

REPORT A POLITICAL ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ZIMBABWE

2024

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Executive Summary

In Zimbabwe, the local governance sector operates amidst a dynamic political and economic landscape, where corruption poses a persistent challenge. Commissioned under the Strengthening Institutions and Youth Agency in Zimbabwe (SIYA) project, this Political Economy Analysis (PEA) seeks to untangle the intricacies shaping corruption patterns within local authorities. The analysis, essential for the Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust (SAPST) and its collaborators—ZIMCODD, YETT, and Transparency International Zimbabwe—aims to provide nuanced insights into power structures, patronage networks, electoral cycles, economic disparities, and socio-economic vulnerabilities.

The PEA's deployed a mixed methods approach, generating data from an extensive literature review, drawing on the works of thought leaders like Klitgaard, Rothstein, Patil, and Rose-Ackerman, key informant interviews and a survey. Thematic analysis and critical discourse analyse were key techniques used in analysing qualitative data while quantitative data was analysed using the descriptive statistics technique. The transparent methodology underscores a commitment to robust research and the integrity of findings.

The historical landscape of corruption in Zimbabwe, spanning from the 1988 Willowgate Scandal to contemporary issues, reveals a persistent entanglement with economic challenges. Notable cases, such as the Chitungwiza land scandal and the NSSA scandal, emphasize the imperative for sustained anti-corruption measures in local governance. The analysis of key stakeholders in Zimbabwe's local governance illuminates the crucial role of both internal and external actors. Policy makers and management officials such as Town Clerks/CEOs, chamber secretaries, and directors shape local authorities' operational landscape, while external stakeholders like civil society, media, and the private sector contribute diverse perspectives to the anti-corruption matrix. Recognizing these stakeholders' roles provides a comprehensive foundation for sustainable and effective initiatives in combating corruption and fostering positive policy change at the local level.

Examining the anti-corruption measures within Zimbabwe's local governance system highlights persistent challenges, including gaps in policy formulation, weak institutional structures, cultural tolerance of corruption, inadequate arbitration mechanisms, and inconsistent enforcement of financial and procurement policies. Addressing these gaps requires a comprehensive approach, combining policy reforms, institutional strengthening, and a cultural shift towards integrity. Local governments in Zimbabwe stand at a critical juncture with significant potential to enhance their anti-corruption capacities. Strategies such as Open Government Data, E-procurement,

Legal Interpretation of Contracts, and Capacity Building recommendations underscore the multifaceted nature of combating corruption. However, effective implementation requires collaboration, resource investment, and a steadfast commitment.

Assessing youth participation in Zimbabwe's local governance using Hart's Ladder of Participation reveals a stark reality. Despite positive rhetoric, youth engagement often remains at lower rungs, hindered by limited representation and tokenistic initiatives. Junior Councils face challenges in resource allocation and democratic processes, emphasizing the need for youth quotas at the local government level. Strategies, including democratic reforms, legal frameworks, youth quotas, and dedicated focal persons, are proposed to enhance meaningful youth involvement in local governance.

In a nutshell this comprehensive analysis unravels the complexities of corruption within Zimbabwe's local governance. The multifaceted dynamics, encompassing political, economic, and institutional factors, provide a strategic compass for informed decision-making. By recognising key stakeholders, addressing persistent challenges, and exploring anti-corruption measures, local governments in Zimbabwe can fortify their resilience against corrupt practices, fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and ethical governance. The imperative lies in concerted efforts, collaboration, and a steadfast commitment to implementation for comprehensive and sustained results.

1. Introduction

The local governance sector in Zimbabwe operates within a dynamic political and economic landscape, where corruption poses a persistent challenge. Understanding the intricate interplay of political, economic, and institutional factors is crucial for effective anti-corruption and policy advocacy programming at the sub-national level. This Political Economy Analysis (PEA) seeks to unravel the complexities shaping corruption patterns within local authorities. Focusing on power structures, patronage networks, electoral cycles, economic disparities, and socio-economic vulnerabilities. Commissioned under the Strengthening Institutions and Youth Agency in Zimbabwe (SIYA) project, this analysis becomes imperative for the Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust (SAPST) and its collaborators—ZIMCODD, YETT, and Transparency International Zimbabwe—to tailor anti-corruption interventions to the unique challenges of local governance. By exploring the multifaceted dynamics, the PEA serves as a strategic compass for informed decision-making in the pursuit of robust anti-corruption and policy advocacy initiatives at the grassroots level.

1.1. Political and Economic Dynamics Surrounding Corruption in the Local Governance Sector

The local governance sector in Zimbabwe is intricately entwined with both political and economic dynamics that profoundly influence the prevalence and patterns of corruption. Politically, power structures and patronage networks, mirroring those at the national level, create an environment ripe for corruption. Political elites, aligned with ruling parties, hold key positions, influencing appointments, resource allocation, and decision-making. The alignment of local authorities with specific political parties shapes priorities, resource distribution, and policy implementation, impacting transparency and accountability. Electoral cycles introduce complexities, pressuring engagement in corrupt practices for political support. State and elite capture phenomena, where powerful individuals manipulate decision-making, further exacerbate corruption risks.

Economically, resource distribution reflects wider disparities, creating fertile ground for corruption. Economic imbalances incentivise corrupt practices in resource allocation, favouring those with connections. The informalization of the economy amplifies corruption opportunities, particularly in the regulation of informal practices. Socio-economic vulnerabilities, such as high unemployment and poverty, contribute to corruption risks as individuals may view corruption as a means of economic survival. Public procurement processes are a critical lens through which economic dynamics

influence corruption, with economic actors wielding significant influence. Economic collapses exacerbate corruption as local authorities grapple with financial constraints. Understanding these political and economic dynamics is pivotal for designing effective anti-corruption strategies tailored to the unique challenges of local governance.

1.2 Background of the SIYA Project

Given the political and economic background of corruption in the local government sector it becomes important to locate the space that the SIYA project seeks to fill in this landscape. The SIYA Project, a collaborative effort led by the Southern African Parliamentary Support Trust (SAPST) alongside ZIMCODD, YETT, and Transparency International Zimbabwe, aims to implement "Strengthening Institutions and Youth Agency in Zimbabwe." Rooted in SAPST's expertise in Parliamentary Strengthening, the project transcends its traditional parliamentary focus to engage with local authorities. This strategic collaboration reflects SAPST's commitment to enhancing the local governance architecture comprehensively. SIYA recognizes the pivotal role of local authorities in its success, acknowledging them as the primary interface between citizens and governance structures. Strengthening their capacity for anti-corruption reform and policy implementation becomes crucial for fostering good governance and integrity at the grassroots level. SIYA's engagement with local authorities seeks to fortify the foundation of governance, understanding that sustainable change emanates from vibrant local institutions. The success of SIYA hinges on a nuanced understanding of the local governance landscape, with the Political Economy Analysis (PEA) serving as an indispensable tool to navigate the complexities of this vital partnership.

1.3 Purpose and Scope of the PEA:

The purpose of the Political Economy Analysis (PEA) within the SIYA project is to illuminate the intricate web of socio-economic, political, and institutional factors influencing the local government sector. The PEA aims to serve as a guiding compass for SAPST and its partners by offering nuanced insights into the dynamics shaping anti-corruption initiatives at the sub-national level. By dissecting the complex interplay of actors, policies, and contextual forces, the PEA seeks to inform targeted interventions, ensuring they are tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities inherent in local governance.

The scope of the PEA extends beyond a mere assessment; it encapsulates a comprehensive examination of stakeholder landscapes, governance matrices, youth participation dynamics, and the capacities of local authorities. In doing so, the PEA aspires to go beyond the surface, delving deep into the intricacies that define the local government sector and, by extension, the success of SIYA's anti-corruption objectives.

2. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach employed in conducting the Political Economy Analysis (PEA) on local governance, anti-corruption initiatives, and youth participation. A mixed methods approach was deployed. The foundation was laid through an extensive literature review, leveraging the works of thought leaders like Klitgaard, Rothstein, Patil, and Rose-Ackerman. Key informant interviews provided real-world insights, while surveys and questionnaires ensured a quantitative dimension. Thematic analysis and statistical scrutiny were applied for qualitative and quantitative data, respectively, offering a comprehensive understanding. Acknowledging limitations, this transparent methodology underscores the commitment to robust research and the integrity of findings.

2.1 Data Collection Methods

2.1.1 Literature Review

The foundation of this Political Economy Analysis (PEA) was established through a thorough literature review. A systematic examination of academic publications, policy documents, and relevant scholarly articles provided a theoretical framework for understanding local governance dynamics, youth participation, and anti-corruption initiatives. This method ensured a robust conceptual foundation, allowing the study to build upon existing knowledge and identify gaps in the current discourse. In the pursuit of a comprehensive understanding of local governance dynamics, anti-corruption strategies, and youth participation, we delved into the works of thought leaders such as:

- [Redacted] - Revered for his groundbreaking work elucidating corruption and innovative anti-corruption strategies.
- **B**[Redacted] - A luminary in the scholarly exploration of institutions, governance, and the intricate dance between power and integrity.
- [Redacted] [Redacted] - Recognized for her contributions to unravelling the complexities of youth participation in governance, a theme integral to our study.
- [Redacted] **A**[Redacted] - A preeminent scholar, her work on the economics of corruption and institutional design offered profound insights.

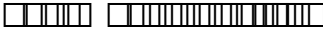
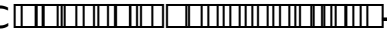
Pivotal texts including "Controlling Corruption" by Klitgaard and "Corruption: A Study in Political Economy" by Rose-Ackerman served as pillars upon which our theoretical framework rested.

2.1.2 Key Informant Interviews

Real-world insights and contextual nuances were extracted through a series of key informant interviews. Purposively selected informants, possessing a profound understanding of local governance, anti-corruption measures, and youth involvement, engaged in semi-structured interviews. A total of 25 KII were conducted. The selected respondents were 4 Mayors, 4 Town Clerks, 3 experts on local government policy systems and processes and anti-corruption drawn from the academia and public policy think tanks, 6 representatives of civil society organisations drawn Residents Associations and other development partners, 2 officials from the Procurement Authority of Zimbabwe, 2 officials from ZACC and 3 officials from the Head Office of the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works and a respondent from the Ministry of Finance and Investment Promotion. This approach facilitated in-depth conversations, enabling the extraction of qualitative data that extended beyond the surface, capturing the perspectives of various stakeholders involved in or affected by local governance dynamics.

2.1.3 Surveys and Questionnaires

Quantitative data were meticulously harvested from a stratified sample population, ensuring representation across the following critical sectors:

- 40  - The heartbeat of our communities, actively participating in local youth councils and community organizations.
- 30  - Advocates at the forefront of anti-corruption and transparency initiatives, providing critical insights from the civil society perspective.
- 30 representatives from young women movements
- 30 representatives from people living with disabilities

This diverse and purposive sample population allowed us to glean nuanced insights into attitudes and perceptions surrounding anti-corruption measures, open government data, e-procurement, and the legal interpretation of contracts.

2.2 Data Analysis Techniques

The qualitative data harvested from key informant interviews underwent a rigorous thematic analysis, inspired by Braun and Clarke's methodological rigor. Quantitative data derived from surveys underwent meticulous statistical scrutiny, leveraging tools such as SPSS to extract meaningful patterns and correlations. The triangulation of these diverse data sources not only bolstered the robustness of our findings but also unveiled a richer tapestry of insights into the complex interplay of local governance and anti-corruption dynamics.

2.3 Limitations and Challenges

While the multi-method approach fortified our study, potential biases in key informant interviews and the context-specific nature of findings were recognised. Proactive measures were continually implemented throughout the research process to address and mitigate these concerns, underscoring the commitment to the integrity of our study.

