

ZIMCODD 2023 Annual REPORT

January– December



ZIMCODD



www.zimcodd.org

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Operational Context

The year 2023 was a mixed year from an economic perspective. In the first half of 2023 (1HY23), the economy battled a massive Zimbabwe dollar (ZWL) decline and significant inflationary pressures that led to hyperinflation. The ZWL declined by at least 85% in official and alternative (parallel) markets. Consequently, the local currency depreciation fueled price growth as businesses were forced to benchmark their local prices at or above volatile parallel market rates to cushion against exchange rate-induced cost build-up and losses. The Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZimStat) price statistics show month-on-month (MoM) price inflation mounting by 74.5% in June 2023, significantly up from 1.07% realized in January 2023. In annual terms, the June 2023 inflation outturn was 176%, meaning consumer purchasing power fell by 176% between June 2022 and June 2023.

Also, the spillover effects from the Russia-Ukraine war sustained high fuel prices in the 1HY23 at a time when the nation was battling a severe electrical energy deficit, leading to prolonged load-shedding schedules. Electricity shortages coupled with volatile ZWL and expensive electricity substitutes like fuel and liquified gas increased both the cost of doing business and the cost of living. The external public debt, which remained in distress, severely constrained the fiscal space, forcing the government to resort to resource-backed loans (RBLs).¹

Economic performance was mixed in the year's second half (2HY23). In the early part, sanity was restored in the market after the government instituted various policy interventions to tame ZWL decline and clamp price growth. Due to these interventions, the ZWL gained about 25% and 30% of its lost value against the USD in the official and parallel markets between June 2023 and August 2023, respectively. This ZWL stability exerted enormous downward pressure on ZWL prices, plunging the economy into deflation (negative inflation) in July 2023 (-15.3%) and August 2023 (-6.2%). However, from October 2023, ZWL depreciation and ZWL inflationary pressures regained momentum, powered by increased fiscal spending, which is generally associated with the fourth quarter (Q4).²

These macroeconomic fluctuations, buttressed by poor job creation in the productive sectors, climatic shocks, and weak social protection systems, sustain household poverty. The World Bank posits that while the extreme poverty rate has declined from its 2020 peak, it remains high against cyclical agricultural production and elevated food prices.³ About 40% of households faced moderate to severe food poverty in the Dec 2022-Jan 2023 period, slightly up from 38% in the Sept-Oct 2021 period though significantly down from 61% in March 2021 to 71% in July 2020.

Furthermore, the perpetual ZWL volatility experienced in 2023 fueled currency substitution as economic

1. https://zimcodd.org/?sdm_process_download=1&download_id=6541

2. https://zimcodd.org/?sdm_process_download=1&download_id=6617

3. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/>

agents demanded stable USD for storing value.

The economy rapidly dollarized in 2023, with ZimStat estimating that 80% of transactions were conducted in USD.⁴ Also, Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) statistics show that about 80% of the total money supply (M3) was in foreign currency. While dollarization helped to stabilize household budgets, it widened income inequalities among those households primarily earning in volatile ZWL, like civil servants. Most essential goods and services, such as fuel, healthcare, and rentals, were cheaply priced in USD but punitively quoted in local currency. Also, public institutions like schools and universities demanded part payment of tuition fees in USD, thus compromising the have-nots' access to education.⁵ As a result, many school-age children were at high risk of child protection violations, including child vending, child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and sexual and gender-based violence.

In the fourth quarter of 2023 (23Q4), the Treasury announced its 2024 national budget proposals, with the spending ceiling for the year set at ZWL58.2 trillion. Total revenue collection is estimated at ZWL53.9 trillion, comprising ZWL51.2 trillion in tax revenues and ZWL2.7 trillion in non-tax revenues. The budget has a financing gap of ZWL9.2 trillion made up of a budget deficit of ZWL4.3 trillion and amortization of loans and maturing Government securities estimated at ZWL4.9 trillion.

This huge financing gap laid bare the negative impacts of high indebtedness as the Treasury accumulates more debt and is set to spend more on debt servicing in 2024 (7.2%) than what is earmarked for social protection (4.1%). The mounting debt arrears and penalties, which now constitute more than 52% of total external public & publicly guaranteed debt of US\$12.7 billion, have closed Zimbabwe's access to external concessionary credit lines. Consequently, the Treasury is over-relying on domestic borrowing, which creates stiff competition for limited loanable funds, exerting pressure on market interest rates to upscale and crowd out private sector investment.

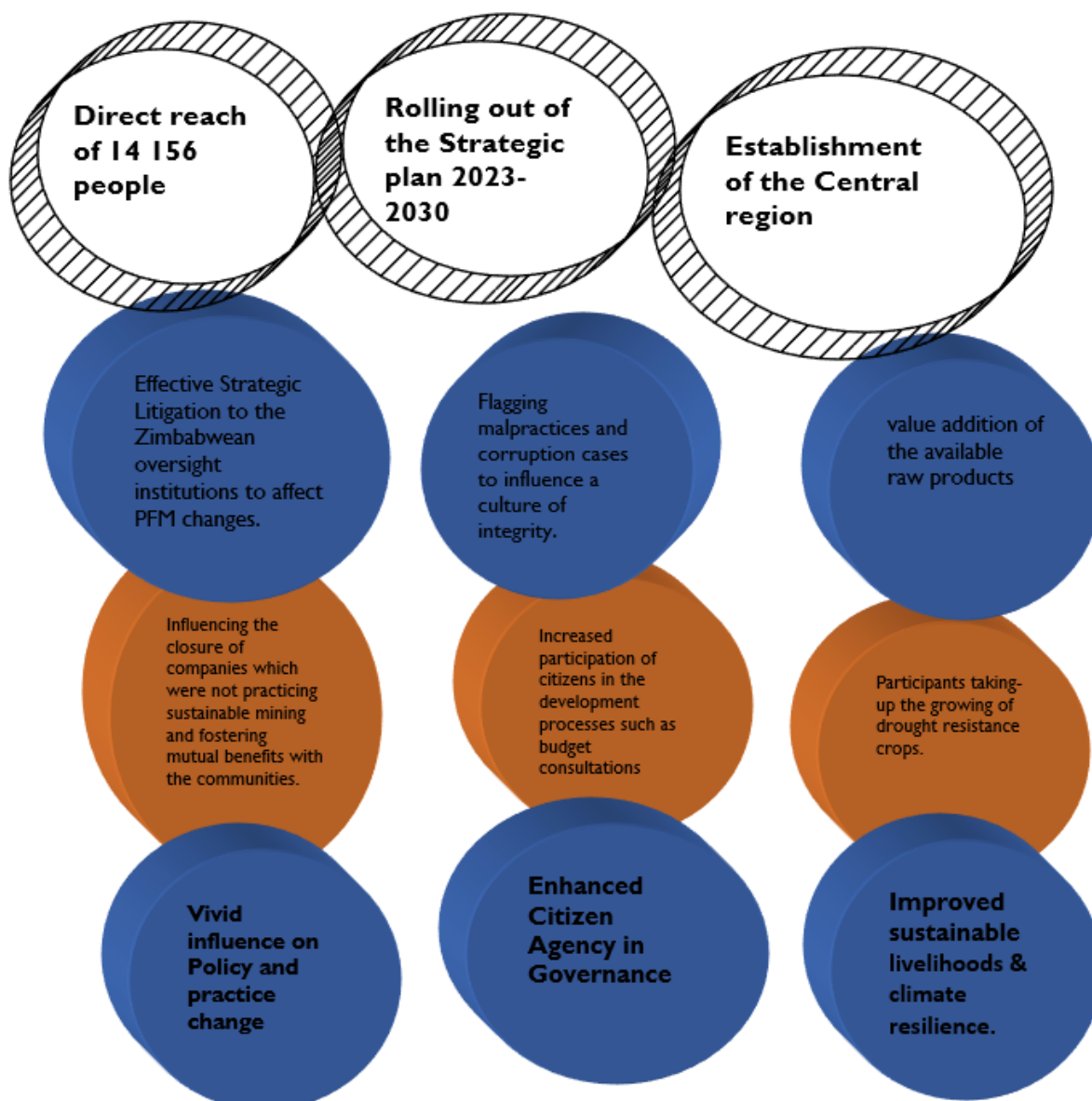
Also, authorities are piling more regressive taxes to mobilize additional revenues to support government developmental projects and programs. For instance, the budget proposals significantly hiked toll and passport fees, increased strategic fuel levy, removed some basic goods from VAT zero rating and exemptions, and crowded out informal traders from the distribution channels by demanding formal documents like tax clearance and VAT registration certificates.

