



ZIMCODD
ZIMBABWE COALITION ON DEBT & DEVELOPMENT

"The Destruction of Market Stalls for the Poor And Vulnerable Adults who are just trying to make a living out of vending, is violation to their Right to Social Protection, which the Government Itself is failing to Provide." – Budiriro 5, Harare.

PUBLIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT SITUATIONAL REPORT.

July Issue

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	02
2.0	Purpose	03
3.0	Methodology	04
4.0	Contextual Analysis of Public Resources Management in Zimbabwe	06
5.0	Public Resource Management Survey Findings	08
5.1	Availability of public resources of economic value in Zimbabwe	09
5.2	Equal and equitable distribution of benefits of public resources	10
5.3	Citizens Involvement in Decisions to do with Public Resources	10
5.4	Access to Information on Public Resources	11
5.5	Public Resources Access by Demographic Groups	11
5.6	Access to Devolution Funds Information	12
5.7	COVID-19 Resources and Key Issues	15
5.8	Natural Resource Governance Issues	17
6.0	Social Services Delivery Findings	21
6.1	Availability of Trained Health Care Professionals	22
6.2	Quality of Healthcare	24
6.3	Access to Safe Sanitation and Social Amenities	25
6.4	Water Supply	31
6.5	Road Networks in Local Communities	32
6.6	Public Transport	35
7.0	Conclusion	37
7.1	Recommendations	38
8.0	Annex 1: Citizen's voices on Public Resource Management (Selected Human Interest Stories)	39



1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Public Resources Management (PRM) situational report for July 2021 seeks to generate evidence that outlines the challenges as well as mechanisms for improving PRM in Zimbabwe's targeted districts. It utilized a right based social accountability monitoring framework which observes principles of equitable resource allocation, expenditure management, performance management, public accountability, integrity, and oversight. The study covered 55 districts in Zimbabwe in July. The study was coordinated by the ZIMCODD's Community Resource Monitoring Agents (CORAs) resident in 55 districts across the country. ZIMCODD CORAs have been capacitated to monitor, track, document, and report the abuse of public resources at the district level monthly to provide a comprehensive understanding of the state of PRM.



2.0 PURPOSE

This study seeks to document evidence on poor economic governance that is characterized by grand systemic corruption, mismanagement of public resources, tenderpreneurship¹ resource leakages, and abuse. The study further seeks to provide information that promotes transparency and accountability on COVID-19 resource mobilisation, allocation, and vaccine expenditure as well as the need to stimulate citizen action against the abuse of public resources. The initiative intends to contribute to two main objectives which are:

- I. To build citizen agency in public resource monitoring and in particular, COVID-19 resources; and
- II. To promote participation in economic governance at the local level.

1. A process whereby government officials or political elites abuse their powers and influence to secure government tenders and contracts



3.0. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the stated key objectives, this situational report shared the information gathered through 55 CORAs from different districts countrywide.

The CORAs are Social and Economic Justice Ambassadors who have been capacitated and deployed to monitor and document the use of public resources in their districts monthly. A mixed methods research design utilizing surveys and case studies was employed to gather the perspectives of CORAs. The CORAs gather the data throughout the month using a survey questionnaire to identify leakages and bottlenecks in the flow of financial resources and to flag the abuse and mismanagement of public resources. A systematic random sampling process

was deployed by CORAs to engage stakeholders at their community level in a bid to compile comprehensive human-interest stories which are shared with ZIMCODD as case studies.

Quantitative responses to the survey questionnaire are augmented by qualitative data from case studies and this provides a judicious and comprehensive view of public resource management at the local level. It is expedient to note that, emic approaches have been adopted for this survey as they better capture the lived experiences of community members and their perspectives on PRM and tell the story from within their own contexts. The coverage of the PRM situational report is presented in Fig 1 below.

