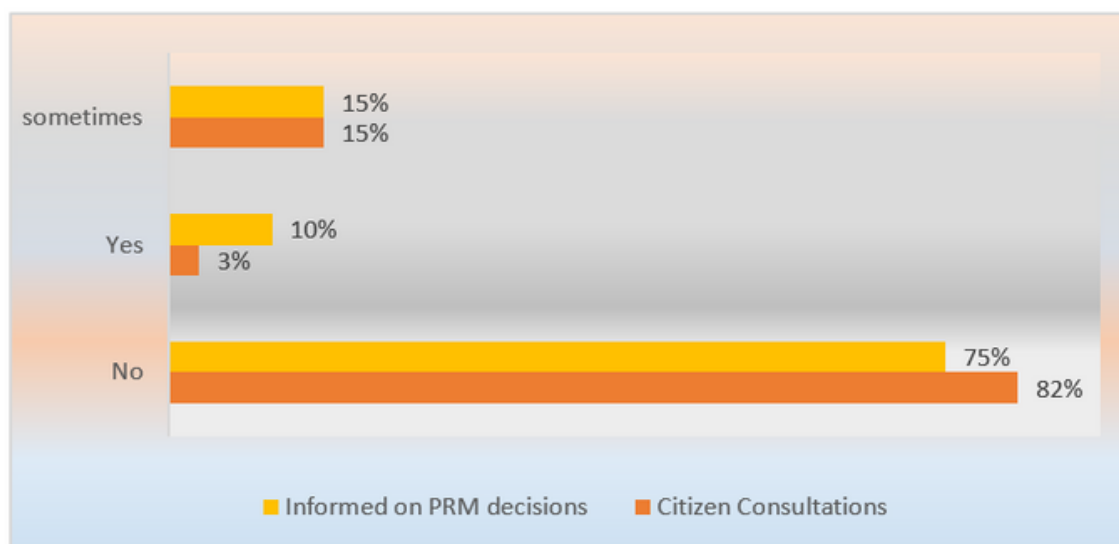
Source: ZIMCODD

In Zimbabwe equitable public resource distribution is still hampered by a number of structural and systemic barriers. This calls for a wholesome reform in public resource allocation and distribution at the national and local government level to ensure equitable resource distribution.

5.2 Citizens Involvement in Decisions to do with Public Resources

It is critical to note that the level of citizen involvement and participation in economic governance in general and public resource management illustrates the level of transparency and accountability of a government and promotes equitable distribution of public resources in PRM at community and national level.

Fig 6: Informed about the Exploitation and Use of Public Resources

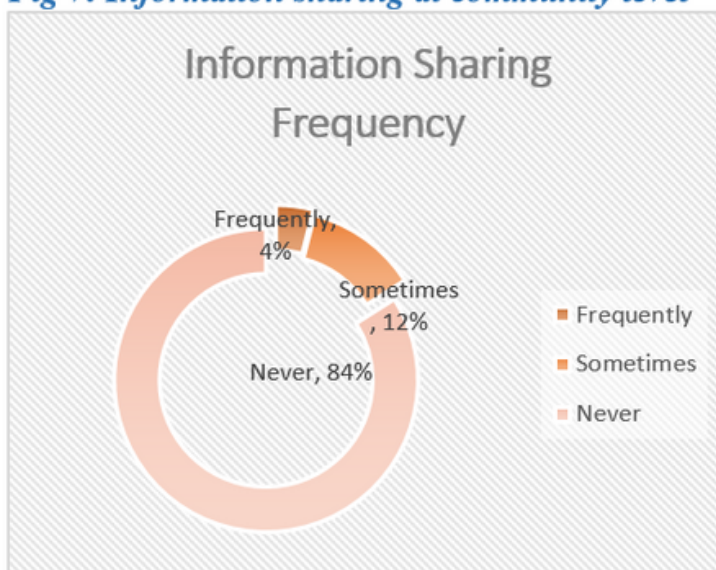


Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

Across the 57 districts surveyed, citizens lament that they are excluded in decisions on public resource exploitation, resource allocation and use. As presented in the graph above, the survey established that in 82% of the surveyed districts, citizens are not consulted while in 15% they are sometimes consulted and only in 3% of the sampled districts, citizens are consulted when public resource decisions are made. Similarly, in 75% of the districts citizens are not involved in PRM decisions while in 15% of the districts, citizens are sometimes involved and in 10% of the districts, citizens are involved when PRM decisions are made at local government level. This is a worrying trend observed in the past 4 months thereby calling for the need by local authorities to employ mechanisms that foster citizen participation in decisions that affect them.