Politically, Harmonised elections were conducted in August 2023 and although they were characterised by a generally peaceful environment the electoral process and outcome were disputed due to several irregularities that included widespread voter intimidation, delay in the delivery of voting materials in the major cities,

4. <https://www.newsday.co.zw/business/article/200019456/delta-foreign-currency-sales-rise>
5. <https://reliefweb.int/report/zimbabwe/humanitarian-action-children-2023-zimbabwe>

and failure to adhere to constitutional and legal requirements among other shortcomings and infractions. The Southern African Development Community Election Observer Mission (SEOM), for example, stated that: ‘some aspects of the Harmonised Elections fell short of the requirements of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, the Electoral Act, and the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections (2021)’.⁶ In the aftermath of the elections, there have been growing reports on the abductions, torture, and murder of members of the opposition. At the same time, legislators and councillors from the opposition have been recalled from their elected positions barely three months after the polls.

2023 at a Glance



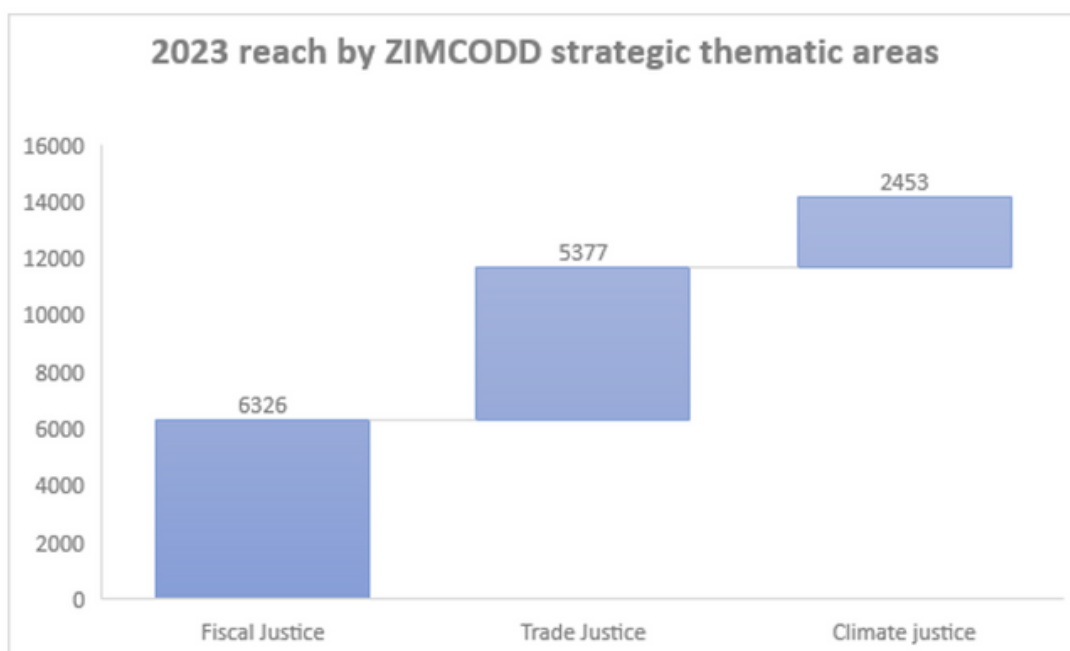
6. https://www.veritaszim.net/sites/veritas_d/files/ZIM_SEOM_FINAL_REPORT_SUBMISSION.pdf

1. Introduction

In 2023 ZIMCODD demonstrated significant advancements in carrying out its mandate of facilitating the realization of socioeconomic justice in Zimbabwe. The accomplishments include, but are not limited to, generating and expanding rapidly a powerful economic justice movement, evidence gathering, engaging in strategic advocacy, and promoting climate justice. The year saw the Strategic Plan 2023–2030 rollout, and the performance shown in this first year of implementation indicates that the organization has the momentum it needs to meet its goals and plans. Even though ZIMCODD noticed great milestones in 2023, it is important to note and acknowledge that the year was full of difficulties that had a significant impact on programming. Several lessons were considered, and in certain cases, adaptation management was used to guarantee successful programming. The following result areas are in line with the accomplishments made.

- Advocating for policies, laws and practices that facilitate the optimization of finance for pro-people development through Domestic Resource Mobilization
- Advocating for enhanced Public Resource Management (PRM) and fiscal accountability systems in Zimbabwe.
- Advocating for the flow of new climate financing to support mitigation and adaptation actions.
- Advocating for transparency in natural resources governance, especially in extractive industries.
- Advocating for sustainable debt management and debt justice in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa.