3. Concise Overview of Corruption in Zimbabwe: A Background

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of corruption in Zimbabwe, spanning from the Willowgate Scandal in 1988 to contemporary issues. It explores the historical entanglement of corruption with economic challenges, revealing persistent grand corruption in the 2010s. The chapter also delves into corruption within local government, showcasing examples like the Chitungwiza land scandal, Harare City Council's financial mismanagement, and the Gweru City Council scandal, emphasizing the need for sustained anti-corruption efforts.

3.1 *What is corruption?*

Corruption, a widespread and intricate societal challenge, has captured the attention of contemporary scholars across various fields. Defining corruption is tricky due to its complex nature, involving a range of activities that go against ethical and legal norms. At its core, corruption involves the misuse of entrusted power for personal gain, harming public trust, hindering economic development, and destabilizing political systems (Treisman, 2015).

Corruption takes on various forms, adapting to different social and political contexts. Administrative or bureaucratic corruption involves smaller-scale acts like bribery or favouritism at the frontlines of public services. Political or grand corruption, on the other hand, includes high-level officials manipulating policies or misusing public resources for personal gain, affecting entire systems (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2015). To understand the types of corruption, we need to look at its different manifestations. Bureaucratic corruption, common in administrative systems, sees officials exploiting their positions for personal gain. Political corruption involves actions like embezzlement and electoral fraud, undermining democratic processes (Uslaner, 2016). Judicial corruption compromises the integrity of legal systems through bribery or nepotism, jeopardising fair and impartial adjudication.

Corruption also involves a broad range of acts, with bribery being a major one. Bribery includes offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting something valuable to influence the actions of an official or another person in a position of trust (Transparency International, 2022). Embezzlement, another common act, involves misappropriating public or entrusted funds for personal use. Nepotism, favouring relatives in appointments or promotions, and extortion, coercing individuals for personal gain, further illustrate the diverse acts constituting corruption (UNODC, 2015).

3.2 A History of Corruption in Zimbabwe (1980-2023)

Since achieving independence in 1980, Zimbabwe's journey has been marred by the persistent spectre of corruption, a force that has intricately woven itself into the nation's socio-political and economic fabric. The dawn of independence in 1980 marked a new chapter for Zimbabwe. However, beneath the surface of hope and optimism lay the seeds of corruption. One of the earliest and most emblematic cases was the Willowgate Scandal of 1988, where government officials were implicated in the illegal allocation of vehicles. This grand case, involving high-profile figures, not only exposed the vulnerabilities within the nascent governance structures but also set a precedent for the entanglement of political power and corruption.

The economic challenges of the 1990s in Zimbabwe were not confined to the agricultural sector; corruption permeated various governmental institutions, with parastatals emerging as hotbeds of illicit activities. This period witnessed a disturbing trend where state-owned enterprises, designed to be engines of economic growth and development, became breeding grounds for corruption, largely driven by a confluence of economic difficulties and opportunistic exploitation.

One prominent example of corruption within parastatals during this era is exemplified by the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ). In the mid-1990s, high-ranking officials within the NRZ were implicated in corrupt practices, including embezzlement of funds meant for infrastructure maintenance and improvement. The misallocation and siphoning of resources contributed to the deterioration of the railway system, negatively impacting the broader economy.

The Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Company (ZISCO), a key player in the country's industrial landscape, also fell victim to corruption during this period. In the late 1990s, instances of corrupt procurement practices and embezzlement within ZISCO were rampant. High-ranking officials were accused of manipulating procurement processes to award contracts to companies with ties to influential political figures, rather than those offering the best value for the company. The resultant financial haemorrhage, coupled with suboptimal production, undermined the once-vibrant steel industry.

The drivers behind corruption in parastatals during the 1990s were multifaceted. Economic challenges, including hyperinflation and dwindling foreign exchange reserves, created an environment where individuals sought alternative means to amass wealth. The lack of effective oversight mechanisms and accountability structures within parastatals allowed corrupt practices to flourish unchecked. Furthermore, political interference in the management of these enterprises provided cover for unscrupulous individuals to exploit their positions for personal gain. The intertwining of political and economic interests was evident in the case of the Cold Storage Company (CSC), a state-owned enterprise critical to the country's meat industry. In the late 1990s, corruption

within the CSC involved the arbitrary allocation of resources and contracts to entities with political connections, rather than those with the requisite expertise. This compromised the efficiency and competitiveness of the meat industry, contributing to a decline in exports and economic inefficiencies.

The economic challenges of the 1990s, coupled with a lack of institutional safeguards, propelled corruption within parastatals. The exploitation of these state-owned enterprises not only resulted in financial losses but also eroded public trust in governmental institutions. This period set a precedent for the entrenchment of corruption, laying the groundwork for subsequent challenges that would afflict Zimbabwe's economic and political landscape.

The decade spanning from 2010 to 2020 in Zimbabwe was characterized by the persistence and exacerbation of grand corruption, a phenomenon deeply intertwined with the economic collapse experienced in the preceding years. Against the backdrop of economic turmoil, corruption continued to flourish, with high-profile cases revealing the erosion of ethical governance and the perpetuation of a culture of impunity. One emblematic case that encapsulates the pervasive grand corruption of this period is the National Social Security Authority (NSSA) scandal. Unveiled in the mid-2010s, this scandal exposed high-ranking officials within NSSA who were implicated in embezzling funds meant for pension payouts. The very institution entrusted with securing the financial well-being of pensioners became a hotbed of corruption, diverting resources away from those who depended on them the most. This case not only highlights the economic repercussions of corruption but also underscores its devastating impact on the most vulnerable members of society.

Another notable instance of grand corruption during this period involves illicit financial flows, with politically connected individuals manipulating financial systems for personal gain. The lack of robust mechanisms to trace and prevent such flows allowed the siphoning of vast sums of money out of the country, contributing to the economic challenges faced by Zimbabwe. The absence of effective measures to curb these practices underscored the pervasiveness of corruption within financial institutions. The RBZ Financial Intelligence Unit in 2022 reported that Zimbabwe lost 32.179 billion during the period 2000 to 2021 due to Illicit Financial Flows via proceeds of crime, money laundering, tax evasion, smuggling, corruption, fraud, drug trafficking etc

Furthermore, the abuse of public office for personal gain remained a recurring theme. High-profile individuals, often shielded by political connections, continued to exploit their positions for personal enrichment. These cases revealed a disconcerting pattern where those in influential roles operated with a sense of impunity, free from the constraints of accountability. The economic collapse of the 2000s had led to the informalization of Zimbabwe's economy, creating an environment where corruption

thrived. Informal and illicit economic activities proliferated, further contributing to the entrenchment of corrupt practices. The nexus between economic desperation and corruption became increasingly pronounced, as individuals sought alternative means to navigate the challenges posed by the economic downturn.

Throughout this period, the lack of effective checks and balances, coupled with a culture of impunity, allowed corruption to persist. The erosion of public trust in institutions deepened, hindering efforts for economic recovery. The grand corruption cases of the 2010s not only underscore the need for comprehensive anti-corruption measures but also highlight the intricate relationship between corruption and the broader economic and social fabric of the nation.

3.3. Corruption in the Local Government in Zimbabwe

Since the early years of independence, the illicit sale of land has woven its insidious threads into the fabric of Zimbabwe's local government. One glaring example illuminates this pervasive issue—the Chitungwiza land scandal. In the late 1980s, local government officials, entrusted with the equitable distribution of residential stands, engaged in a clandestine operation. Instead of adhering to transparent allocation procedures, they colluded with well-connected individuals, selling off prime land meant for public use. This scandal not only distorted the urban planning of Chitungwiza but also exacerbated housing inequalities. While the public anticipated fair access to affordable housing, those with political connections or financial means exploited the corrupted system, leaving the broader citizenry grappling with the consequences of compromised governance.

The embezzlement of local government funds has been a perennial woe. The case of the Harare City Council's financial mismanagement stands out as a stark illustration. In the mid-2000s, officials within the council misappropriated funds allocated for critical public services, diverting resources from health, sanitation, and education. This financial malfeasance not only resulted in a dearth of resources for vital community needs but also shattered public trust in local government institutions. With citizens witnessing the mismanagement of funds meant for their well-being, the ripple effects of the embezzlement extended beyond fiscal implications. Harare, once poised for sustainable development, became ensnared in a cycle of underfunded public services and a disillusioned populace.

Even in contemporary times, the echoes of corruption persist. The Gweru City Council scandal serves as a modern-day testament to the endurance of corrupt practices within local governance. Recent revelations exposed officials who engaged in illicit land deals, selling off public land meant for recreational spaces and urban development. This not only distorts the city's growth trajectory but also highlights the resilience of corrupt tendencies among those entrusted with steering community development.

Evidence accessed from [\[REDACTED\]](#) reveals corruption at Guruve RDC leading to a petition against council. In one case, council is alleged to have flouted tender procedures in February 2017 and proceeded to purchase a vehicle worthy US\$41 000.00 using ZINARA funds, from a bogus dealer who never delivered the vehicle despite the full amount having been paid. Regarding the allocation of stands, the petitioners impress that council has lost plus US\$1.6 million in potential revenue due to the fraudulent and unprocedural allocation of stands to undeserving beneficiaries. More than 1000 stands were pegged on a block at the back of Guruve hospital but they were not parcelled out to the intended beneficiaries who were on the waiting list prejudicing the council of millions. The Auditor General's Report for 2019 and [\[REDACTED\]](#) also reported a number of local authorities blacklisted from accessing the Road Fund disbursed by ZINARA on corruption related allegations and failure to acquit the allocated funds. These councils include Bulilima, Gwanda, Karoi, Marondera, Kariba, Plumtree and Bindura. The audit results for the City of Bulawayo as shown in the AG Report of 2018, for instance, are based on 2014/2015 financial statements and the issues raised would have been recurrent in the preceding years further undermining public service delivery.

Borrowing by local authorities is subject to the granting of borrowing powers by the Minister responsible for Local Government. Such borrowing should be for capital projects and not recurrent expenditure. Despite this clear framework, there are local authorities which are borrowing for recurrent expenditures. This has a negative bearing on public service delivery as the funds borrowed are not used for projects that generate resources for repayment of the loans and overdrafts. Harare City Council borrowed US\$ 32.5 million from CABS to fund salaries and terminal benefits of employees without ministerial approval provided for in the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15). Gweru City Council and Mutare City Council have also been implicated in borrowing funds for recurrent expenditures amounting to US\$775 thousand and US\$5.4 million respectively. The two city councils further diverted resources from Estate Accounts towards recurrent expenditure at the expense of capital related expenditures thereby compromising service delivery. This is in contravention of Section 300 of the Urban Council's Act. This therefore suffices the importance of creating a viable base of citizens monitoring local authorities to improve efficiency in the provision of public services. It is therefore trite to equip local citizens to demand transparency and accountability of sub-national institutions to curb against potential abuse of power by local institutions.

Box 1: The US\$144 China Import Export Bank loan to Harare City Council scandal

Harare, has experienced acute water shortages for decades due to dilapidated infrastructure and shortages of water treatment chemicals against a rapidly rising population. To address the water supply problems, the Zimbabwean Government signed a US\$144 million contract for a loan from the China Export-Import (Exim) Bank in 2011 backed by a government guarantee. The loan agreement was targeted at the upgrading of waterworks and sewers so as to improve reticulation and boost water supplies to Harare. The loan facility was meant to rehabilitate, replace, install and commission equipment at Morton Jaffray and Prince Edward water treatment plants as well as the Crow borough and Firle sewer works.