5.3 Access to Information on Public Resources

Fig 7: Information sharing at community level



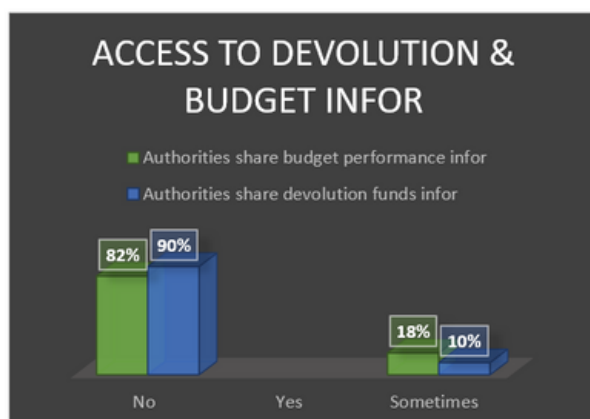
Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

84% of the sampled districts never freely share information on public resource management while in 12% of the districts local authorities sometimes share public resources information and in 4% local authorities were reported to frequently share PRM information. This illustrates that communities continue to be deprived of their right to access information held by the state as provided for in section 62 of the constitution.

5.4 Access to Devolution Funds & Local Authority Budgets Information

While access to critical budgetary information enhances citizens' capacity to effectively monitor and to hold their government to account, citizens continue to be disempowered economically as such information is withheld by authorities as in the graph below:

Fig 8: Access to Devolution and Budgets Information



Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

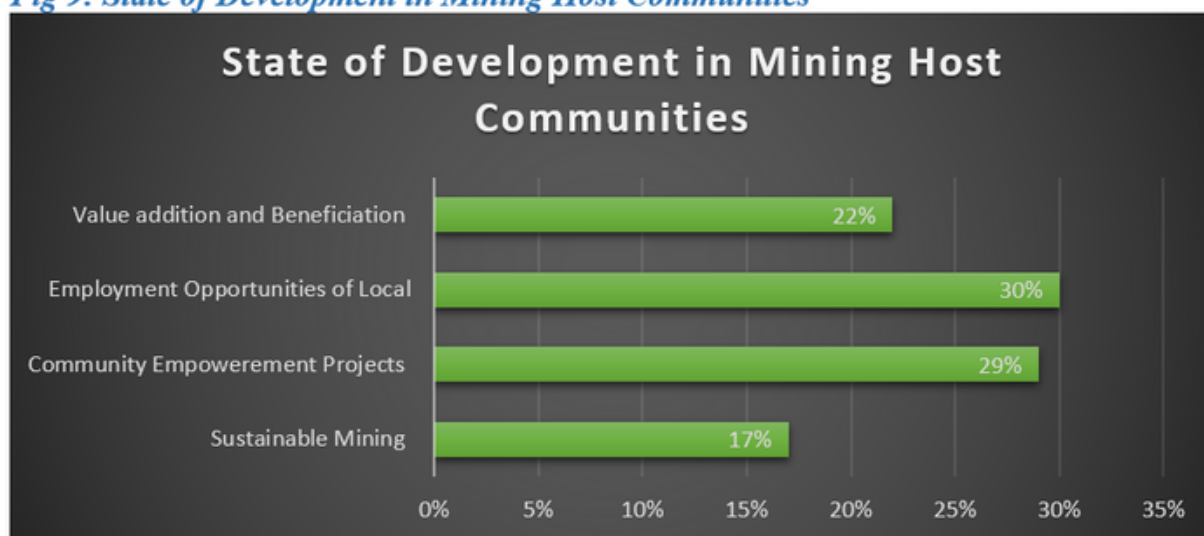
90% of districts did not have access to devolution funds information and 82% did not have access to budget performance information. On the other hand, 10% reported that they sometimes have access to devolution information while 18% sometimes access budget performance information.