In the period under review, ZIMCODD was able to demonstrate a direct impact on 14 156 participants. This consists of 9 142 females and 5 014 males. A total of 734 Persons with Disabilities were reached.



2. Programmes implementation summary

Key Result Area (KRA) 1: Advocating for enhanced Public Resource Management (PRM) and fiscal accountability systems in Zimbabwe.

2.1 Increasing the Involvement of citizens in budget processes.

ZIMCODD observed a remarkable participation rate from the public in the local budget consultation. The effects can be attributed to organizational initiatives like budget literacy, budget monitoring seminars budget advocacy and other initiatives by other development players. A crucial indicator of the public's eagerness to participate in development processes is the fact that in certain cases, the citizens even demanded to be included in the budget processes conducted by local councils. A total of 1100 people attended local authority budget consultations in Gokwe, Gweru, Goromonzi and Kwekwe, which are the main districts in which ZIMCODD intensified the influencing activities. The organization recognizes this milestone even though there is still room to influence greater participation in development processes like these. It notes that many citizens already believe their input will not be included in the final budget and that their participation is merely a way to help the local authorities tick the box indicating that the budget formulation process was inclusive. By resisting that mindset, this accomplishment becomes more apparent and serves as a platform for further accomplishments.

<http://cvz.org.zw/2023/10/25/gokwe-villagers-prioritize-key-issues-in-community-meetings-on-local-budget-consultation/>

Residents demanded to be involved in a prebudget meeting for them to make an input into the budget prioritization process before the budget consultations. The request was granted by the City of Gweru and for the first time in Gweru residents attended the budget preparatory meeting that was held on 15 September 2023

The government's decision to make the national budget process virtual this year significantly hampered public participation in the processes. The overall data from ZIMCODD's process evaluations indicates that while citizens were eager to take part, the methodology of the budget consultations presented a major obstacle.

Improved quality submissions from citizens who attended budget literacy trainings was another way that the pre-budget process paid off. The public demanded accountability and transparency regarding annual council budget expenditures, raising concerns about how much was collected in taxes and rates during the previous budget cycle and what was done with it.

<http://cvz.org.zw/2023/10/25/gokwe-villagers-prioritize-key-issues-in-community-meetings-on-local-budget-consultation/> This is an indication of meaningful participation and not only getting involved to improve the image of the decision-makers, that they are being inclusive.

The organization's process assessments showed that there has been a significant change in the definition of participation, where presence is equivalent to participation. This was the missing piece—while citizens occasionally participate in PFM procedures, there was inadequate capacity for them to carry out their mandate completely.

Budget Advocacy

Several of ZIMCODD's 2023 advocacy nuggets were incorporated into the 2024 National budget. Although there are many holes and loopholes in the national 2024 budget, ZIMCODD did observe some positive changes in certain areas, such as an improvement noted in Human Capital development in which a total of ZWL 8 trillion, which is 13.7% of the total budget was set aside for Primary and Secondary education with ZWL 231.8 billion earmarked for learning material. In addition, the primary and secondary education budget vote includes sanitary wear for girls. Health was allocated ZWL 6.3 trillion which is 10.8% of the total budget. Higher and Tertiary education was allocated ZWL 2.4 trillion which is 4.1% of the total budget. Social protection programs such as Basic Education Module Assistance (BEAM), Harmonized cash transfers, food deficit programs, and support for the elderly and people with disabilities received 4.1% (2.4 trillion), a significant increase from the 1.2 that was allocated in the 2023 budget. Though it can still be argued that these changes are not sufficient in addressing Human Capital development, such changes are worth noticing.

Additionally, ZIMCODD celebrated that its wealth tax advocacy through the national budget became a reality in the 2024 national budget. Through mass mobilisation events, calls to action and [direct petitions](#) to the government, voices were amplified and a channel of communication was opened up for those at the front line to push those in power. The government listened and responded by enacting several measures to increase taxes on the richest in Zimbabwe. This has been ZIMCODD's clarion call for tax justice through the redistribution of wealth from the hands of a few to benefit the majority who are bearing the brunt of regressive taxation, inequalities, and abject poverty. The redistribution of wealth will enable the poor and vulnerable groups to access essential public services such as health and education. ZIMCODD Petitioned parliament on 10 February 2022 calling for the government to reform the regressive taxation system through introducing wealth tax among other measures.

2.2 Broadening the voice on PFM through capacitating CSOs on budget analysis and advocacy.

Several CSOs including Poverty Reduction Forum Trust, Simukai Residents Trust, Green Governance Trust, Signs of Hope, Sprout Women Empowerment, Women for Economic and Social Empowerment etc., have been educating the public by discharging analyses on budget processes following their involvement in budget analysis and advocacy workshops by ZIMCODD. Intending to foster transparency, accountability, and social justice through gender-responsive budgeting in budget allocation and spending, the workshops gave CSOs the information and abilities they needed to engage in budget advocacy successfully. The trainings provided participants with a comprehensive understanding of budget advocacy, its significance, and its role in influencing government policies and resource allocation.

Post-Budget analysis and engagements

Following the presentation of the 2024 National Budget by the finance minister on 30 November 2023, ZIMCODD analyzed the proposed budget from a socioeconomic perspective. The analysis was motivated by the need to assess the government's responsiveness to people's aspirations including women's needs. After conducting a budget analysis and engaging with stakeholders, ZIMCODD is convinced that it also played a role in influencing certain modifications to the approved budget from the initial budget pronouncement such as reviewing toll fees downward and the reduction of the sugar tax by 90%, from 2 cents per gram to 0.2 cents per gram.

2.3 Strengthening capacity for oversight institutions to track public resources.

Positive changes have been noted following ZIMCODD capacity strengthening efforts of oversight institutions on public expenditure tracking and budget monitoring towards improving resource allocative efficiency and outcomes of public service delivery. The changes include the execution of Action Plans that were developed from these capacity-building engagements. ZIMCODD is still committed to monitoring and aiding with public finance management technical capacity until these Action Plans are fully implemented.



The Parliament Budget Office, Civil Society members and Parliament Health Portfolio Committee members listen to deliberations.