A total of \$44 million would be spent on rehabilitating Morton Jaffray, \$17 million on the Crow borough and Firle sewage plants, while \$4,5 million was designated for information technology (IT) and automated billing. Pump stations at Warren Control, Alexandra Park and Letombo were meant to cost \$16 million, while \$7 million would have been used for water treatment chemicals. Part of the loan was for the construction of a laboratory and purchase as well as installation of pressure valves, pre-paid meters covering 500 000 households and necessary works materials. The deal, which council ratified in 2013 and was supposed to be through within 36 months, was envisaged to increase water pumping capacity at Morton Jaffray to 614 mega litres (ML) a day from a paltry 400 ML

However, corruption has largely hampered the project as part of the funds disbursed were channelled towards purchasing 25 luxury cars for top management which was contrary to what the funds were meant for. Public media reports alleged that USD37 million was gobbled on administrative costs and allocated a paltry USD55 million for water treatment at Morton Jaffray water works. A commission appointed by the the

- Weak internal controls leading to fraudulent activities by employees;
- Expenditure not supported by adequate documentation;
- Non-adherence with procurement regulations;

- Failure to pay suppliers for goods and services received;
- Transfer of funds from Fund Accounts without Treasury concurrence;
- Poor corporate governance practices in state enterprises and parastatals;
- Failure by state enterprises and parastatals to honour statutory obligations;
- Inadequate controls over receipting of payments in respect of accounts receivable in a number of councils.

- Failure to prepare financial statements timeously and submit them for public scrutiny as envisioned by the relevant laws. Cases have been recorded where financial statements and books of accounts are updated when council is seeking to apply for borrowing powers
- A shambolic accounting system—some local authorities are reported to have operated multiple bank accounts resulting in leakages and possibilities of serious fraud

In the ongoing chronicle of corruption within Zimbabwe's local government, these cases of the illegal sale of land and embezzlement of funds emerge as poignant examples. They underscore the need for sustained efforts to dismantle corrupt networks, institute robust oversight mechanisms, and cultivate a culture of accountability within local authorities—a crucial step towards fostering genuine community development and restoring public trust.

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter offered a historical landscape of corruption in Zimbabwe, spanning from the 1988 Willowgate Scandal to contemporary issues. It explored corruption's intricate nature, encompassing bureaucratic, political, and judicial dimensions. Examining notable cases, including the abuse of the USD144 million China Afreximbank loan at Harare City Council, Chitungwiza land scandal and the NSSA scandal, highlighted corruption's persistent grip. The chapter emphasized the entanglement of corruption with economic challenges and the imperative for sustained anti-corruption measures in local governance.

4. Key Stakeholder Mapping in The Local Governance Sector

Zimbabwe is politically and constitutionally a unitary state with a 3 tier governmental systems: National government, provincial and metropolitan councils and local government. This chapter explores key stakeholders in Zimbabwe's local governance, vital for anti-corruption and policy advocacy initiatives. Internal actors, including policy makers, Town Clerks/CEOs, chamber secretaries, and directors, shape local authorities' operational landscape. External stakeholders like citizens, VIDCOs/WADCOs, civil society, residence associations, splinter citizen associations, media, grassroots political party cells, the Ministry of Local Government, and the private sector play pivotal roles. It is salutary to note the key stakeholders operate at different levels of government. Whereas the local authorities are directly responsible for the delivery of local services, the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works retains the overall supervisory functions over sub-national governments. Understanding the key stakeholders and the dynamics of the interactions and collaborations in intergovernmental relations is crucial for effective programming.

TIERS OF GOVERNMENT AND THEIR ROLES IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE



4.1 *The Legislative Framework for Local Government in Zimbabwe*

Zimbabwe's local governance system bears the imprints of its complex historical evolution, transitioning from colonial structures to post-independence reforms (Ncube & Chitakunye, 2013; Mutandwa, 2019). The desire to establish a viable colonial economy resulted in the establishment of institutions both at national, regional and local levels with clearly marked codes of racist extremism designed to give preferential treatment to whites over blacks. A dualistic model of government was introduced with separate government structures for Europeans and Africans. The dualistic governance model applied in Southern Rhodesia, Mills (2012) argues, was the equivalence of the British policy of differentiation in the Natal, South Africa. The dualistic governance model was aimed at promoting the policy of differentiation. The policy of differentiation culminated into a binary state epitomised by a system of separate development of races marked by separate legal and political systems for whites and the black people. The dualistic colonial structures were the bedrock of a highly centralised government system anchored on white supremacist policies and the imposition of centrally defined substandard programmes on native institutions and nourishment of African self-government.

on layout plan TRF/WR/12/17 Westlea on March 2020 without following council allocation procedure.

Apart from that Mafume is also facing allegations of approaching the same officials to allocate residential stands to individuals only identified as Choruma, Muchengwa and Mupindu in Greengrove on layout plan number TPF/ER/07/19/1 without following council allocation procedures.

Source: The Herald 29 January 2021

Box 3: Circumstances around the suspension of Harare City Council deputy mayor

Mukunguma has a litany of allegations cited in his suspension letter including that on March 2017 he instructed the Director of Corporate Services and Housing to allocate stands to Blue Star housing pay scheme from layout plan TRF/WR/06/17 which had been allocated to Probation Infill paying housing scheme, disregarding legal processes outlined in the Urban Council's Act (Chapter 29:15) and council allocation processes.

He also stands accused of facilitating the illegal allocation of land to a company identified as Hardspec Investments Private Limited through an offer letter valid for two days until September 2019 without following procedure.

After the offer had lapsed for over five months, it is alleged that in his capacity as chairman of the finance committee that authorises land sales, he further authorised and facilitated the unprocedural payment of \$5 million on January 7, 2020, \$20 million and \$1,9 million which were made on February 18, 2020, from Hardspec Investment.

Mukunguma is said to have also unprocedurally authorised and facilitated the sale of 7 000 square metres of council land, an open space along Glen Eagles Road next to Eaglesvale to a local company called Continental Wire Products without following council allocation procedure.

Source: Herald 29 January 2021

Box 4: Land corruption and violation of change of land use

Harare City Council ... suspended Human Resources Director and Former Housing Director Matthew Marara and 13 other employees to allow investigations into corruption allegations that could have prejudiced council of US\$1,1 million in shoddy land deals in Kuwadzana.

Allegations are that they illegally sold 152 stands in Kuwadzana in a deal fraught with irregularities in the approval of plans and production of layout plans prejudicing council of US\$1 141 779 in the process.

The suspended officials allegedly identified open spaces in Kuwadzana 3,4,5 and 6. There was no application for change of land use. The group then created fictitious payment schemes and fraudulent layout plans.

Plans were presented as if they had been approved by the council and were used to facilitate water connections and the creation of accounts in the municipal finance system



Chapter 9 of the constitution also contains principles of public administration and leadership. The principles seeks to promote a public leadership system that is accountable to the citizens through, among other actions, promoting high standard of professional ethics, impartiality and fairness, fostering transparency through providing the public with timely and accurate information, efficient and economic use of resources, promoting citizen participation in governance and generally public institutions that are broadly representative of the diverse and heterogeneous interests of the citizens.

Urban Councils Act Chapter 29.15

The principal legislation governing urban councils is Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29.15). The Act provides for the establishment of urban local government bodies in Zimbabwe and the vesting of powers and authority upon them. It also includes the composition of councils and their internal systems of governance. Part V of this Act from section 38 deals with the governance of urban areas through election of councillors and selection of mayors and chairpersons of councils. This is an important section of the act which should be understood together with Chapter 14 of the Constitution. As has already been highlighted above under the section on the Constitution, the democratic principle of election of councillors is used.

The UCA recognizes that urban councils are planning authorities who have the responsibilities of planning and managing for key resources such as land, buildings and civil works and open spaces amongst others as per the provisions of the second schedule of the Act. They also have the responsibility of development control as per the provisions of the Regional Town and Country Planning (RCTPA) Act. These responsibilities are meant to ensure orderly development of the areas under their jurisdiction. However, the Master Plans and local Plans prepared by urban councils under the RTCP Act are outdated and leave room for manipulation by council officials. Council officials have also been known to prepare their own illegal subdivisions which have been used to allocate land parallel to the official approved layouts (see extract below). A planner and government official were recently fingered for using an illegal layout to parcel out land for housing in the town.

Extract 1: Generation and use of fraudulent layout plans in Strathaven and Kuwadza

3.0 Layout plans

- ❖ Two layout plans sharing the same boundary TPF/WR/82/17 and SD/WR/12/16 were used to allocate 52 Strathaven stands in question.
- ❖ Layout plans TPF/WR/82/17 with 25 stands ranging from 1089-1103 and 1104-1126 and SD/WR/12/16 with 27 stands ranging from 1061- 1088 share a common land boundary and were both fraudulently created to enable the illegal selling of land in Strathaven.
- ❖ Both layout references TPF/WR/82/17 and SD/WR/12/16 are fraudulent and duplicate other layout plans for Kuwadzana and Vainona respectively. Plan TPF/WR/82/17 was used for stand range 21877-21909 in Kuwadzana 4 while Layout Plan No.SD/WR/12/16 is a reference for a layout plan for stand 446 of stand 439 Vainona Township Salisbury District.

Source: HCC

Rural District Councils Act Chapter 29.13

The Rural District Councils Act bestows planning and development functions of RDCs. This act fulfils the constitutional mandate as outlined in section 275 of the constitution. Rural District Councils are planning authorities for the areas under their jurisdiction in terms of the law i.e. the Regional Town and Country Planning Act and Rural District Councils Act. Section 74 of the RDC Act states the functions of an RDC as (a) promote the development of the council area; and (b) formulate policies, both long-term and short-term, for the council area; and (c) prepare annual development and other plans for the council area; and (d) monitor the implementation of development plans and policies within the council area; and.....' As their urban counterparts, RDCs oversee allocation of plots for housing and other developments. Section 73 of the Act is very telling in terms of the powers of the RDCs to control development in the areas under their jurisdiction through ensuring that the conditions of the establishment of any township within the council area and the conditions of title to any land in the council area are properly observed and RDC has powers:

However, since the turn of the millennium, political corruption has largely affected governance in RDC especially in relation to land. Whereas the law provides for sustainable land governance to promote intra and intergenerational equity, there is a surge of illegal developments and most of these take place in the peri-urban areas. A case in point is development in Seke Communal Lands and Manyame RDC where there

is subdivision of land reserved for grazing and cultivation and conversion to residential use.

Local Governance Structures: Cities, Municipalities, Town Councils, Local Boards and Rural District Councils

At the forefront of local governance are cities, municipalities, town councils and Local Boards, each entrusted with distinctive responsibilities related to local administration, service delivery, and urban planning (Mamvura, 2018; Muzondo, 2016). Conversely, rural areas are governed by Rural District Councils, focusing on rural development, agriculture, and infrastructure (Mamvura, 2018; Muzondo, 2016). The structure of local government institutions in Zimbabwe is organized within a hierarchical framework that encompasses diverse administrative levels, each endowed with specific functions and responsibilities. Rural district councils stand at the apex of local governance in rural areas, overseeing multiple wards within a district. These councils play a pivotal role in coordinating and implementing development projects, infrastructure initiatives, and community services. Wards within the district are further represented by elected councillors with representative, regulatory and oversight functions.