5.5 Natural Resource Governance Issues

The 2023 Mining Vision envisioned a US\$12 billion mining sector by the end of 2023. The extractive sector is a forex cash cow for the nation as it contributes about 70% to annual export earnings. In 2022, Treasury expected the sector to register a 10% growth underpinned by elevated global mineral commodity prices which are inducing domestic mineral production and mining investment, especially in exploration, mine development & mechanization.

However, although the government claims that, the mining vision was a success. The evidenced on the ground shows that the government failed to attain the 2023 mining vision. The contractions in the economy are a clear testimony. The existing porous PFM systems and impunity are encouraging corruption and illicit transactions in the mining sector. For instance, official estimates show that the nation is losing at least US\$1.2 billion in gold revenues annually through smuggling. While revelations from the Aljazeera documentary on gold mafia shows that Zimbabwe is losing approximately 500 kgs of gold monthly. In the 2024 national budget, the government has made commitments to ensure that the disgruntled fiscal mining regimes are aligned and amended.

Fig 9: State of Development in Mining Host Communities



Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

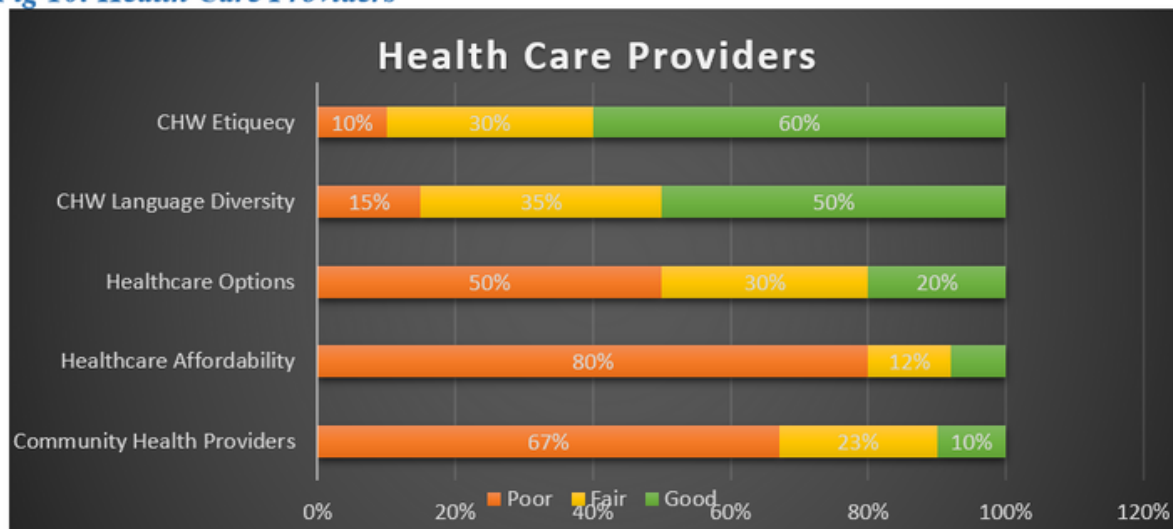
6. Social Service Delivery Findings

Globally, governments are critical in ensuring the redistribution of wealth and income from the rich to the poor, promoting gender equality, building strong social safety nets, and delivery of quality and affordable public services like education, housing, and health care. All of this is made possible by the government's sole power to levy taxes and levies in the economy. As such, the following sections examine the use of taxes in Zimbabwe by providing survey findings on the state of public service delivery across the nation.

6.1 Availability of Community Health Workers

Generally, community health workers (CHWs) are members of the community working either for pay or as volunteers in association with the local health care system.³ They are essential as they provide interpretation and translation services, culturally appropriate health education, and give informal counselling and guidance as well as provide some direct services such as first aid.