2.4 Increased demand for accountability in public service delivery

#TakeAction Campaign

To simplify activism and bringing it to everyone's convenience, ZIMCOPP successfully launched the #TakeAction campaign as a build-on of the #Howfar campaign. The campaign tracked governance questions from the public domain. To access quick information a citizen mobile application was developed as a conduit for information sharing, experience sharing, and sharing of critical information required for advocacy. Since its launch, the application has been downloaded by 6,800 users and over 300 reports have been made. Some duty bearers have begun to respond to some of the reports. The App is a utility platform with multipurpose functions. The most important of which is to post PFM issues such as abuse of public resources by duty bearers, news articles, announcements for Jobs and reporting of corruption. Bulawayo City Council have responded to queries on Service Delivery issues respectively regarding uncollected market stall garbage. A few days after receiving the report, they began to clean up and maintain the stalls. A Member of Parliament for Nkulumane MP Phulu responded to a query reported on the application regarding Constituency Development Funds and provided receipts for accountability purposes.

2.5 Impact of EMPOWERED Community structures on Public Resource Management Strengthening capacity for oversight institutions to track public resources.

Masvingo SEJA and RAs initiatives

In Zimuto Masvingo, TellZim held community discussions on PFM issues from September 2022 to March 2023. TellZim is an organization run by a certified SEJA and it is one of ZIMCOPP's youth-led partner CBOs. The initiative was to interface duty bearers with citizens from Zimuto to come up with basic possible solutions to common challenges bedeviling the community. Participants highlighted that the Zimuto area faces an acute shortage of clean water. It was decided that the best course of action would be for the Council to drill boreholes in the area using some of its devolution funds. It emerged that councillors hardly engage villagers once they are elected to office, and the local councillor was cited as one such leader who hardly consults villagers. Chief Zimuto pledged to call elected leaders to his traditional court from time to time so that they could engage with the villagers on various developmental issues. See link <https://tellzim.com/zimuto-community-urges-council-to-prioritize-feedback-on-projects/>

Goromonzi participants influence better health services.

In the Goromonzi community, the health services at Chinyika Clinic have improved after intervention from the community led by ZIMCOPP SEJAs; Darlington Bakasa, Catherine Mutizwa and Mary Nyadome. Chinyika Clinic had no blood pressure machine, yet people were paying \$US 1 per annum towards the clinic's upkeep while being shortchanged at the end of the day. Residents pushed the Ward Development Committee and the Councillor which saw Councillor Majuru donating the clinic's only blood pressure machine in May 2023. As a result, the community is now benefiting by accessing free blood pressure check-ups.



*The donated blood pressure machine being used at Chinyika Clinic in Goromonzi
(Photo Credit: Catherine Mutizwa, ZIMCODD SEJA-Goromonzi)*

Ruwa residents hold duty bearers accountable.

Following the capacity-building sessions of Ruwa Residents and Rate Payers Association by ZIMCODD during the period under review, the residents managed to self-organize and wrote a letter to their Member of Parliament for Goromonzi South Constituency requesting an update on the Constituency Development Funds. As a result of this initiative, on the 18th of January 2023, Honorable Reuben Chikudo, MP for Goromonzi South responded to the request by availing to the residents of a Goromonzi South Constituency Development Fund Project update report.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yc5BXHJSVafe0C_XPR0u9Pp_ngBJHXKXjJXt9L61ReU/edit

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1q_LC4pDB_Nliux6UpY8r4kKffN2zxx86Jmz_L1QVXIQ/edit

Gweru Citizens holds duty bearers accountable.

Gweru City Council in the past presented a technical summarized budget version which made it hard for ordinary citizens to understand. Through ZIMCODD Public Finance Management Indabas, ZIMCODD SEJAs saw the need for the local authority to compile a simplified version of the budget, a citizen-friendly document. A citizen WhatsApp group was created and SEJAs approached the Gweru City Finance Director in November 2022 to compile a Citizen's Budget for the 2023 budget consultation. The request was positively received by Gweru City Deputy Finance Director Owen Masimba and a Citizen's budget was compiled for the year 2023. The simplified Citizen's budget was one of the main documents used by Gweru City during budget consultations.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kdsbslQeAfySbvC00xUHTviihRCdSB7B7-CnATLQHw/edit>

KRA 2 Advocating for transparency in natural resources governance, especially in extractive industries.

2.6 Community engagements on effective resource management

To promote community involvement, ZIMCODD launched a series of initiatives during the review period. These interventions aimed to influence citizen-agency concerning resource management matters. The initiatives are proving to be relevant and effective in influencing effective governance at the local level. Among the initiatives that were put into effect are:

- **Ward-level community AMI**

WAMI offers a platform for community members to look into and raise concerns about the use of natural resources like gold. It opens a platform for community members to voice their opinions and shape policies and procedures that support the sustainable and fair use of regional resources. The initiative objectives are to equip communities with skills and information to improve monitoring and knowledge management on local mining activities for evidence-based advocacy, to raise awareness of the importance of legislative and policy reforms to the mining sector's contribution to economic recovery and development, and to co-create recommendations and solutions to challenges and gaps in translating mineral wealth and potential to economic recovery and development.

- **Quarterly Constituency Indabas**

Constituency Indabas have proved to be real-time responses to policy problems by duty bearers. On the other hand, citizens and community members have also found convenience in terms of demanding accountability from duty-bearers. The Indabas helps to build citizen agency around the demand for transparency and accountability in public finance management and to consolidate and amplify citizen voices to demand transparency and accountability from policymakers and other duty-bearers at the local level. Through this platform, citizen engaged in development issues with their solution holders and highlighted key policy issues which needed attention at the local level. For example, the Deputy Mayor reported that Bulawayo City Council utilized funds from the council coffers to complete some of its devolution projects. Participants bemoaned the lack of a clear framework for the allocation of devolution funds and that devolution is incomplete with intergovernmental transfers only.

- **Quarterly PFM Reform Indaba**

The Indabas sought to amplify citizen voices in the PFM discourse and raise participation and economic consciousness among the citizenry. The Indabas ignite debates around the current state of the mining sector in Zimbabwe and whether the amendment bill is in any way responding to challenges bedeviling the sector.

ZIMCODD, operating under the auspices of the Fight Inequality Alliance Zimbabwe, persisted in organizing against the effects of unsustainable mining and mismanagement of natural resources through these community engagement programs. Community members testified about the environmental damage and displacement caused by mining in their local areas during a series of gatherings that were organized. There was overwhelming consensus among the mining communities that the extractive industry in Zimbabwe is a key driver of inequality, as mining companies take their natural resources and damage the local environment without sharing the benefits with the local communities. The communities emphasised the need for the redistribution of resources across the populations so that everyone benefits. Due to intense community pressure for the sustainable use of resources, a Chinese-owned company that was mining quarry in Mutare, Dangamvura was forced to close. Lessons from this case are being disseminated to influence that the strategies' bandwidth be replicated in the promotion of sustainable resource management.