In terms of its operational framework, councils are chaired by mayors, deputised by deputy mayors (for cities and municipalities) and chairperson and vice chairperson (for town councils, local boards and RDCs). Both mayors and chairperson of council are elected in the first meeting of council by members present. However, the majority of council business is done in committees of council, which are workshops of council that deals with matters of detail. Committees of council are either standing committees or special committees. Standing committees are statutory structures which each council is expected to have whereas special committees are established to deal with a matter incidental to council business and are disbanded once the objective is realised. Below is a list of standing committees for both RDCs and urban councils

Standing committees for RDCs

- Finance committee
- Audit committee
- Roads committee
- Natural resources committee
- Ward Development Committee (WADCO)
- Rural District Development Committee (RDDC)
- Area committee

Standing Committees for urban councils

- Finance committee
- Audit committee
- Health and housing committee

The mayor or chairperson is an ex-officio member of all council committees. Following their deliberations, committees come up with recommendations that are then adopted at full council into resolutions/policies of council

4.2 Key Stakeholders in the Local Governance Sector.

[REDACTED]

4.1.1 Internal Stakeholders

[REDACTED]

4.1.2 Councilmakers


Councillors in local government in Zimbabwe play vital roles in representing their communities, making policies, and contributing to the overall governance and development of their respective areas. Some of the key roles and responsibilities of councillors in Zimbabwe include representation. Councillors are elected representatives who serve as a link between the local community and the local government. They represent the interests, concerns, and needs of their constituents. Councillors also participate in the decision-making process within the local council. They contribute to discussions, debate policies, and vote on matters related to local governance, development plans, and budget allocations at full council meetings. To this end, they can be an aggressive force in planting notions and aspects of anti-corruption in local authority set ups.

Councillors provide support and services to their constituents. This may involve helping residents navigate local government processes, addressing concerns or complaints, and facilitating communication between the community and the council. Hence given this responsibility, councillors have the power to transmit strong anti-corruption communication to local authority administration and influence culture. Additionally, councillors are involved in formulating local policies and regulations. They contribute to the development of plans that guide the growth and development of their areas, including land use planning and zoning regulations. Therefore, any form of policy advocacy programming initiatives should rope in councillors to ensure success and sustainability of project benefits. Councillors can in fact be a crucial tool for social accountability as they provide a conduit between local government and communities.

Councillors have a role in overseeing the local government's budget. They participate in the budgetary process, ensuring that funds are allocated appropriately to address the needs and priorities of the community. By nature, budget tracking is an anti-corruption initiative and provides a sense of transparency and accountability. With

councillors having the legal and policy responsibility to ensure budget oversight, it naturally follows that they should be a key element in anti-corruption programming. Councillors are also key in community engagement. Councillors engage with various stakeholders, including community members, businesses, and non-governmental organisations, to gather input, address concerns, and foster collaboration for the benefit of the community. To this end, councillors can be viewed as key community mobilisation agents with the power to direct communities towards a given line of action and behaviour. Lastly Councillors play an advocacy role. Councillors may advocate for their communities at higher levels of government. This involves representing local interests and seeking support or resources for local projects and initiatives. To this end, councillors have the potential to spread anti-corruption messages and key positive policy formulation resolutions to higher offices with greater power and influence for change. Therefore, it is evident that councillors are integral stakeholders and possible partners in anti-corruption programming and policy advocacy.

4.1.3 Council managers (Town Clerks and CEOs)

A  In Zimbabwe, there are key official positions in local government. The appointment of such officials is governed by the letter of specific legislation and policies, primarily the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15) for urban councils and the Rural District Councils Act (Chapter 29:13) for rural councils. The Urban Councils Act and the Rural District Councils Act play a central role in regulating the appointment of officials such as Town Clerks and Chief Executive Officers. Section 114 of this Act outlines the process, designating the council as the appointing authority. The Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing through the Local Government Board supplements this legal framework with policies that guide the appointment process, maintaining consistency across local authorities. The role of these top officials is to guide the operations of the local authorities, make crucial quasi administrative decisions on behalf of the local councils and also work on the actioning of resolutions of the full council. Hence, the very appetite and drive for anti-corruption initiative should come from these top officials. They in fact cultivate the policy ownership of anti-corruption culture within local authorities and any such initiatives must have their support.

4.1.4 Chamber Secretaries

Closely tied to the apex brass of local authorities are the Chamber Secretaries. The Chamber Secretary position although exclusive in Urban Councils is a powerful position. The Chamber Secretaries are the voice of local councils responsible for

council secretariat, minutes of committees and full council meetings and maintaining a proper record of the proceedings of all council meeting and their resolutions. The Chamber Secretary is also responsible for the facilitation of policy recommendations and adoption. Hence, when it comes to the initiation and facilitation of policy, the Chamber Secretaries are important figures to consider in any form of anti-corruption programming.

4.1.5 Directors of Departments

The next important internal stakeholders are the Directors/Executive Officers of various council departments. Both the Urban Councils Act and the Rural District Councils Act provide the statutory basis for the appointment of these Directors (for the former) and Executive Officers (for the latter). Their roles and responsibilities are defined by the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing, through policies or guidelines to ensure a standardised and professional approach to the appointment of Directors and Executive Officers across urban and rural councils. Of note is the key position of Director of Finance in urban local authorities or Executive Officer Finance in RDCs. More often than note, the Director of Finance can provide the conduit for the implementation of corrupt practices as they are responsible for the finance of local authorities. Although they largely operate based on the provisions of the various acts and local financial management policies, they have the power to call out corrupt practices or actually act as whistle-blowers in some instance. Hence, various Directors are key internal stakeholders in local governance within the auspices of anti-corruption and policy advocacy programming.

4.1.6 Key External Stakeholders

The next cohort of key stakeholders are external stakeholders. For the purposes of this analysis, such external stakeholders can be defined as actors that have a bearing on local authority operations but are not involved on the day to day operations of the local authority.

4.1.7 Citizens

The power to govern by any tier of government is derived from the people of Zimbabwe, an

indication that they should be active participants in governance and development issues in their areas (Nyama and Mukwada, 2022, Muchadenyika, 2017, Madhekeni and Zhou, 2012. In addition, Madzivanyika (2014) added that citizens have inalienable rights (freedom of expression, access to information, right to be heard among others) which only a well-defined citizen participation agenda can satisfy. More specifically, the supreme law of the land confers powers to the citizens of Zimbabwe, for which citizen participation is the only conduit to enjoying such powers.

Section 14 of the Constitution states that every person has the right to access information that is held by another person or institution, subject to the provisions of this section. The right to access information is subject to the provisions of this section. The right to access information is subject to the provisions of this section.

Madzivanyika (2014) states that if local authorities decline to provide requested information, citizens have the right to demand such information through litigation. This, to Chikerema (2014) and Nyikadzino (2014) entails that where local government derogates from its obligation to provide information on request, any such person whose legitimate right and/or expectations are adversely affected by such derogation has the right to be given promptly and in writing the reasons for the conduct and can also approach the courts for redress. This is designed to impose a mandatory function on public bodies (including local government authorities) to afford citizens the right to information under their care

Section 194 (1) of the Constitution commands that public administration must respond to people's needs within a reasonable time and encourage the public to participate in decision-making. This is attainable if citizens are provided with timely, accessible and accurate information in a transparent manner. Madzivanyika (2014) cites the need for broad representation of diverse communities as a condition for the realization of section 194. Nyama and Mukwada (2022) views the rationale of section 194 (1) as to enhance the engagement of rights holders in public policy value chains while making duty bearers accountable to the former. The constitution is more anchored on public involvement against imposition of decisions by public authorities. To this end, it is clear to see that an informed citizenship can act as both a vital tool for anti-corruption culture and positive policy formulation at local government. However, it must be noted that for such citizens to be actively involved, local authorities must provide vital interface platforms for participation.

4.1.8 VIDCOs and WADCOs

The lowest formal local government institutions in Zimbabwe are VIDCOs and WADCOs. They are most defined in rural local governance and are established through the RDC Act. However, given their utility as platforms of engagement with citizens, they are now present in urban areas though not provided for in the Urban Councils Act. In terms of section 59 of the RDC Act, the Ward development committees shall consist of the councillor for the ward, who shall be the chairman of the committee; and the chairman and secretary of every VIDCO and neighbourhood development committee (NDCO) in the ward: Provided that, in the case of a ward in which there is neither a VIDCO nor a NDCO, the Minister shall appoint persons to the ward development committee from a list of names prepared by the councillor for the ward. Where for any reason a WADCO cannot be constituted for lack of representation, the Minister may appoint such persons as he thinks fit to constitute the committee. A WADCO shall, on or before the 31st March in each year, prepare and submit a ward development plan to the rural district development committee of the council. As aforementioned, urban councils have adopted similar models for WADCOs as engines for development. As viewed by Muchadenyika (2017) VIDCOs and WADCOs are structures for decentralized planning and development and they play a significant role in coming up with development plans. VIDCOs and WADCOs are participatory platforms and the principle is that the development plans should emanate from robust debate by the communities. However, practice have shown less robustness in the processes of VIDCOs and WADCOs as the structures are captured by political parties and hence acting as centres for party activists as opposed to community wide development planning. Manhokwe (2010) gave a salutary remark pointing out that in practice WADCO plans are seldom a true reflection of the views of the communities. Very often they are dominated by other sources of planning information and in this case, central government field departments. The circumstances above necessitate looking at general limits of decentralisation in general so as to find ways to curb them and promote genuine public participation.

In the rural areas, the committee is mandated to meet every quarter for development business or any other time as requested by members in the face of pressing matters. The assumption is that development concerns and priorities are better known by the people domiciled in the ward who, through their representatives in the committee, identify, prioritise and table them before the respective local authority for service delivery. However, the absence of a legal framework for WADCOs in urban areas have left this institution subjected to the individual innovations of local authorities and councillors and hence presenting a major weakness.

Hence, it is crucial to note that if properly modelled, VIDCOs and WADCOs present the only meaningful and viable opportunity for organised citizen participation in devolution. Not only do they facilitate participation but they promote inclusion. This is because of the multiplicity of social groups and sectors represented in the committee. Within the context of devolution, it

follows that the devolution funds allocated by the treasury annually (at least 5% of national revenue) should not address the national government’s priorities but finance the development priorities raised by communities through the WADCOs. With inclusion also comes quality in decision-making due to the comprehensive and exhaustive nature of generated ideas. This inclusive nature is not only good for the pulling of diverse ideas but is also good for cohesion in communities, a specific objective of devolution in the constitution. Hence, to ensure that there is an organic and sustainable approach to anti-corruption programming, there will be an inherent need to interrogate and interact with VIDCO and WADCO structures.

4.1.9 Civil Society

Muchadenyika (2014) submits that the role of civic society organizations in engendering social accountability, transparency and integrity in Zimbabwe is well documented and appreciated. As public watchdogs on good governance, their interaction with local authorities has left landmarks and permanent footprints and has led to increased demand for accountability especially relating to budgetary oversight by both sets of institutions and that such interaction will forever strengthen a country’s governance framework and the effectiveness and efficiency of its anti-poverty programs. Related studies (Nyama and Mukwada, 2022, Mapfumo, 2019, Madzivanyika, 2014) have shown that most CSOs have demonstrated their ability to foster people-centred development through promoting ownership, inclusivity and participation. Marango et. al (2018) added that civil society organisations are engaged in a wide range of sector analysis and policy dialogue, independent research and share valuable information on sustainable governance and economic development. To Muchadenyika (2017) CSOs involved in advocacy for economic and social justice have mobilized citizens in championing the cause for good and accountable governance, and challenged the state against violation of rights.

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Social movements such as ZIMCODD, SAPST, AFRODAD, Transparency International, WiCOZ and others have attempted to mobilise citizens in large numbers to claim their rights and pressure for accountability and social justice. Kademaunga and Saki (2020) also identified a number of roles of CS in promoting citizen participation and sustainable local governance and these include advocacy and lobbying for enhancing public accountability and transparency and research as the basis for evidence based

advocacy. It is however important to note that, there might be a need to include organisations that focus on dialogue promotion in the programme. Organisations like the Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation (CCMT) can help to create meaningful conflict management systems based on positive dialogue. This “softer” approach might be more successful given the level of political polarisation of local government in Zimbabwe.