Fig 10: Health Care Providers



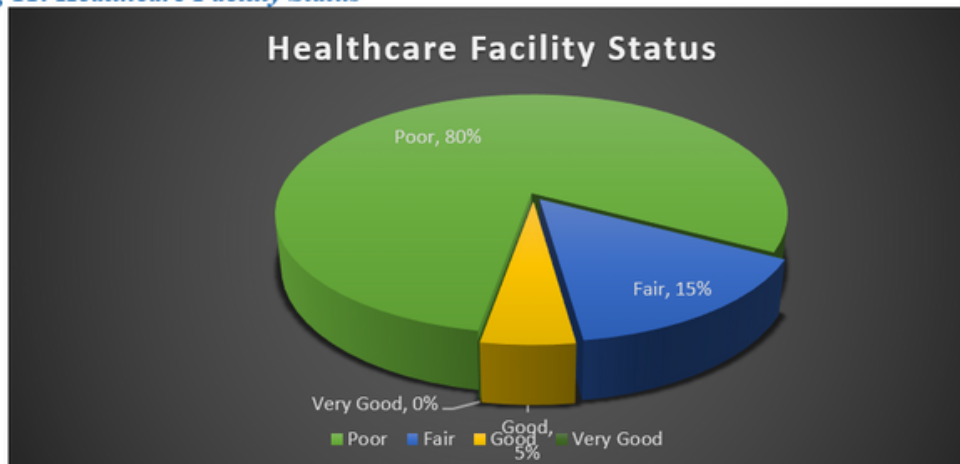
Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

From the survey results, community healthcare services are plummeting as healthcare costs continue to burgeon as in the figure above. As such, the majority poor are not accessing the essential health services they need.

6.2 Quality of Health Care Facilities

Generally, the government should set aside at least 30% of its healthcare budget for capital expenditures such as renovations of old, building new infrastructure, and repairing old as well as acquiring new medical equipment. Also, more of these investments should be undertaken in deficit areas particularly marginalized communities to reduce health inequality.

Fig 11: Healthcare Facility Status

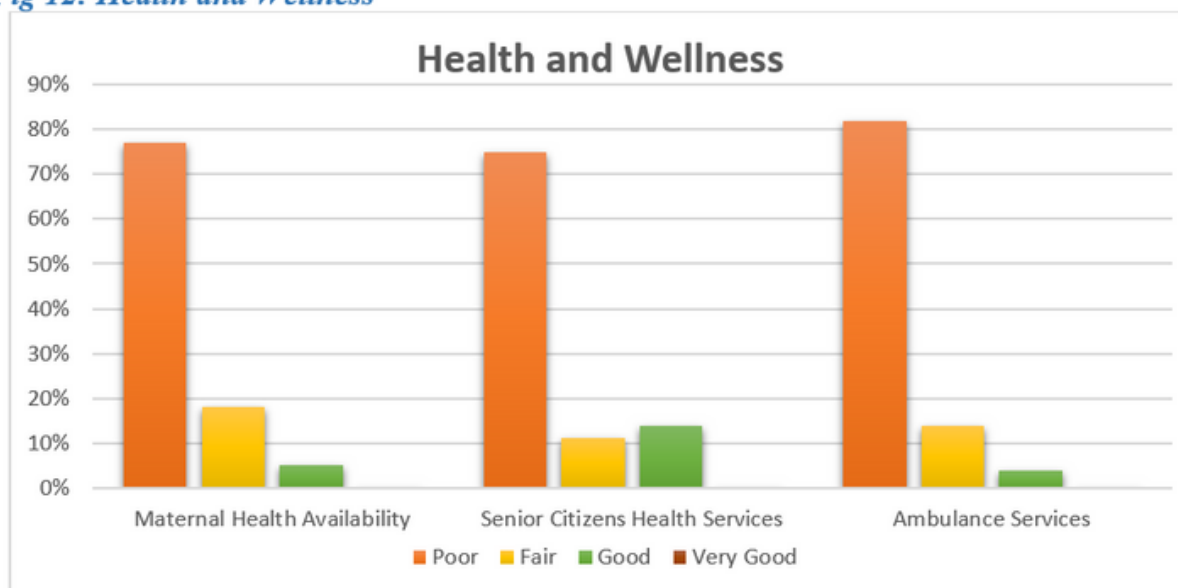


Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

3. <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/healthdisp/role-of-community-health-workers.htm>

With recurrent expenditures consuming an average of 70% of Zimbabwe's public healthcare budget and the Treasury delaying the disbursements, most healthcare facilities are in a deplorable state. The survey established that 80% of the 57 districts surveyed had poor facilities.