2.7 Increased participation of Youths in governance

The National Youth Symposium

Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD), Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) hosted its 12th edition of the annual youth symposium which ran under the theme "A just energy transition, unlocking youth participation and potential". The panel discussions consisted of a mixture of youth researchers, representatives from mining communities, the Church and key ministries such as that of the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation. This was successful in ensuring that the sessions were informative, palatable and relevant to all youths coming from different community backgrounds.

National Tertiary Institutions Debates on Extractives and Debt Management 2023, The Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development (ZIMCODD) successfully convened the National Tertiary Institutions Debates from 1- 5 August 2023. The debates were held under the theme, "Towards a just energy transition in view of the discovery of lithium and other minerals". The debates took a deliberate approach to discuss taxation as the main pivot that anchors Domestic Resource mobilisation (DRM) in Africa and beyond. The winners of the debates were as follows:

- Mutare Polytechnic A and Mutare Teachers College
- University of Zimbabwe
- National University of Science and Technology

https://zimcodd.org/sdm_downloads/the-weekend-reader-4-august-2023/



The best speakers & winning team post for a picture after the Harare Tertiary Institutions Debates

KRA 3: Advocating for policies, laws and practices that facilitate the optimization of finance for pro-people development.

2.8 Public Interest Litigation

ZIMCODD filed a matter of public interest during the period under review, bringing the Zimbabwean Attorney General, Parliament, and Minister of Finance to court to compel them to create a debt contraction law that acknowledges the need to obtain parliamentary approval prior to issuing guarantees and contracting public debt.

As a result, the High Court ruled in favour of ZIMCODD and ordered the Minister of Finance and Parliament to:

- Assent to the National Assembly by way of motion or in the Finance Bill the limit for public borrowing envisaged in section 11 (2) of the Public Debt Management Act [Chapter 27:21],
 - Gazette a bill amending the Public Debt Management Act [Chapter 22:21] which Bill will outline.
- a) The role of Parliament in approving loans and guarantees before contraction of same.
- b) The limits on debt and obligations are guaranteed by the state pursuant to section 300 (1) c of the constitution. See [here](#).

Following the successful PIL on public debt in Zimbabwe, ZIMCODD played a crucial role in providing technical support, sharing lessons and challenges among other CSO partners. The climax in 2023 was the Public Interest Litigation Retreat in Nairobi that brought together stakeholders for (1) Validating the draft PIL toolkit (2) Reviewing (new) existing cases (3) Capacity building for potential stakeholders of new PIL cases (4) Strategizing on potential areas of PIL collectively.

KRA4 Advocating for sustainable debt management and debt justice in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa

During the period under review, ZIMCODD continued advocating for sustainable debt management and debt justice in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa by engaging in platforms such as the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) in which ZIMCODD under the banner of SAPSN was part of the 3rd Regional Dialogue for Non-State Actors (NSA) on the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030 in Johannesburg from the 12th to the 13th of September 2023. The regional dialogue was held under the theme: Accelerating SADC's Development through the Socially Accountable Generation and Use of Public Resources.

Further, SAPSN convened the SADC People's Summit. It was held in Luanda, Angola under the theme: Justice, Meaningful Participation and Inclusion. This theme focused on the common goals of the SADC people for justice, especially regarding debt bondage, unfair taxes, growing inequality, people-beneficial natural resource governance, and the shift to a future secure from climate change. Additionally, it emphasized the populace's worries about the region's increasing authoritarianism, repression, and loss of civic space.

Other forums in which the organization participated under this Key Result Area includes.

- Alternative Mining Indaba in Cape Town
- African Conference on Debt and Development which was held in Senegal.
- SADC People's Economic Forum which was held in Zambia.

KRA 5: Advocating for the flow of new climate financing to support mitigation and adaptation actions.

2.9 Building Resilience & feminist climate change

ZIMCODD has been conducting some initiatives aimed at capacitating women and youth in Matobo, Binga, Gokwe and Chipinge on adaptations and mitigation measures. It has been found through organization process assessments that the trained members were able to effectively transfer their newly acquired knowledge and skills to other members. After engaging in climate resilience and adaptation activities, women and youth with greater capacity have shifted their focus to cultivating drought-tolerant crops to increase food security. Here is a picture of a Chipinge ZIMCODD member who has demonstrated success in reducing the negative effects of climate change:



Farmer Dambudzo Chivange (widow) is now able to send her children to school by selling traditional small grains (Photo Credit: Mary Kafesu, ZIMCODD SEJA-Chipinge)

Influencing governance through sustainable livelihoods

ZIMCODD in facilitating governance issues, realized that there is much effectiveness in ensuring citizen agency by contributing to their livelihood. Accordingly, ZIMCODD initiated the Ideas Festival initiative, which facilitated knowledge exchange and capacity building among participants in pertinent fields like resource management, farming practices, and climate adaptation. The Ideas Festival uses a methodology in which competent participants from other districts facilitate discussions in which they share best practices and real-world insights. These sessions have produced several results.

Claudette Ndlovu, a SEJA from Matobo believes the Ideas Festival was transformational as it unlocked untapped potential in her life. After the festival, she held trainings at two local schools on climate change where she led learners into planting trees at the school gardens as a climate change mitigation measure. So far, eighty-four trees have been planted both at local schools and at a community garden. She also started a poultry farming project in October 2023 to generate income and so far, she has done two batches of fifty chicks. She plans to scale up this project into a fully-fledged business.

Another young woman from Matobo, Sakhile Ndebele, also began a poultry project and hired a fellow youth from her community to work alongside her on it. Sakhile intends to expand the project to hire more youth without access to economic opportunities.

Mitigating climate change impact through income-generating activities

After taking part in ZIMCODD's climate adaptation interventions, women and youth from Gokwe South started a project to mitigate climate change impact by eradicating poverty through poultry. To begin the project, Gokwe participants decided to purchase broiler chicks. During their duty bearer engagement activities, they involved their Member of Parliament in supplying chick feed to twenty groups in preparation for their roll-out. The Member of Parliament expressed her support for the initiative and pledged to help young people and women fight climate change. This program helped 726 groups of 10 individuals (youth, PWDS, and women). The groups also empowered others by donating 50 chicks per group to 312 groups of 10.