Civil Society (CS) holds significant potential in shaping national and local government policies, particularly in budgeting. CS contributes by offering critical and independent insights into public expenditure management, fostering financial literacy among citizens, integrating new data into the budget process, conducting budget oversight training for various groups, and scrutinizing the legislative passage and implementation of budgets. These actions enhance transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in the governance process.

4.1.10 Residence Associations

According to Musekiwa and Chatiza (2015) although RAs in Zimbabwe are a pre-independence and predominantly urban phenomenon, they have grown in visibility and numbers dramatically since 1980, with many of them established after 2000. The Bulawayo Residents’ Association (BURA), which is the first RA was established in the early 1950s. However, the post-2000 socio-economic crisis in Zimbabwe resulted in a substantial decline in local government capacity to deliver essential services in areas such as water and sewer reticulation, housing, refuse, primary health, and street lighting, (Muchadenyika, 2017; Musekiwa et al 2013). Residents (mostly in urban and less in rural areas) responded to the service delivery gaps by creating RAs and increasing the visibility of such associations (Musekiwa and Chatiza, 2015). The rise in the numbers, mandate, and geographical spread of RAs occurred within a context of political liberalisation that witnessed the growth of significant opposition to the previously unchallenged Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). Mapuva (2011) adds that contemporary political developments in which the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) dominated most of urban (and even rural councils) have precipitated a paradigm shift in the composition of most urban councils. In terms of characteristics, most RAs are established as pressure groups to ensure that councils improve service delivery and are accountable to ratepayers.

Musekiwa and Chatiza (2015) offered two main dimensions to the creation of RAs and expression of public voice through associations. First, citizens can vote out poorly performing and corrupt councils during regular local government elections. In Zimbabwe, since 2000, many urban local authorities have fallen under the control of

the opposition MDC-T, as the electorate registered discontent with the service delivery model of ZANU-PF, which has controlled central government since independence. Second, where citizens are dissatisfied with the electoral system as a means of protest, they can organise into associations to engage authorities directly or produce and deliver services that the local authorities are unable or unwilling to provide.

RAs in Zimbabwe are largely an expression of the second dimension. Their fundamental concerns are people-centred, specifically designed to best service public needs by providing opportunities for meaningful participation. One can thus argue that participatory democracy in Zimbabwe is undergoing processes of institutionalization and professionalisation especially in the context of the constitution where the law mandates public participation. Citizens' participation in various forms, including RAs, is sometimes seen to promote better decisions and 'more efficiency benefits to the rest of society. Mapuva (2011) submits that RAs are a form of civic association whose mandates have traditionally revolved around lobbying and advocacy. However, they are increasingly exploring ways to facilitate constructive engagement between local government leaders, other service providers and citizens to improve conditions of living. Hence, it follows that any meaningful programming initiatives with local authorities on anti-corruption and policy advocacy must include resident associations at all costs.

4.1.11 Splinter Citizen Associations

Splinter citizen associations such as passenger, commuter and vendors' associations play a vital role in anti-corruption efforts and policy advocacy at the local government level in Zimbabwe. Such associations might not be formally registered and grow organically at community level. Be as this may, these grassroots groups represent diverse community interests, offering first hand insights into local challenges. By actively engaging with local authorities, they contribute to transparency, exposing corruption vulnerabilities. Additionally, these associations advocate for fair policies, ensuring that governance decisions align with community needs. Empowering and mobilizing citizens, they act as a crucial check on local government activities, fostering accountability. In Zimbabwe, their involvement enhances democratic processes and creates a collaborative environment for effective anti-corruption measures and equitable policy development. Hence any sustainable anti-corruption programming should involve such actors as they can provide glaring insights into astute anti-corruption programming.

4.1.12 Media

The absence of critical and elaborate interface platforms between citizens and their local authorities has also forced a re-think on remodelling the design of the approach to citizen participation. The media plays a pivotal role in local governance by serving as a watchdog and facilitator of civic engagement. It provides a platform for disseminating information about local government activities, policies, and decisions, fostering transparency. Through investigative reporting, the media holds local authorities accountable for their actions, ensuring adherence to ethical standards. Additionally, it amplifies the voices of the community, enabling citizens to participate in decision-making processes. By serving as a bridge between local government and the public, the media contributes significantly to an informed, empowered, and engaged local citizenry. It thus follows, that good media partners who specialise on local governance issues can be a good inclusion for sustainable anti-corruption and policy advocacy programming at local government level.

4.1.13 Grassroots Political Party Cells

Incorporating various grassroots political party cells in local government anti-corruption programming is crucial for fostering inclusivity and ensuring a comprehensive approach to combating corruption. By nature, local government councils are made up of councillors from different political parties. Hence, the thinking and culture of such councillors cannot change without a positive anti-corruption and policy advocacy drive from their political parties. Inclusion of grassroots political party cells in anti-corruption and policy advocacy programming can enhance ownership, community buy in and eradicate barriers in positive anti-corruption programming. It promotes diverse perspectives and collaborative efforts in identifying, addressing, and preventing corrupt practices at the local level. Engaging multiple political parties enhances the legitimacy of anti-corruption initiatives, creating a unified front against corruption. By involving different political ideologies, these programs can transcend partisan divides, garnering broader public support and trust. This inclusiveness contributes to the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures, reinforcing the importance of a collective commitment to transparent, accountable, and ethical governance within local communities.

4.1.14 G D

The head office structures of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development is a crucial stakeholder in the local governance sphere. It is a fact that although local authorities have a fair degree of autonomy, the Minister and the central government are key stakeholders. Powers of central government through the ministry in the running of local authorities include:

- Suspension of mayors and councillors pending disciplinary procedures by the tribunal established in terms of section 276 of the constitution

- ❑ Appointment of the Local Government Board to exercise the function of approving the appointment and discharge of senior council employees
- ❑ Approval of council budgets
- ❑ Approval of council by-laws
- ❑ Appointment of caretakers
- ❑ Approval of change of status e.g. from a municipality to a city

Devolution has largely been piecemeal in nature and the Ministry still holds pertinent administrative and financial power. To this end, establishing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development at both the national and provincial levels is imperative for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) undertaking anti-corruption programming in Zimbabwe. These agreements formalize collaboration, ensuring alignment with governmental priorities and regulations. At the national level, a MoU with the Ministry facilitates streamlined communication, access to relevant data, and a cooperative framework for implementing effective anti-corruption initiatives. Extending this collaboration to the provincial level, with the Minister of State, enhances program adaptability to local nuances. It provides NGOs with valuable insights, resources, and support, amplifying the impact of anti-corruption efforts by fostering a synergistic relationship between NGOs and governmental bodies.

4.1.15 Business and Private Sector

The Business and Private Sector wield a dual influence on corruption within local transactions, notably in the Zimbabwean context. On one hand, the concentration of economic power can potentially foster corruption, as undue influence may be exerted to manipulate regulatory frameworks. However, the private sector also serves as a crucial ally in corruption reduction efforts. By promoting ethical business practices, implementing robust internal controls, and advocating for transparent governance, businesses can create an environment less susceptible to corruption. Collaborative initiatives between the private sector and local authorities in Zimbabwe, emphasizing accountability and fair business practices, can contribute significantly to reducing corruption, fostering economic growth, and ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities.

4.2 Chapter Summary

In summary, Chapter 4 delved into the intricate web of stakeholders crucial for anti-corruption and policy advocacy programming in Zimbabwe's local governance. Internal figures, such as top leadership and directors, shape local authority operations, while external actors, including citizens, civil society, media, and political party cells, contribute diverse perspectives to the

anti-corruption matrix. The Ministry of Local Government and private sector are seen as key actors for collaboration to enrich anti-corruption efforts. Recognising these stakeholders' roles provided a comprehensive foundation for sustainable and effective initiatives in combating corruption and fostering positive policy change at the local level.

5. Anti-Corruption Gaps in the Local Governance Matrix in Zimbabwe

In this fifth chapter, a look into the anti-corruption dynamics within Zimbabwe's local governance is conducted, exploring both existing policies and significant deficiencies. Despite notable initiatives such as the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) Act and relevant legislation, our analysis uncovers substantial inadequacies in policy development, institutional frameworks, cultural aspects, mechanisms for redress, and financial management. Identifying these gaps is crucial for tailoring specific interventions and promoting a holistic strategy to counter corruption at the grassroots level.

5.1 Existing Anti-Corruption Policies at the Local Level in Zimbabwe:

Zimbabwe has implemented several anti-corruption policies at the local government level to combat corrupt practices. The Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) Act of 2004 provides the legal framework for the establishment and functions of ZACC, which oversees anti-corruption efforts nationally, including at the local level. The Constitution of Zimbabwe, Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19) and the Procurement Act (Chapter 22:14) are vital legislative tools governing financial management and procurement processes, contributing to the prevention of corruption within local authorities. Additionally, the Local Government Laws Amendment Act of 2019 introduced measures to enhance transparency, accountability, and integrity within local governance structures.

The Constitution contains provisions on Principles of Public Administration in terms of chapter 9 sections 194-198, Public Financial Management (sections 298-301), Parliamentary oversight over state revenue and expenditure (section 299); limits of state borrowings, public debt and state guarantees (section 300) and duties of custodians of public funds and property (section 308). Section 299 (1) of the Constitution empowers Parliament to monitor and oversee expenditure by the State and all commissions and institutions and agencies of government at every level, including statutory bodies, government-controlled entities, provincial and metropolitan councils and local authorities. Such oversight is intended to ensure that all revenue is accounted for, all expenditure has been properly incurred and any limits and conditions on appropriations have been observed. Section 299 (2) requires an Act of Parliament to provide mechanisms for Parliament to monitor and oversee expenditure. However, the current Public Finance Management Act is largely weak in that respect. Section 309 of the Constitution outlines one of the functions of the Auditor-General as that of ordering the taking of measures to rectify any defects in the management and safeguarding of public funds and public property. Public officers are

required to “comply with orders given to them by the Auditor-General”. The Public Finance Management Act must include severe penalties for non-compliance with the Auditor-General’s instructions. In light of the above constitutional provisions, Parliament is currently seized with aligning, legislation with the constitutional provisions to enhance the robustness of anti-corruption mechanisms in public institutions.

The Auditor General has produced reports indicating wide evidence of abuse of public resources in sub-national governments. The aforementioned abuse of public resources has been traced, with ample scientific evidence, to a weak public finance management system. The overall thrust of the of the reform of the PFM system has been to:

- Promote fiscal sustainability, effective resource mobilisation and allocation
- Enhance public sector performance, value for money and strategic financial planning and management
- Promote sustainable governance through strengthening systems for transparency and accountability, responsiveness, equity and inclusivity as hallmarks for shared growth and development
- Strengthen fiduciary risk management through effective controls, compliance and oversight

The Constitution established several institutions mandated to combat corruption. These institutions include the ZACC, NPA and the office of the Auditor General (AG) which carries out annual audits of all government departments, institutions and entities and local governments. The main functions of ZACC include investigating and exposing cases of corruption in the public and private sectors. Powers, duties and other functions are outlined in the Anti-Corruption Commission Act Chapter 9:23 (ACCA). ZACC has over the years managed to deal with corruption cases at both the national and local government level. For instance, ZACC in 2021 conducted compliance assessments, spot checks, systems and process review assessment at several institutions including eight local governments and discovered that the majority were non-compliant. The ZACC chairperson said that the spot checks conducted depicted an ugly pattern of corruption within rural district councils. Despite efforts made by ZACC to combat corruption, the institution faces some challenges. Its lack of independence emanates from the appointment of its members by the president. This limits its abilities to investigate corruption orchestrated by high-ranking members of the ruling party. ZACC also suffers from financial constraints and the ACCA does not provide details of how the ZACC should be funded.