Fig 12: Health and Wellness



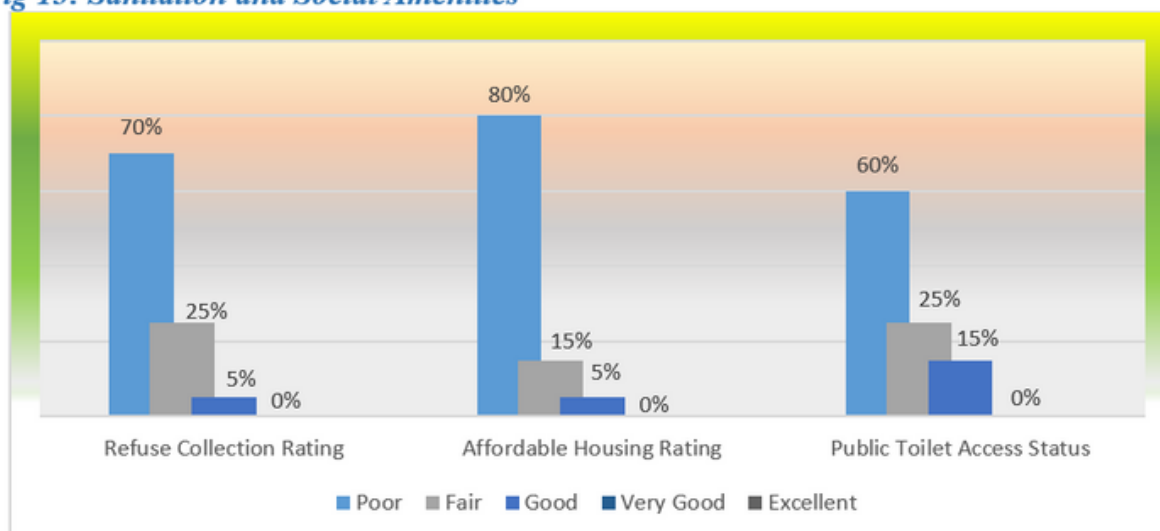
Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

Again, the survey results show that public health institutions across the nation are failing to deliver essential services like maternal health, ambulance services, and elderly care. As such, only privileged citizens are enjoying quality private services priced in foreign currency.

6.3 Access to Safe Sanitation and Social Amenities

Developing nations like Zimbabwe are generally characterized by recurring outbreaks of medieval diseases such as cholera and typhoid. This is because of the failure of their governments to provide adequate sanitation services as public funds are massively abused, misused, embezzled, and diverted for private gain by some public officials.