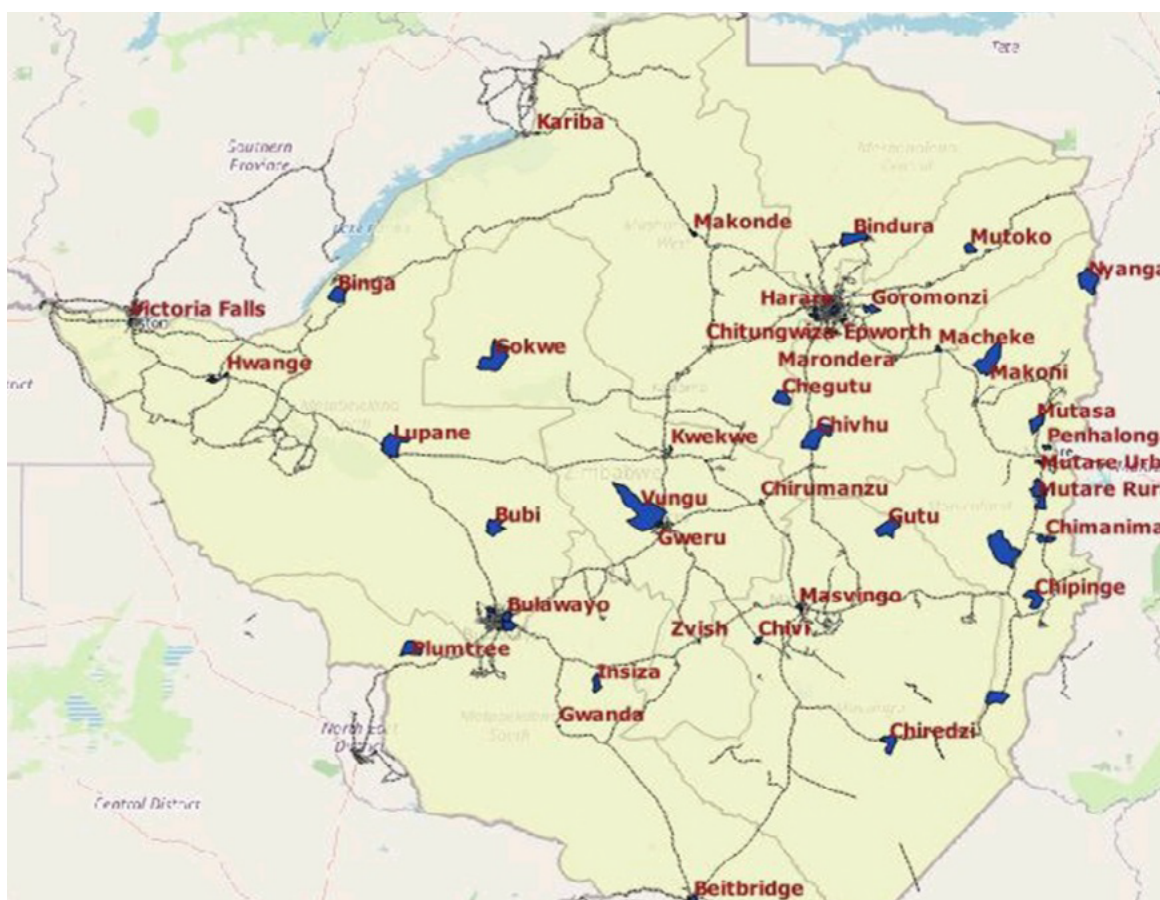


FIG 1: GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE



4.0 CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN ZIMBABWE

Public Resources Management in developing economies such as Zimbabwe is expected to spearhead socioeconomic development to reduce poverty and widening inequalities. However, this has proved difficult if not impossible due to binding constraints including excessive politicisation, lack of accountability and representation, inability to promote public interest and lack of responsiveness on the part of duty bearers. This comes at the expense of the other public interest priorities during this time of the pandemic, economic decline, and political instability.

Government prioritization and overall management of public resources has been under scrutiny during the July reporting period. Towards the end of May,² the government gave 18 Isuzu double cab cars to Chiefs and another 19 to members of the POLAD on Friday 30 July³. This has been criticized as a self-serving political decision by the ruling party rather than a decision that is made for the common good.

At the beginning of the year, the government announced that it had set aside US\$ 100 million for the procurement of 20 million vaccines but as of 2 August the COVID-19 vaccines budget had run out as US\$ 93.2 million had been used⁴. The amount spent and the set target do not tally, a cause for concern that should be investigated by the relevant oversight bodies.

At the same time, the government has spent approximately US\$ 1, 665, 000⁵ for the 37 ISUZU double cab cars for chiefs

(18) and POLAD members (19) at a time the pandemic is ravaging the economy and causing untold suffering among communities. Hypothetically, if the money had been used for the purchasing of vaccines it could have bought 333 000 doses of Sinopharm⁶ and gone a long way in pandemic management. Nonetheless, this was not the case.

On the other hand, service delivery across the country continues to decline with infrastructural gaps and decrepitude. Local authorities are failing to provide sufficient water with areas such as Tafara, Budiro, and Arcadia in Harare experiencing high water cuts. Electrical power cuts have become the order of the day exposing ZESA's incapacity to generate sufficient power for the entire nation.