Relating to guarding public funds and assets against corruption, the Urban Council Act and the RDC Act provides for the appointment of auditors on or before the commencement of each financial year who are registered as public auditors or

competent to carry out the roles to conduct systems audits, among others. The Urban Councils Act compels councils to produce to the auditor all relevant books, papers, writings and minute books in its possession. The auditors have the power at any time and without notice to make an examination of any records and assets of the council. The auditors also have the power to call upon any councillor or employee of the council for any explanations and information s/he may require. The powers vested in the auditors enable them to unearth any corrupt activities within councils and submit the report to the town clerk who then submits it to the council. The efficacy of the auditor's reports is however questionable if it involves financial misconduct of the town clerk yet the reports are submitted to the town clerk.

Furthermore, the RDC Act and the Urban Councils Act empowers the Minister responsible for Local Government to conduct investigations that may be in the form of financial inquiries. The Minister is able to appoint any person to examine the accounts and records of a council. The Urban Councils Act provides that, an authority and every member or employee of an authority shall, when requested to do so, submit to an investigator all information in its or his/her possession and shall produce to him/her and give him/her access to all books, documents, records, accounts and other sources of information of the authority. Such an investigation report is provided to the Minister in writing and on his or her examination a copy of such report is sent to the council and the auditor. The Minister is then empowered by the Act to take steps as in his/her opinion is necessary or desirable to rectify any defect or omission revealed by the report. Through these powers, appointed Ministers responsible for local government have over the years managed to unearth corruption activities in municipalities. However, allegations of corruption are politically motivated and biased towards opposition controlled councils and opposition party councillors.

One key area rampant with corruption is public procurement. The Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act Chapter 22:23 contains provisions to ensure transparency in procurement adjudication of tenders by local authorities. In terms of the Act, the tender process is open for public inspection. For local authorities, councillors are no longer part of the tender adjudication. This has been criticised for limiting council oversight on local government procurement processes. Public Entities Corporate Governance Act Chapter 10:31 further compliments the former Act through ensuring that councils comply with international standards on corporate governance issues as a panacea to sustainable services delivery.

Local authorities are, in terms of section 228 of the Urban Councils Act and section 88 of the RDC Act empowered to make by-laws. Resultantly, most local authorities have internal policies and by-laws on fighting corruption. The anti-corruption by-laws are meant to foster transparency and accountability and reduce abuse of council resources through various form of corruption. They apply to both internal and external

stakeholders and those implicated are either referred to council disciplinary tribunals or courts of law for trial depending on the nature, context and gravity of the case involved. Generally, the way local authorities are structured in Zimbabwe deliberately reflects a slant towards self-correcting mechanisms. This explains why there are audit committees, internal auditors and provisions for the public to attend full council meetings. ZACC is also encouraging local authorities to establish integrity committees in local authorities.

5.2 *Anti-Corruption Gaps in the Current Governance Matrix*

The local governance landscape in Zimbabwe is confronted with significant challenges pertaining to the formulation and implementation of robust anti-corruption measures. This analysis delves into the critical gaps within policy frameworks, institutional structures, cultural dimensions, recourse mechanisms, and financial management and procurement policies, drawing from documented evidence and contextual examples.

5.2.1 Gaps in Policy and Documentation

Zimbabwe's local governance institutions exhibit notable gaps in anti-corruption policy frameworks and documentation. Despite the acknowledgment of corruption as a pervasive issue, the absence of a comprehensive and enforceable policy framework is evident. The 'National Anti-Corruption Strategy' (NACS) introduced in 2014 remains a commendable effort, yet its impact has been undermined by inadequate resource allocation and a lack of consistent implementation. The absence of standardised documentation processes further hampers transparency and accountability within local authorities (Transparency International Zimbabwe, 2019).

5.2.2 Structures and Offices Aimed at Curbing Corruption at Local Government Level

The existing structures and offices designed to curb corruption in Zimbabwe's local governance system face operational challenges. The Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) is the primary body tasked with addressing corruption. However, documented instances reveal constraints in its operational autonomy and effectiveness. The commission has faced accusations of political interference, compromising its ability to independently investigate corruption allegations (Transparency International Zimbabwe, 2021). Additionally, the lack of dedicated resources constrains ZACC's capacity to proactively address corruption within local authorities. Other institutions include NPA, AG etc.

Similarly, the Directorate of Public Prosecutions is also seen to be aligned to the ruling ZANU PF. Despite some laws prescribing harsh terms of imprisonment, up to 20 years as is legislated in Section 3(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, many politically

connected and influential persons escape sanction through intervention by their proximity to power.

5.2.3 Institutional Culture of Corruption

Zimbabwe's local governance system is deeply entrenched in a culture that perpetuates corruption. Historical legacies, combined with contemporary challenges, contribute to an institutional culture tolerant of unethical practices. Informal networks and patronage systems exacerbate corrupt behaviours, hindering genuine efforts to instill integrity within the system. The documented prevalence of corrupt practices, such as the mismanagement of public resources and bribery, underscores the entrenched nature of this culture (Transparency International Zimbabwe, 2020). However, studies (Treisman, 2015, TI-Z, 2021) have shown that whilst there appears to be a commitment, in terms of the drafted legislation, to combat the scourge of corruption, there is no proper coordination by the different state agencies with respect to a clear programme of action. Most of the provisions aimed at tackling corruption are found in various provisions of the criminal statutes such as the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Amendment Act (2004) and the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act (2004). However, corruption is rife in the effecting agencies, with most Zimbabweans perceiving the Zimbabwean Republic Police (ZRP) force as the most corrupt organ of state.

5.2.4 Arbitration and Recourse Gaps

Arbitration and recourse mechanisms for corruption in Zimbabwe's local governance sector suffer from critical deficiencies. The lack of an independent and transparent mechanism for reporting corruption allegations undermines public trust. Whistleblower protection mechanisms are weak, dissuading individuals from coming forward. Recent documented cases highlight instances where whistleblowers have faced reprisals, further underscoring the inadequacy of existing recourse mechanisms (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 2022).

Zimbabwe also lack a protection from employer reprisals linked to disclosures of possible corrupt practices and misconduct against employees who report such misconduct. There is no provision in Zimbabwean law which guarantees the protection of witnesses. Section 14 of the Prevention of Corruption Act criminalises the victimisation of persons who provide or disclose information on corrupt practices. Whilst the legislation is comprehensive in laying out its objectives, the execution thereof is often limited by the means of the enforcing agencies of the state. There is no provision in the statute books which provide for the protection of a witness's family, and such protection is limited to the persons who report offences and assist and testify in court cases arising therefrom. There is also no provision in any current legislation

that allows for witness relocation and assignment of new identity because the law is silent thereon.

The South African Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995 defines a witness as 'a person who wishes to give evidence, gives evidence or gave evidence for the purposes of this Act and includes any member of his or her family or household whose safety is being threatened by any person or group of persons, whether known to him or her or not, as a result thereof.' This Act effectively established the first witness protection agency in Africa, which is severely lacking in Zimbabwe, and will continue to impact negatively on its efforts to eradicate the culture of fraud and corruption which has become entrenched in many of the country's institutions.

5.2.5 Non-Existence of Real Policies Against Corruption

The rhetoric surrounding anti-corruption policies in Zimbabwe's local governance sector contrasts with the tangible absence of robust and enforceable frameworks. While policy documents such as the 'Local Authorities Anti-Corruption Policy' exist, implementation remains sporadic. Political will to enforce these policies is often undermined by selective application and a lack of accountability. The documented prevalence of corrupt practices despite existing policies points to a substantial gap between policy formulation and actual implementation (Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development, 2018).

Zimbabwe has an archaic law on its statute books called the Official Secrets Act, OSA, (1970) which is a remnant of its colonial past enacted by the previous Rhodesian government. Section 4 of OSA deals with the "prohibition of communication of certain information" and creates a series of offences relating to the receiving and disclosure of official information without authorization. While state agents and local government officials argue that the OSA act is aimed at safeguarding critical national security and related local government information interests and is aimed at combatting spying and espionage against Zimbabwe, it is often used to suppress exposure of corrupt practices and maladministration in government institutions. The penalty for disclosure of official secrets without prior authorisation under section 4 of OSA is a term of imprisonment of up to 20 years, a fine or both such fine and imprisonment. Such extreme punitive measures have the effect of silencing any exposure of corruption by potential whistleblowers.

5.2.6 Weak Public Financial Management and Procurement Policies

The study unearthed an array of weaknesses in the PFM system, legislation and processes. Financial management and procurement policies within Zimbabwe's local governance systems vary in strength and enforcement as explained in prior sections.

The PFM system lack strong penalties against offenders to dissuade violation of the Act. Most offenders who are politically exposed persons (PEPs) have violated the Act without any sanctions imposed against them. This explains the current weak commitment to the reform process as political elites who should lead the process are also controlling the reform. The adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) in some instances is a positive step towards transparency. However, documented cases reveal instances of weak financial oversight, mismanagement of funds, and procurement irregularities. The lack of consistent adherence to these policies compromises the effectiveness of financial controls within local authorities (Zimbabwe Independent, 2021).

This analysis argues that for the current PFM reform to succeed, an enabling environment must be fostered. A strong political will and commitment to the reform process as well as implementation and monitoring is quite important. Stakeholders including civil society must take ownership and actively participate in the ongoing fiscal reforms process. Best practice should not ignore the country context and the best fit model is always ideal. It is imperative to have strong coordination with development partners. The PFM Act should strengthen mechanisms and systems available for legislative bodies (Parliament and local government councils) to use in monitoring and oversight over revenue and expenditure by the State (including all Commissions; institutions and agencies of government at every level; statutory bodies; government-controlled entities; provincial and metropolitan councils and local authorities).

5.2.7 Centralisation of Power

The legacy of centralized decision-making in Zimbabwe, as highlighted by Dube (2019), has cast a persistent shadow on the autonomy of local authorities, hindering anti-corruption efforts at the grassroots level. Despite legislative reforms guiding the nation toward decentralization, the full realization of genuine local autonomy remains an ongoing challenge. The historical imprint of centralized governance creates hurdles for the desired shift in decision-making dynamics, limiting the independence of local authorities. This centralization, coupled with fiscal constraints arising from heavy dependence on central government allocations, limits the ability of local entities to implement effective anti-corruption measures independently. Moreover, local entities face fiscal constraints, exacerbated by their substantial dependence on central government allocations, as noted by Dube (2019). This financial reliance impedes local governments' ability to autonomously implement robust anti-corruption measures, perpetuating a complex interplay between historical legacies and contemporary fiscal

challenges, ultimately impeding progress toward transparent and accountable local governance.

5.2.8 Weak Citizen Engagement Strategies for Anti-Corruption

Citizen engagement in local governance in Zimbabwe faces substantial challenges, constituting a significant anti-corruption gap. Despite existing platforms, the absence of a standardized framework hinders genuine participation. Fiscal constraints and dependence on central government allocations limit local authorities' autonomy to implement robust anti-corruption measures. Budget consultations and strategic planning suffer from low citizen engagement due to factors like insufficient notice and technical language. Irregularly convened feedback meetings and weak financial reporting practices enable corruption and underperformance. A lack of public knowledge about legal frameworks exacerbates the situation. With over 95% of residents having no access to critical documents, weak citizen engagement becomes a major anti-corruption gap, allowing corruption and financial indiscipline to persist without adequate scrutiny in local governance processes.

Additionally, the surge in corruption is exacerbated by the absence of strong social accountability policies and systems, including service charters, citizen satisfaction surveys, public hearings, and participatory budgeting. Without these essential tools, there is a notable lack of transparency and avenues for citizen engagement in governance processes. The absence of clear benchmarks and feedback mechanisms diminishes the ability of citizens to hold authorities accountable, creating an environment where corruption can thrive unscrutinized. Implementing a comprehensive suite of social accountability tools is crucial to fostering transparency, citizen involvement, and combating corruption effectively in public service delivery.