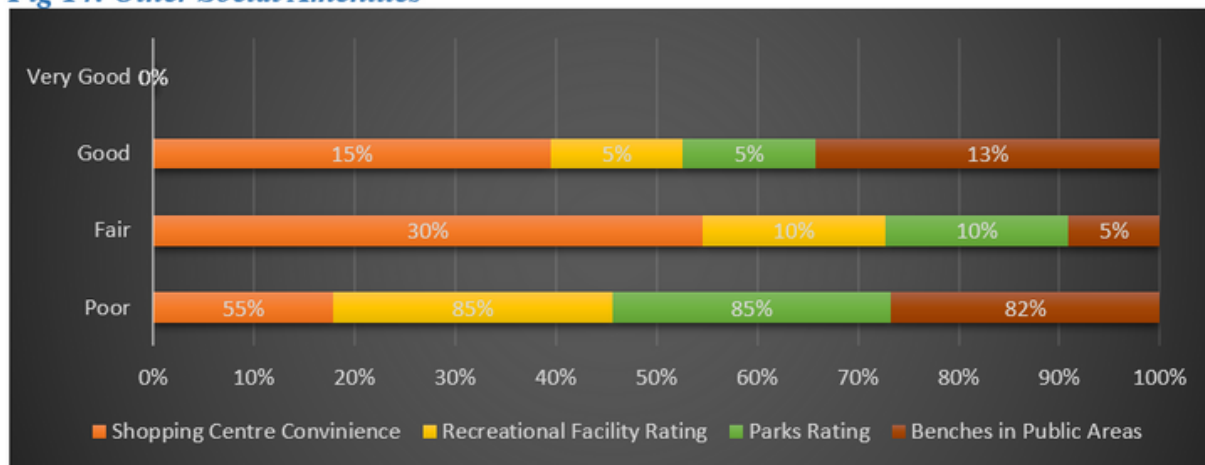
Fig 13: Sanitation and Social Amenities



Source: Data Compiled by ZIMCODD

The survey findings show that 70% of the 57 districts sampled are experiencing poor refuse collection, 80% lack affordable housing schemes, and 60% had poorly accessible public toilets. This poses severe health hazards. The responsible authorities are blaming poor service delivery on non-payment of rates by residents as well as local currency volatility.

Fig 14: Other Social Amenities



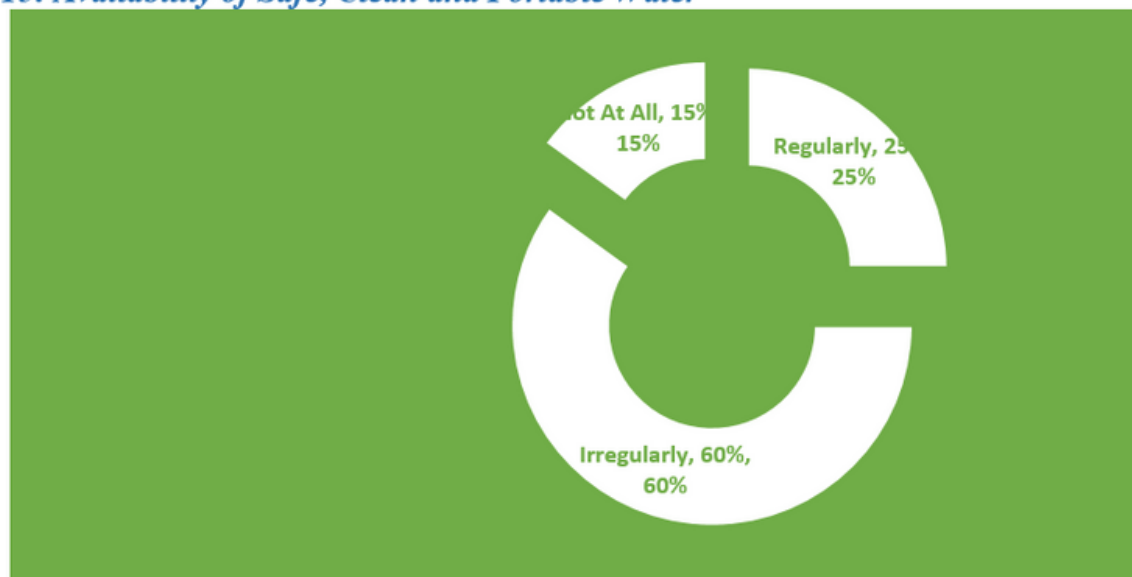
Source: Data Compiled by ZIMCODD

As ZIMCODD alluded to in its October 2023 issue, social amenities enhance the desirability of a residential area. As such, amenities bring a sense of community identity and belonging to a society. Despite this, the survey established that social amenities across the nation are deteriorating.

6.4 Water Supply

Clean, safe, and portable water are crucial for public health, whether it is used for drinking, domestic use, recreational purposes, or food production. As such, sufficient water supply, improved sanitation, and better management of water resources can boost Zimbabwe’s economic growth and contribute significantly to poverty eradication.