Gokwe women in putting the capacity initiatives in practice, they organised themselves and secured 5 tonnes of sorghum (*red mapfunde*) and 3 tonnes of millet (*mhunga*) to kick start value addition projects among their disadvantaged communities so that they become self-sustainable. They have also managed to build chicken coups that are housing over 3 400 birds in their various constituencies and they owe their success to ZIMCODD programming. Additionally, they now have over 1 480 goats that are being reared under rural industrialisation for Gokwe's out of school youths. It is also encouraging to note that Gokwe residents also pushed for the drilling of 4 boreholes in Sengwa, 2 in Zhamba, 1 in Defe and 1 in Mateta Ward 5 to address the water issue, which is also critical in livelihood projects.

Value addition for economic development

ZIMCODD also provided participants with training on how to enhance the value of their products to optimize the potential of their projects. As a result, their revenue has increased because they are no longer focusing on raw products only. Some of the value-addition projects that the target communities are now engaging in include peanut butter production and packaging in Gokwe, packaging of madora or macimbi in Matobo, drying and packaging of mangoes in Gokwe using solar driers, production and packaging of mealie-meal from rapoko, millet and sorghum in Gokwe and Checheche. They are also developing high-quality animal feed pellets, leveraging the nutritional content of sorghum and millet for livestock and poultry.

Women and youth empowerment hubs formed in Gokwe South including Rujeko hub (18 members), Madenha hub (16members), and Kushinga hub (36 members) have managed to diversify livelihood options including running poultry projects and small grain farming responding to climate change. The small grains are used to supplement chicken feeds and bolster food security at the household level. Hub members in Gokwe are spreading the message of climate change far and wide through engaging schools, political and traditional leaders, church gatherings and mostly the nhimbe's. Gokwe residents are now establishing and intensifying climate-responsive projects like poultry and other small livestock. Banking clubs have also been established as a way of saving money. A good example is the flourishing Tinosvika Gokwe Money Savers in Ward 18 accommodating both the youth and women.

[ZIMCODD ideas Festival begins to bear fruits in Gokwe – Digital Agency \(hericommedia.com\)](https://www.hericommedia.com)

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ntKmJ05JohiyLJepq-AwgRQzzP5e53iY?usp=drive_link

3. Cross-cutting themes

Movement Building

As a people's movement, ZIMCODD continues to build a critical mass in demanding transparency and accountability in the use of public resources and ensuring that communities participate in economic governance processes. The organization used community-driven initiatives to organise and influence communities to strengthen the capacity of young women and other marginalised groups to demand social and economic justice. As stated in the OP2023 the Movement and Coalition-building and Solidarity, are essential for the achievement of social justice. One of ZIMCODD's greatest achievements in 2023, was the establishment of the fourth region which will drive the organisation's operations in the Midlands and Masvingo province.

<https://tellzim.com/zimcodd-establishes-new-central-region-committee/>

Evidence gathering

One of the most important strategies for enforcing the movement is research, according to the ZIMCODD Operation Plan (OP) for 2023. The organization produced several knowledge products in 2023 that span all focus areas. There is a general indication of greater demand for information on social and economic issues, primarily because these knowledge products have been referenced in several significant papers, journals, and other publications. It is also important to note that these products have been used internally to influence programming. The following are some of the knowledge products developed and they can also be accessed on this website <https://zimcodd.org/research/>

Table 1: Research Products

Product	Narrative
2023 Open Budget Survey (OBS)	<p>The survey focused on national and local government budgeting systems and processes. The survey was conducted in ten provinces, with one local authority selected per province. The objectives of the 2023 OBS were to gather opinions and perceptions regarding national and local government budgeting, generate knowledge for promoting fiscal transparency and accountability, promote needs-based budget processes that are inclusive and people-centred, and contribute towards gender-responsive budgeting through informed research.</p>
Model Social Spending Framework for Zimbabwe	<p>ZIMCodd developed a model social spending framework for Zimbabwe in the context of poverty alleviation, inequality reduction, tax justice, resource availability, allocation and utilization, and climate action to influence budget reforms. This model can help address the challenges facing social protection spending in Zimbabwe and contribute to reducing extreme poverty in all its forms and dimensions, narrowing inequalities, and improving access to essential social services.</p>
Policy Brief on the Percentage Share of Social Spending in Government Expenditure	<p>The policy brief analyzed the trends in social spending in government expenditure from 2019 to 2023, focusing on the non-contributory government social protection schemes. Specific objectives of the Policy Brief were to critically analyze social expenditures and provide an overview of how social spending has evolved in the past five (5) years, track progress, and analyze the extent to which social spending allocations in Zimbabwe are gravitating towards poverty reduction, reduction of inequalities, and climate action, and draw critical lessons and gaps from Zimbabwe’s social spending relative to other countries in the SADC in the same period and proffer recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of fiscal policies.</p> <p>https://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Policy-Brief-on-the-Percentage-Share-of-Social-Spending-in-Government-Expenditure-1.pdf</p>

Table 1: Research Products

Product	Narrative
Citizen Oversight and Budget Expenditure Tracking Survey in Local Authorities	<p>The survey examined how Local Authorities (LAs) use their resources concerning public health and education. The survey also gauged the ratepayers' knowledge and understanding of how their funds are supposed to be used. Thus, in the end, the developed survey report will be used to raise citizen agency.</p> <p>https://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/ZIMCodd-Budget-Monitoring-Framework-1.pdf</p>
Climate Change Mitigation and Resilience in Zimbabwe	<p>This paper examined climate change, resilience, and mitigation in Zimbabwe to determine whether the government's programs and projects to ensure optimum climate mitigation and resilience are effective.</p>
Position Paper on the Devolution Framework for Public Finance Management (PFM)	<p>The overall thrust of the devolution framework for PFM was to achieve the following, among other key objectives: Promoting fiscal sustainability, effective resource mobilization and allocation in sub-national governments; Enhancing sub-national government performance, value for money and strategic financial planning and management; Promoting sustainable governance through strengthening systems for transparency and accountability, responsiveness, equity and inclusivity as hallmarks for shared growth and development, and Strengthen fiduciary risk management through adequate controls, compliance and oversight.</p> <p>https://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/An-Analysis-of-the-2023-OAG-Report-On-Value-for-money-Audit-of-Devolution-Funded-Projects-1.pdf</p>
Shrinking Civic Space Trends, Impacts and Coping Mechanisms for Civic Society Organizations in Southern Africa.	<p>The following specific objectives underpinned the analysis: To critically analyze and document the shrinking civic space trends, impacts, and CSO resilience mechanisms in selected countries in Southern Africa; To investigate the extent to which the changing civic space in selected countries has impacted development outcomes for the region; To proffer recommendations on how to reverse the shrinking civic space and defend civic space in SADC countries.</p>