5.2.9 Weak Anti-Corruption Systems and Policy Absence in Local Authorities

The lack of nuanced anti-corruption policies at the local government level in Zimbabwe is compounded by several critical gaps. The absence of whistleblower protection policies, open data mechanisms, and weak contract interpretation hinders transparency and accountability. Furthermore, the lack of e-procurement and e-accounting systems heightens the risk of fraudulent activities. The absence of a designated office or officer to handle anti-corruption issues creates a vacuum in oversight, allowing corruption to flourish unchecked. Additionally, the lack of a standalone anti-corruption arbitration board further exacerbates the situation, impeding inward prevention and effective regulation of anti-corruption activities at the local government level. Addressing these gaps is imperative for bolstering integrity and accountability in local governance.

5.3 Chapter Summary

The analysis of anti-corruption measures within Zimbabwe's local governance system underscores the imperative for targeted interventions. Documented evidence reveals the persistent challenges emanating from gaps in policy formulation, weak institutional structures, cultural tolerance of corruption, inadequate arbitration mechanisms, and inconsistent enforcement of financial and procurement policies. Addressing these gaps requires a comprehensive approach that combines policy reforms, institutional strengthening, and a cultural shift towards integrity.

5. Enhancing Anti-Corruption Capacities: Exploring Strategies for Local Governments in Zimbabwe

In the pursuit of effective anti-corruption strategies, local governments in Zimbabwe face a multifaceted landscape shaped by governance structures, technological advancements, and legal frameworks. This section delves into the capabilities and possibilities of local governments in Zimbabwe to bolster their anti-corruption measures, focusing on Open Government Data, E-procurement, Legal Interpretation of Contracts, and Capacity Building Recommendations.

5.1 Open Government Data

Local governments in Zimbabwe possess untapped potential in leveraging Open Government Data (OGD) as a robust tool against corruption. The dissemination of transparent, accessible, and timely data enhances public scrutiny and participation, serving as a deterrent to corrupt practices. While strides have been made, challenges persist, including limited data availability and the need for standardized reporting. Collaborative efforts between local governments, civil society, and the private sector are crucial to overcoming these challenges and unlocking the full potential of OGD in promoting accountability and integrity.

Current Landscape - A notable initiative is the Zimbabwe Open Data Platform, providing datasets on various sectors. However, the comprehensiveness and real-time nature of the data remain areas for improvement (Zimbabwe Open Data Platform, 2022).

Possibilities and Recommendations - Local governments should prioritize enhancing data quality and accessibility, exploring partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for capacity building, and adopting international best practices in OGD implementation.

5.2 E-procurement

E-procurement presents local governments in Zimbabwe with a transformative mechanism to mitigate corruption risks in the procurement process. The digitization of procurement activities enhances transparency, reduces opportunities for fraud, and streamlines the bidding process. The adoption of e-procurement systems, however, requires significant investment, technical expertise, and a commitment to combating corruption.

Current Landscape - While some local governments have initiated e-procurement systems, challenges persist, including inadequate infrastructure and limited digital

literacy among stakeholders (Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, 2017).

Possibilities and Recommendations - Local governments should prioritize investment in e-procurement infrastructure, conduct comprehensive training programs, and collaborate with the private sector to ensure the seamless integration of digital procurement platforms.

5.3 *Legal Interpretation of Contracts*

Local governments play a pivotal role in ensuring the legal interpretation of contracts aligns with anti-corruption objectives. Clarity in contract language, strict adherence to legal standards, and regular audits contribute to the prevention of corrupt practices. However, challenges such as limited legal expertise and potential loopholes in contract language require strategic interventions.

Current Landscape - The Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act (2017) provides a legal framework, but challenges in interpretation and enforcement persist (Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, 2017).

Possibilities and Recommendations - Local governments should invest in legal capacity building, engage legal experts for contract drafting and interpretation, and periodically review and update contractual frameworks to address emerging corruption risks.

5.4 *Capacity Building Recommendations*

Building the capacity of local governments is foundational to effective anti-corruption measures. This extends beyond acquiring technical skills to fostering a culture of integrity, ethics, and accountability among staff. Capacity building initiatives should encompass training programs, workshops, and knowledge-sharing platforms tailored to the specific needs of local governance.

Current Landscape - While capacity-building initiatives exist, they often lack continuity and may not address the evolving nature of corruption risks within local governments.

Possibilities and Recommendations - Local governments should establish dedicated units for continuous capacity building, collaborate with educational institutions for tailored training programs, and foster knowledge-sharing platforms to ensure a sustained and adaptive approach to anti-corruption capacity development.

Local governments in Zimbabwe possess substantial capabilities and possibilities to reinforce anti-corruption strategies. Leveraging Open Government Data, adopting E-procurement systems, ensuring sound legal interpretation of contracts, and prioritizing continuous capacity building are integral components of a comprehensive and effective anti-corruption framework. Collaboration, resource allocation, and a

commitment to sustained improvement will be crucial in realizing the full potential of these measures within the local governance context.

5.5 Chapter Summary

In summary it has been seen that, local governments in Zimbabwe stand at a critical juncture, equipped with significant potential to enhance their anti-corruption capacities. The exploration of strategies, including Open Government Data, E-procurement, Legal Interpretation of Contracts, and Capacity Building Recommendations, underscores the multifaceted nature of combating corruption. However, it is imperative for local authorities to prioritize collaboration, resource investment, and a steadfast commitment to implementation for these strategies to yield comprehensive and sustained results. Only through concerted efforts can local governments fortify their resilience against corrupt practices, fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and ethical governance.

6. The Extent of Youth Participation in Local Government In Zimbabwe

This section seeks to assess the extent of youth participation in local governance processes in Zimbabwe using Hart's Ladder of Participation as a guiding framework. Hart's Ladder of Participation provides a conceptual framework for understanding the varying degrees of involvement individuals or groups can have in decision-making processes. Applying this ladder to the context of youth participation in local governance in Zimbabwe facilitates a nuanced analysis of the current state, barriers, and opportunities. This section delves into the layers of Hart's Ladder to elucidate the dynamics of youth engagement in local governance.



Hart's Ladder of Participation, developed by Roger Hart, provides a conceptual framework for understanding the varying degrees of involvement individuals or groups can have in decision-making processes. The ladder consists of eight rungs, representing a spectrum of participation levels, from the lowest rungs of "manipulation" and "decoration" to the highest rungs of "citizen control" and "delegated power." At the base, participation may be symbolic or tokenistic, with individuals having little real influence. As one ascends the ladder, there is a shift towards genuine consultation, partnership, and, ultimately, empowerment. The framework is widely used in the fields of community development, education, and governance to assess and enhance the quality of participation, ensuring that individuals, including youth, move from passive involvement to active collaboration in decision-making processes (Kothari and Roshani. 1997).

6.1 Current State of Youth Participation in Local Governance

Examining the current state of youth involvement in local governance in Zimbabwe through the lens of Hart's Ladder of Participation reveals a complex scenario. While there has been recognition of the importance of youth engagement, the existing

situation often aligns with the lower rungs of the ladder, such as "manipulation" and "decoration." Positive rhetoric has not fully translated into substantive participation, evident in the limited representation of young individuals in decision-making bodies and the absence of dedicated platforms for authentic youth voices. Notably, initiatives like the Zimbabwe Youth Council, represent a step on the ladder but face challenges, including resource constraints and occasional politicization of youth involvement, hindering their ascent to more empowering rungs.

6.1.1 Youth participation in strategic planning and budgeting

Section 20 of Zimbabwe's Constitution is paramount to the discussion around the engagement, involvement and participation of young people in the economic governance of the country. According to section 20(1)(b), "The State and all institutions and agencies of government at every level must take reasonable measures, including affirmative action programs, to ensure that youths have opportunities to be represented and participate in political, social, economic and other spheres of life." Strategic planning and budgeting are key policy processes in determining council priorities and allocation of resources. In order to maintain a healthy democracy, young people need to be educated and encouraged to become part of an active civic culture, but they are often excluded from authentic community decision-making opportunities.

Madhekeni and Zhou (2012) submits that as young people have gained increasing prominence on the international development agenda, so too has the issue of their participation in decision making. Globally, there is increasing recognition that young people not only have the right to decide how resources are allocated, but that they also have valuable knowledge and viewpoints to bring to governance processes. Increasingly, governments, donors and civil society are recognising both the specific needs and vulnerabilities of youth as well as their huge potential to contribute positively to development. Through the African Youth Charter (2006), the declaration on Youth development and empowerment in SADC (2015), the Zimbabwean Constitution, the Zimbabwe Youth Council Act, the National Development Strategy – 1 2021 to 2025, the National Youth Policy 2020-2025, and the National Gender Policy (2013-2017), Zimbabwe recognises the youth, which constitutes approximately 70% of the Zimbabwean population as a critical stakeholder in governance and decision-making processes. To this end, national and local governments must create opportunities to further enhance youth participation in budget processes. It is also anticipated that the creation of the Youth Caucus within the Parliament of Zimbabwe in 2021 will indeed strengthen the representation of Youth in the Parliament which caucus should be at the core of advocating for prioritisation of youth development and empowerment through the budget and in-line with the NDS1 targets. This paper argues for the cascading of youth quotas to local governments.

ZIMCODD led Open Budget Surveys (OBS) for years 2019 to 2022 show an average 9.1% participation of youth in local government budgeting. However, the situation further deteriorates in RDCs where participation is acutely low due to weak transport and communication networks and relatively low budget literacy levels. The ZIMCODD OBS for 2019 show that reasons cited for low youth participation in budgeting include lack of appreciation among youth on the importance of local government budgeting in socio-economic transformation, lack of information on the dynamics of public finance management in general and local government budgeting in particular, lack of interest, occupation in the informal sector where competition is cut throat and hence lack of time to attend local government budget meetings and inconvenient times and venues where budget consultations are convened.

ZINASU (2022) submits that the main barriers to youth participation in national and local government processes are social, economic and institutional in nature. First, the prevailing societal attitude towards young people is often that they are troubled and troubling, which gives justification to “act upon them without their agreement” (Checkoway, 2011). In the local government space, most youth do not own properties and adult property holders and council policy makers find less logic in engaging them. Youth as well are discouraged to discuss rates on properties as they also don’t own property. Muzondo (2016) adds that youth agendas set by adults who hold this opinion might focus on young people’s shortcomings and problems rather than invest in youth’s potential as a positive source of change. Second, income inequality restricts participation. Voluntary non-remunerated engagement of young people requires time, but time always has opportunity costs. When engaging civically, young people forego the opportunity of pursuing a paid activity. Not all young people can afford this, resulting in the involuntary exclusion of poorer young people, which distorts the representativeness of the active youth. Financial constraints also endanger the sustainability of youth associations. Thirdly, ZIMCODD (2019) noted that employees of public institutions and local authorities can lack the will or the knowledge to involve young people in processes effectively. Furthermore, there can be conflicts with the organisational culture (e.g. a very formal setting not apt for young people) and procedures (e.g. the final steps of policy design and planning may be behind closed doors).

6.1.2 The Case of Junior Councils

Junior Councils can be considered a pillar of youth participation in local governance. The National Junior Councils Association (NJCA) records that junior councils originated in Salisbury during the 1950s before expanding to other municipalities. The NJCA was established in 2011 with the objective of advancing inclusivity through its advocacy for

the implementation of junior councils within rural district councils. The primary objective of junior councils is to foster community development and effective local governance by facilitating the exchange of ideas between young people and senior citizens in the context of sustainable development discussions. However, despite the existence of junior councils in urban areas of Zimbabwe for approximately seven decades, their effectiveness as a participation mechanism, whether in rural or urban remains obscured.