Fig 15: Availability of Safe, Clean and Portable Water



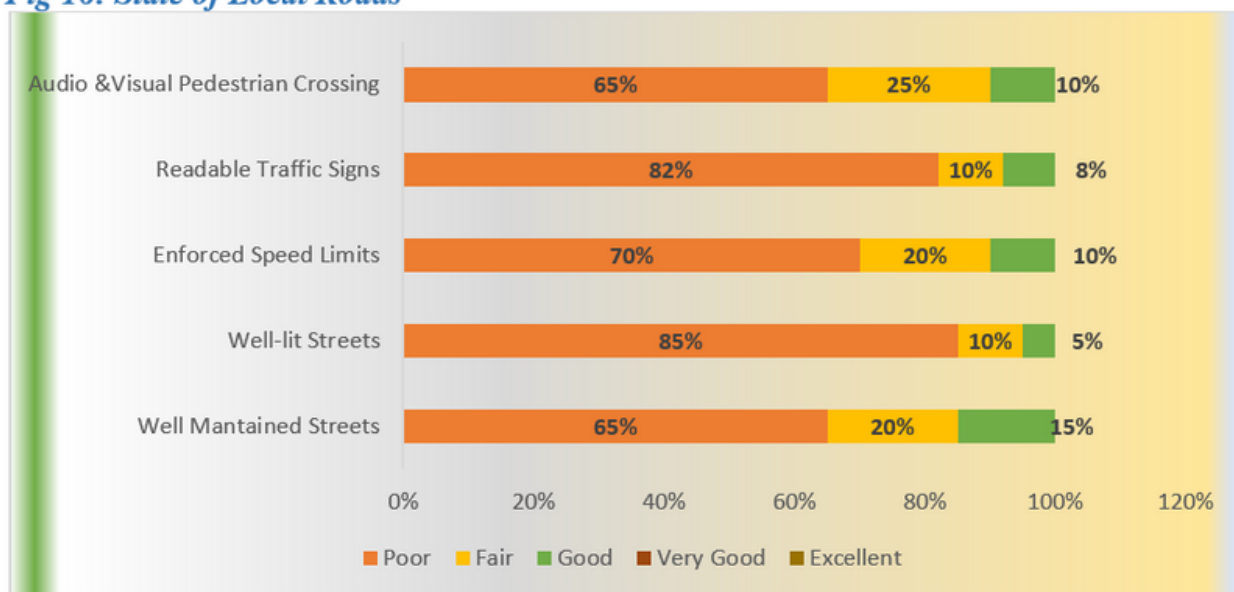
Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

The survey results show that 60% of the respondents received safe, clean, and portable water irregularly in November and December 2023. Because safe water is a vital part of existence, it should be, therefore, obligatory that government ensure that it is provided to all citizens.

6.5 Road Networks

Generally, a good road network is an economy because it helps make nations grow and develop by providing easy access to markets- labor, financial, and commodity markets among other markets. Also, roads bring people closer together thus stimulating social development.

Fig 16: State of Local Roads



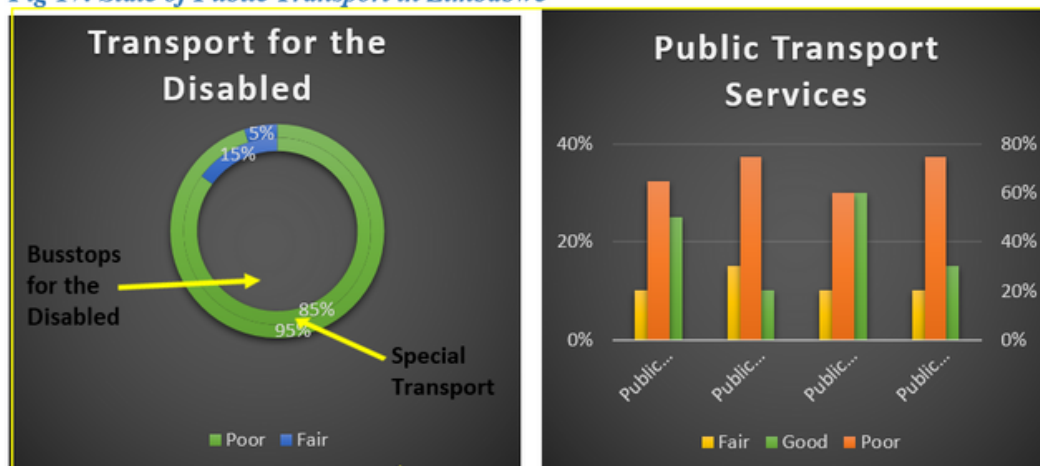
Source: Primary data compiled by ZIMCODD

The survey findings indicate that the local road network in Zimbabwe is poor. Many of these roads are characterized by unreadable traffic lights, broken street lights, lack of audio and visual pedestrian crossings, and potholes as shown in the figure above.