Table 1: Research Products

Product	Narrative
Analysis of 2022 Debt Bulletin	<p>The 2022 Debt Bulletin showed that Zimbabwe is trapped in debt distress as it fails to service its debts and continues to accumulate arrears and penalties. Therefore, the 2022 Debt Bulletin analysis sought to identify the critical developmental impacts of unsustainable debt.</p> <p>https://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2022-Annual-Public-Debt-Bulletin-Analysis.pdf</p>
Analysis of the 2023 Mid-term Budget Statement	<p>ZIMCodd analyzed the 2023 Mid-term Budget Review to take stock of budget and economic performance during the year's first half. The evaluation helps the government realign resources to specific projects and objectives, thereby ensuring the attainability of intended goals.</p> <p>https://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2023-Mid-Term-Budget-Statement-Analysis.pdf</p>
Analysis of 2024 Budget Strategy Paper (BSP)	<p>On the 28th of July 2023, the Treasury presented its 2024 BSP. The BSP set out the government's expenditure priorities for each forthcoming fiscal year. As such, guided by the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1), ZIMCodd's analysis of the 2023 BSP examined the 2024 expenditure areas and the effectiveness of proposed revenue mobilization strategies.</p> <p>https://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Analysis-of-The-2024-Budget-Strategy-Paper-1.pdf</p>
Analysis of the 2024 National Budget Statement (NBS)	<p>ZIMCodd unpacked the 2024 NBS to inform the citizens and duty-bearers of the social and economic justice implications of the Treasury's spending and revenue mobilization proposals for 2024 by determining if the resources have been allocated judiciously.</p> <p>https://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/The-Weekend-Reader-1-December-2023.pdf</p>
Analysis of the 2023 Monetary Policy Statement (MPS)	<p>The primary objectives of MPS are to manage inflation or unemployment and maintain currency exchange rates and financial market stability. ZIMCodd's analysis of the 2023 MPS sought to evaluate the sustainability of the proposed monetary measures in stabilizing the exchange rate and price level.</p> <p>https://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Analysis-of-the-2023-Mid-term-Monetary-Policy-Statement.pdf</p>

Table 1: Research Products

Product	Narrative
<p>Analysis of OAG Reports for the year ending December 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Authorities Use of Devolution Funds 	<p>OAG assists public entities, constitutional entities, and local authorities to promote good governance anchored on public accountability, transparency, integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness in all matters and decisions involving public funds. ZIMCODD analyzed the 2023 OAG reports to flag irregularities as well as provide insights on the implications of the same on public resource mismanagement, the realization of social and economic justice, and overall sound public finance management in Zimbabwe.</p> <p>https://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/An-Analysis-of-the-2023-OAG-Report-On-Value-for-money-Audit-of-Devolution-Funded-Projects-1.pdf</p>
<p>Weekly Economic Reviews</p>	<p>This research product tracks, analyzes, and comments on all key economic developments in each respective week. The main aim is to keep citizens informed on crucial economic developments that will help them make sound economic and financial decisions.</p> <p>https://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/The-Weekly-Economic-Review-10-October-2023.pdf</p>
<p>Monthly Economic Reviews</p>	<p>This research product tracks, analyzes, and comments on the monthly performance of key economic indicators like inflation, exchange rate, money supply, and external trade. It also includes sectoral reviews such as agriculture, mining, and energy sectors. The main aim is to inform and increase citizens' economic literacy and engage policymakers on an evidence-based approach.</p> <p>https://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Zimcodd-year-end-economic-commentary_compressed.pdf</p>
<p>Monthly Public Resource Management (PRM) Situational Reports</p>	<p>The PRM SitRep evaluates how well the central and local governments use their resources to provide the highest quality services. It covers trade justice, sustainable livelihoods, fiscal accountability, responsibility, public debt, public service delivery, climate change, and domestic resource mobilization. At the center of the PRM SitRep is the need to build citizen agency in public resource monitoring and promote participation in economic governance from local to the central government.</p> <p>https://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/SITREP-November-December-2023.pdf</p>

Table 1: Research Products

Product	Narrative
Monthly Policy Digests	This monthly research product analyzes the efficacy of public policies and simplifies technical policy documents to make them palatable for ordinary citizens. Its recommendations are also used for policy lobbying and advocacy. https://zimcodd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/July-2023-Policy-Digest-on-Citizen-Vulnerability.pdf

**Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
ZIMCODD Strategic Plan (2023-2030)**

Several achievements have been registered regarding Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning. This year saw the roll-out of the Strategic Plan (2023–2030), a vital planning instrument that provides perspective to ZIMCODD's programming. The goal of the SP is to alter the existing power dynamics to achieve development that is both environmentally sustainable and pro-people. The intent is to give voice and support to marginalized people and groups so they can demand responsible management of the country's resources. Through coalition-facilitated platforms, ZIMCODD plans to work in solidarity, as a social movement, to influence government and private sector practices. Additionally, the plan suggests that ZIMCODD should connect to regional and global solidarity and campaign networks to engage with powerful structures that drive the agenda of a few elites and corporations. Some of the approaches ZIMCODD will be using are:

- Movement and Coalition-building and Solidarity, understanding people's power for the achievement of social justice.
- Civic participation, recognizing marginalized people and communities as the primary change agency.
- Knowledge, evidence-based research, and advocacy, understanding that it is through community-driven evidence and credible research that ZIMCODD can undertake effective advocacy.
- Rights-based, understanding that communities and individuals understand and are empowered to hold duty bearers to account.
- Feminist values, principles and analysis, ZIMCODD believe in an inclusive agenda advocating for a gender-just society.
- Information dissemination, recognising that through accessible information and optimization of digital spaces, ZIMCODD can amplify the voices of marginalized people and communities.

Operational Plan 2023

According to the internal annual review for 2023, the OP was executed without a hitch, and performance in terms of hitting the goal was outstanding. Most of the scheduled activities were carried out exactly as intended, except for a few that were delayed in response to the pre-and post-election atmosphere. Furthermore, the OP's implementation made sure ZIMCODD invested more in domestic and international partnerships and opportunities. The knowledge gained from carrying out this plan will be applied to the 2024 plan to ensure efficient planning and execution.

Youth participation

In 2023, youth involvement has been a crucial component of ZIMCODD programming. It is crucial to note that youth participation in development processes is a prerequisite for any change in Zimbabwe's governance issues. Youth made up sixty-five percent (65%) of ZIMCODD's direct reach in 2023. The establishment of the Strengthening Institutions and Youth Agency in Zimbabwe's Accountability Narrative (SIYA), a five-year project with a target of 20,000 youths, is another commitment that will see ZIMCODD push much further in terms of involving more Youth in governance issues.