6.1.3 The Work and Challenges of Junior Councils

Research has shown that Junior Councils are seemingly structures parallel to the main councils. Certainly, urban junior councils, have been granted financial support by corporate entities and not local authorities. This has enabled them to convene monthly meetings for the purpose of discussing matters pertaining to the provision of services which impact on children. Urban Junior Councils in Harare for example have shown great agency by raising resources to respond to key issues affecting children in particular. Furthermore, the junior council advocates for children's rights issues such as child abuse, early marriages, cyberbullying, and substance abuse on a regular basis in schools. In contrast to their urban counterparts, which have access to corporate financing, the majority of junior councils in rural areas depend primarily on inadequately resourced RDCs and, to a lesser degree, non-governmental organisations for financial support. Furthermore, junior councillors hailing from rural regions have expressed discontent regarding what they perceived to be preferential treatment towards their urban counterparts when it came to opportunities for capacity-building, including seminars, workshops, and conferences (Musarurwa, 2019).

A challenge of note is the fact that junior councillors are not selected by local governments. Instead, the Ministry of Youth, Sport, Arts, and Recreation and The Ministry of Education choose junior councillors. This has led to the junior councillors serving the interests of the two ministries and not local governments. The junior councillor nomination process is generally perceived as lacking in democratic principles. It is emphasised that certain institutions nominated pupils at the behest of education authorities, rather than those who were favoured by their peers. Furthermore, although the candidate selection process encompassed essay writing and interviews, the subjects addressed were largely irrelevant to the rights of children (Sakala, 2018).

The Zimbabwe Youth Council Act (Chapter 25:19) of 1983 and policy directives, including a circular dated 16 November 2017 from the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works that urged all local governments to establish junior councils to empower youth in decision-making, establish the national Youth Council, with which local junior councils are only loosely affiliated (Munyede et. al, 2021). Nevertheless, the

absence of a precise legal structure governing junior councils provides duty-bearers in local governments with an opportunity to circumvent their obligation to provide junior councillors with platforms to engage in decision-making.

Essentially junior councils particularly those affiliated with rural district councils, in their present iteration, possess a tokenistic character. Irregular meetings and inadequate funding prevent them from being given sufficient opportunities to carry out their mandate. Essentially the visibility of Junior Councils is solely acknowledged during children's rights observances, such as the yearly Day of the African Child.

6.1.4 The Absence of Youth Quotas and Structures in Local Authorities

Whilst we now have 10 seats for youth (people aged from 21-35 years of age), in parliament on the back of Clause 11 of the Constitutional Amendment. What is surprising though is the absence of such quota provisions for youth at local government level. Verily, we should have reserved seats for youth in local councils to ensure that youth mainstreaming takes place at policy level. The local councils themselves must have a youth focal person on their to ensure that youth issues are mainstreamed. Hence, the current situation is that there are efforts at national level to ensure that youth are part of the governance architecture. This is not the case at local government level.

6.1.5 Youth are not Rate Payers

Given the harsh economic realities in Zimbabwe, where 61% of employed youth earn less than US\$17.50 per month, property ownership is an elusive goal. Affording even the lower-priced properties in high-density suburbs which cost on average USD 17,000, is beyond imagination for many. With meagre incomes, youth prioritise survival essentials like rentals, food, and education, leaving no room for property investment. The struggle for daily subsistence takes precedence over homeownership aspirations. Consequently, youth interest in local governance and rate payer issues is very minimal. This explains why they do not take the time to attend local governance meetings. Addressing these concerns becomes crucial for local authorities to engage and represent a demographic burdened by economic challenges, their interests stretching beyond immediate survival to the hope of a more secure future

4.2 Strategies to Enhance Youth Inclusion:

To strengthen the mainstreaming of youth in local government, several key recommendations can be considered. Firstly, a thorough review and reform of the junior council selection process are essential. Advocacy for a more democratic and transparent approach, involving local governments and community members, will help align representatives with local needs. Additionally, the establishment of a clear legal

framework governing junior councils is crucial. This framework should outline their roles, responsibilities, and powers, ensuring their meaningful participation in decision-making processes. To further integrate youth voices, the introduction of youth quotas at the local government level is recommended. Reserved seats for youth representatives will promote direct involvement in policy discussions. Moreover, appointing a dedicated youth focal person within local councils will ensure consistent consideration of youth issues. Equal access to capacity-building opportunities, irrespective of urban or rural backgrounds, should be emphasised. Financial support for junior councils, particularly in rural areas, is vital for effective functioning and community impact. Improved collaboration between ministries and regular evaluation of junior council activities, involving local communities, will contribute to a holistic and sustainable approach to youth mainstreaming in local governance.

4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter assessed youth participation in Zimbabwe's local governance using Hart's Ladder of Participation. Despite positive rhetoric, youth engagement often remains at lower rungs, hindered by limited representation and tokenistic initiatives. Junior Councils face challenges in resource allocation and democratic processes. The absence of youth quotas at the local government level is notable. The chapter concludes with strategies, including democratic reforms, legal frameworks, youth quotas, and dedicated focal persons, emphasizing equitable resource access. A collaborative and consistent approach is crucial for meaningful youth involvement in local governance.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Conclusion

The political economy analysis examined the local government system of Zimbabwe in terms of its evolution and contemporary context. The PEA wielded a slant towards corruption and the efficacy of the anti-corruption architecture in fostering sustainable governance at the local level. The study indisputably noted that the independent government in Zimbabwe introduced a raft of legal and institutional measures to dismantle the racist backed dual system of governance introduced by the colonial administration. However, it is important to note that despite this legal and institutional reform purportedly meant to dismantle racist backed institutional differentiation, the post-independent government did not depose its excessive control on sub-national governments.

This era rather presents the post-independent national government's perfection of colonial dominance approaches through creating legislation and institutions to retain wide and extensive control of sub-national governments. Key legislative and institutional infrastructure of local government was analysed in the context of gaps and challenges limiting the effectiveness of the system in delivering services and fighting corruption. Fundamentally, the study established that Zimbabwe has a robust local government establishment with clear legal frameworks. However, the extensive influence of the national government in the management of local authorities have in many instances compromised the service delivery and anti-corruption initiatives in these institutions.

There exist notable interferences from the national government in the policy and administrative processes of local authorities to the detriment of good governance and anti-corruption efforts in councils. The study discussed various forms of corruption and abuse of public resources in local authorities and realises multiple challenges in the configuration of the anti-corruption framework to deal effectively with the vice. The challenges include a porous public procurement system that is systemically navigated by PEPs and council employees. E-governance remains inadequately tapped to deliver sustainable anti-corruption results in local authorities.

Whereas, Zimbabwe have a comprehensive legal and institutional for anti-corruption there are notable weaknesses, both legislative and structural, inter alia, political capture of key anti-corruption institutions such as ZACC, NPA, ZRP, archaic legislation such as the OSA and weak protection of whistle-blowers and their families. This is compounded by the reluctance of local authorities to establish concrete systems of

- Push government to develop mechanisms to protect governance and anti-corruption institutions against capture by political elites. This may imply creating frameworks for ensuring the appointment of genuinely independent constitutional commissions

8.2.1 Local Authorities

In interacting with local authorities, the SIYA consortium must advocate for and strive for the following;

- Support local governments to prioritise enhancing data quality and accessibility, exploring partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for capacity building, and adopting international best practices in OGD implementation.
- Support local governments to prioritise investment in e-procurement infrastructure, conduct comprehensive training programs, and collaborate with the private sector to ensure the seamless integration of digital procurement platforms.
- Encourage local governments to invest in legal capacity building, engage legal experts for contract drafting and interpretation, and periodically review and update contractual frameworks to address emerging corruption risks.
- Advocate for local governments to establish dedicated units for continuous capacity building, collaborate with educational institutions for tailored training programs, and foster knowledge-sharing platforms to ensure a sustained and adaptive approach to anti-corruption capacity development.
- Work with local authorities to strengthen mechanisms of monitoring debt to ensure a positive correlation between debt acquisition of the repayment capacity of council.
- Advocate for the publication of key policy documents such as strategic plans and budgets on various platforms and media to enhance public access and debate.
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]



8.3.3 Ministry responsible for Local Government

When engaging with the Ministry responsible for local government, the SIYA consortium should advocate for;

- The Ministry to ensure that granting of borrowing powers should follow a comprehensive review of the capacity of council to repay its debt. After issuance of the borrowing powers the ministry through its decentralised structures should complement council in monitoring use of borrowed funds to reduce abuse of public resources.

8.3.4 Civil society and development partners

As the SIYA consortium interacts with other like minded CSOs, the focus should be to;

- Assist in capacity building of local authorities and anti-corruption institutions on key issues such as the modelling anti-corruption initiatives, good corporate governance, strengthening capacity of oversight institutions in monitoring executive organs.
- Conduct public awareness on local government policy systems and processes, PFM processes such as public budgeting and anti-corruption institutions, processes and policies at national and local government levels
- 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
- Develop tracking mechanisms to monitor the link between public policy input and the actual policy outcomes, for example budget allocations and development outcomes and outputs.

8.3.5. For youth Engagement

As the SIYA consortium aims to enhance youth participation in local governance processes, the consortium should;

- Conduct a thorough review and reform of the junior council selection process are essential. Advocacy for a more democratic and transparent approach, involving local governments and community members in the selection of junior council members will help align representatives with local needs.

encourage proper and sustainable change. To this end, the best approach would be to work with relevant state and government structures to push for change from within. Based on this thinking, the SIYA consortium can infuse the following approaches into their programming model;

- Have an influential patron respected by the state, government and civil society. Such a patron can encourage fruitful partnerships and also encourage Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between the various parties. An good example of such a patron would have to be Father Fidelis Mukonori and how he managed to establish a staunch partnership and level interactions between the Centre for Conflict Management and the Ministry in charge of local government on issues to do with development induced displacements.
- The other approach could be to establish a SIYA advisory board. The board should be comprised of members from state, government and civil society who have the mandate to ensure that local authorities perform better. The power of the advisory board is that it could break barriers to communication between CS, the state and government through its membership.
- The other sustainable entry point model could be the introduction of a recognition and incentives approach. The consortium can establish recognition programs or incentives for local authorities that demonstrate a commitment to anti-corruption measures and inclusive governance. An awards ceremony for local governments at the end of the year is an example of such. This approach has been used by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation which has used the Mo Ibrahim Prize for good governance which is awarded annually to the best performing president in that regard. This will encourage local authorities to open up to CSO accountability and transparency. A metric of indicators and be used to assess the governance prowess of local authorities for the prize. Such metrics can include those portrayed in the simple dummy evaluation tool below;

Indicator Area of Assessment	Scoring Scale (1-5)
Anti-Corruption Measures	
1. Existence of Anti-Corruption Policies and Procedures	
2. Implementation and Enforcement of Anti-Corruption Measures	
3. Transparency in Financial Transactions	

Indicator Area of Assessment	Scoring Scale (1-5)
4. Measures to Prevent and Address Bribery	
5. Reporting Mechanisms for Corruption Concerns	
Transparency and Accountability	
6. Accessibility of Local Government Budget Information	
7. Openness in Decision-Making Processes	
8. Availability of Public Records and Documents	
9. Citizen Access to Information on Local Projects	
10. Mechanisms for Public Grievance Redressal	
Youth Inclusion and Engagement	
11. Existence of Youth Representation in Local Governance	
12. Opportunities for Youth Participation in Decision-Making	
13. Youth-Inclusive Policies and Programs	
14. Mechanisms for Collecting Youth Feedback	
15. Youth Engagement in Local Development Projects	
Overall Assessment	
16. Overall Perception of Local Government's Commitment to Integrity	

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