6.6 Public Transportation

Public transportation is a form of travel offered locally that enables more people to travel together along designated routes: road, rail, and air travel. A good mass transit system is key in reducing greenhouse gases and enables travel by all citizens irrespective of their status in society.

Fig 17: State of Public Transport in Zimbabwe



Source: Data Compiled By ZIMCODD

The survey results show that the mass transit systems across Zimbabwe are poor, that is, they are unreliable, unsafe, and unaffordable. As such, the existing system is failing to enhance the social integration of the nation, lowering the mobility of factors of production, and subduing commerce. Also, the mass transit systems are not friendly to people with disabilities as evidenced by the lack of bus stops and special transport for people with disabilities.

7. Conclusion

Transparency, accountability and integrity in the management of public resources remains a wish and utopian hope as the government continues to undermine the rudimentary principles of public resource management. The politics of public resources which manifest in the 2023 national budget shows that political expediency, considerations and mechanisms coupled with vested interests took precedence in determining resource allocations. While the view might be subject to debate, the challenges that Zimbabweans are encountering is not open for debate but rather in need of urgent redress through allocation of sufficient and adequate resources as well as timely disbursements. The challenges in reference mentioned herein include the extreme poverty which has affected 7.9 million citizens, rural food insecurity which affects 3.8 million rural people and 1.6 million urban people, Severe Acute Malnutrition which has affected 4.6 million children, 1.6 million children live in extreme poverty,⁴ 4.8 million children in need of BEAM assistance as well as the 60% of rural girls and women who are encountering period poverty thus they lack access to menstrual supplies and education. To this end, prudent resource utilisation entail allocating resource towards national challenges so as to promote national interest.

8. Recommendations

- Resources must be allocated based on national challenges rather than political expediency so as to advance national interest.
- While disbursements in the Education sector, Water and Sanitation, Social Protection are commendable as compared to previous allocations, the Treasurer has a responsibility to ensure that timely disbursements are made. This will enable the growth and development in those sectors.
- The Ministry of Finance must consider the voices and aspirations of the citizens registered during national budget consultative forums and public hearings.
- Governments` investment in social protection has to change, both in terms of allocation and expenditure. The dysfunctionality of social protection is posing a great danger on human capital development.
- There is need to capacitate women to meaningfully contribute to decision making processes and rectify gender discrimination and imbalances in Zimbabwe.
- The government must put into place mechanisms to conserve energy, improving and modernising energy infrastructure in order to produce sufficient energy for all without increasing the already existing debt burden.
- The government should ensure timeous disbursements of devolution funds to all local authorities.

4. <https://borgenproject.org/child-poverty-in-zimbabwe/#:~:text=The%20State%20of%20Child%20Poverty%20in%20Zimbabwe%20Zimbabwe,as%20children%20account%20for%2048%25%20of%20the%20population>
5. <https://www.techwomen.org/girls-education/vheneka-khanyisa-eliminating-the-shame-of-period-poverty>

- The currently delayed disbursement of these devolution funds in a highly inflationary environment is tantamount to a waste of public funds. Local governments source key supplies and materials from the private sector, a sector that largely benchmarks local prices at or above the parallel market rates. Therefore, ZIMCODD urges the Treasury to disburse large chunks of fiscal transfers to local governments on time before the value is erased by currency depreciation and ravaging inflation.
- The government must prioritise implementing OAG recommendations as this will strengthen public finance management systems to curb leakages and improve public service delivery.
- For effective decision-making and efficient public service delivery by local authorities, there is a need for minimal interference by the central government. In the context of depreciating local currency and rising inflation, a lack of autonomy for local authorities affects the procurement of services as value is eroded.
- Public Consultations are key. Authorities should fully engage with the public when it comes to matters of spending public funds. Some of the challenges being faced by residents across the country show a huge disconnect between the duty bearers and the rights holders. This has led to a break of a social contract as citizens are no longer willing to pay their rates due to trust issues they have with their local governments. Dialogue is one of the best ways to solve wide-ranging societal problems.
- The urban population has ballooned over the years as a result of tightening lives and livelihoods in rural areas which led to increased rural-to-urban migration. This has overwhelmed water treatment plants and water distribution infrastructure. To cope with rising demand, authorities should find innovative ways such as strengthening Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and raising revenue to invest heavily in water infrastructure.