Gender empowerment

Gender empowerment was given a lot of weight in the 2023 programming across all thematic areas. The theory of change behind Operation Plan (2023) was centered on feminist values, analysis, and principles, with an emphasis on an inclusive agenda that promotes a gender-just society. This year, women made up 60% of the participants that ZIMCODD reached out to, and a plethora of human-interest stories and documentaries featuring them demonstrate the importance of the projects they participated in. The sustainable livelihoods sector saw the highest participation rate of women, who were largely given economic leverage through interventions such as value-adding to farm products, selling and tree planting, and poultry. It is important to remember that most of these participants were unemployed, but they were still able to support themselves by participating in these initiatives. In addition to their involvement in livelihood programming, women's involvement in governance-related issues has significantly changed. This is demonstrated by the emergence of numerous women's movements that promote improved service delivery, women holding policymakers responsible for matters concerning resource management and service delivery, and women's participation in budget consultation. The way that these programs are designed is contributing to a paradigm shift in how communities view women.

4. Recommendations, Lessons and Challenges

Lessons

- Student structures at university and college campuses are critical in governance programming because they form an important base for the mobilization of youth towards economic justice.
- Building a partner ecosystem that leverages individual and collective strength, expertise, networks, and social capital is critical to achieving set objectives and avoiding duplication of efforts.
- Constitutional awareness is key to enabling citizens to actively and meaningfully participate in development processes from an informed perspective.
- Capacitation programs and leadership training for women and youths are necessary for enhancing skills, knowledge, and confidence to engage in decision-making processes.
- Local and traditional institutions need periodic capacity-building and or refresher sessions as they are key stakeholders in influencing policy and advocacy.
- Programming targeted at parliamentarians should be avoided during the pre-election period because the majority of them will be preoccupied with political matters.
- There is a need for policy advocacy around economic inclusion to influence policy positions to benefit participants and citizens at large.
- Deliberate efforts to follow up on action plans are crucial in guaranteeing the attainment of positive results.

Challenges

- Inconsistencies in the fiscal policy environment made budgeting difficult.
- The extended election atmosphere has significantly hampered the way that some of ZIMCODD's initiatives are carried out.
- The PVO bill remained a looming threat to the existence of CSOs and ZIMCODD was not an exception.
- The Patriotic Act has now become a challenge to ZIMCODD programming since utterances that are deemed anti-government will render some participants in trouble.

Recommendations

- There is a need to intensify capacity building of Residents' Associations for productive participation in public policy, this should include areas such as budget and financial literacy to improve the quality of public input during budget consultation and budget performance reviews.
- Leverage Technology for reporting corruption cases: Introduce E-Governance to streamline and enhance the reporting process, providing citizens with accessible and efficient online platforms. This technological advancement transcends geographical barriers, making reporting more convenient and extending the reach of anti-corruption mechanisms.
- Empower traditional structures, train traditional leaders and gatekeepers on socio-economic governance.

- Develop an Accountability Toolkit, a comprehensive guide that equips citizens with practical resources and step-by-step instructions on utilizing accountability tools effectively.
- There is a need for much advocacy aimed at ensuring that Local authorities improve the generation and dissemination of public policy performance reports and financial statements for transparency and accountability.
- Develop tracking mechanisms to monitor the link between public policy input and the actual policy outcomes, for example, budget allocations and development outcomes and output.

Conclusion

ZIMCODD takes pride in its ability to stay on course to ensure that citizens are equipped to defend their socioeconomic rights while influencing policy discourse, through ongoing engagements and dialogues with policymakers for the realization of socioeconomic justice in Zimbabwe, despite the turbulent social, economic, and political environment. Furthermore, the accomplishments made in the first year of the Strategic Plan 2023–2030's implementation validate the assurance that the Plans' objectives and goals can be met.

AHA MOMENTS!!!!!!!!!!!!

SEJAs in Bulawayo lobby for reduced city parking fees

Through continued lobbying of the Bulawayo Business Development, a group led by a Social and Economic Justice Ambassador Idries Chaibhu, the Tendency Three Investments, the company responsible for the management of the parking system in Bulawayo, slashed parking fees for a day by half. The fees were reduced from US\$8 to US\$4 per day. [WATCH: TTI slashes parking fees | The Chronicle](#)

Participation in local government budget processes yields fruits for the Gimboki community.

The Mutare City Council considered requests to build a school in Gimboki courtesy of the platforms established by ZIMCODD for right holders and duty bearers to discuss critical issues or challenges being faced by residents. The move was also achieved by encouraging residents of Gimboki community to participate in local government budget processes, which promoted openness and accountability in the use of public funds and made way for the building of a primary school. Citizens witnessed the building of Gimboki Primary School in 2021, and it was completed this year.

Empowered Social and Economic Justice Ambassadors took the government to court.

ZIMCODD through its Social and Economic Justice Ambassadors took the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Parliament of Zimbabwe, and the Attorney General of Zimbabwe to the High Court to compel parliament to oversee the issue of debt contraction and enforce limitations on the borrowing amount. The High Court ordered that, within 12 months from the date of the order the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning and Development shall propose for national assent to the National Assembly by way of motion or in the Finance Bill the limit for public borrowing envisaged in section 11 (2) of the Public Debt Management Act [Chapter 27:21]. Refer to the link, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ljFgGvy7p-MmxYG-IMff7aVv0RALVDDhQh9pEzmOSDY/edit>

Ideas Festival gives birth to a climate justice movement, Gokwe.

The Manyoni community, in Gokwe South, is one of the constituencies affected by climate change yet it relies much on agricultural activities. It was difficult for the community to mitigate and adapt to climate change due to a lack of information on the issue.

ZIMCODD intervened, gave trainings, and informed the community about mitigation, adaptation, and climate change techniques. Following the trainings, participants planted trees, cultivated crops resistant to drought, and invested in poultry as measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change. The movement did not stop there; in fact, it spread to other communities to the point where other district residents conducted some educational tree-planting field trips to replicate the practice. Additionally, schools like Manyoni Primary School received climate change and tree-planting training from some of the participants from ZIMCODD trainings.



Through collaborations and networks, the community is in dialogue with Mazoe Company on citrus fruit mass production.

<https://newsreportzim.com/zimcodd-trains-youth-and-women/>

<http://cvz.org.zw/2023/10/18/zimcodd-initiative-promotes-tree-farming-and-climate-change-awareness-in-gokwe/>