Power outages impede national development and growth as most businesses rely on electricity. Healthcare is in a dire situation as hospitals are not coping with the malignant effects of the Delta variant. At the same time, the failure by Harare City Council to pay nurses for over 2 months had a grave impact on service delivery⁷. This continued ineffectiveness in public resource management as it manifests in poor public service delivery calls for a redefinition of the role of the public sector and a wholesale reform in public resource governance.

2. <https://iharare.com/pres-mnangagwa-hands-over-brand-new-cars-to-traditional-chiefs/>
3. <https://www.zimetro.co.zw/teachers-criticise-mnangagwa-for-giving-cars-to-polad-clowns/>
4. <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2021/08/zim-covid-19-budget-dries-up/>
5. Each ISUZU D Max Double cab cost approximately US\$ 45 000 after duty
6. At US\$ 5 each.
7. www.allafrica.com/stories/202107050399



5.0 PUBLIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SURVEY FINDINGS

5.1 AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC RESOURCES OF ECONOMIC VALUE IN ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe is endowed with numerous resources of economic value. This was attested by the stratified survey conducted in 55 districts from the 10 provinces. The survey discovered that public resources of economic value are natural and man-made.

Timber, land, water bodies, estates, fish, kapenta, forestry, wildlife minerals such as coal, gold, limestone, chrome, diamonds, dolomite, black granite, white granite, quarry, copper; roads; schools; boreholes; hospitals; and clinics. These are the public resources that the citizens expect the government to harness through good public resource management which fosters inclusivity, bridges the inequality gap and liberate citizens from the shackles of poverty.

5.2 EQUAL AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF BENEFITS OF PUBLIC RESOURCES

Only 37% of respondents noted that the resources in their communities are distributed inclusively and equitably while 6% reported that to a lesser extent, public resources were equitably distributed.

The majority, 57% of the respondents are not included in the distribution of public resources in communities despite the availability of legal frameworks that guarantee equal distribution of public resources at the community level.

On the contrary, the preamble to Chapter 14 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe alludes to the “equitable allocation of national resources and the participation of local communities in the determination of development priorities within their areas; it further notes that there must be devolution of power and responsibilities to lower tiers of government in Zimbabwe”.

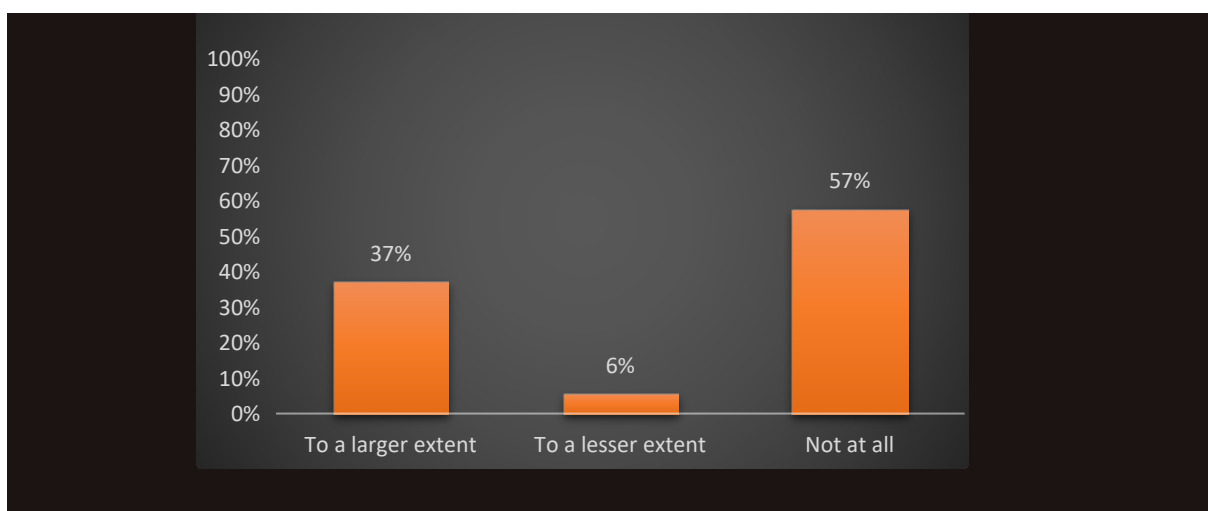


FIG 2: DISTRIBUTION OF BENEFITS FROM LOCAL PUBLIC RESOURCES

5.3 CITIZENS INVOLVEMENT IN DECISIONS TO DO WITH PUBLIC RESOURCES

Survey results showed that citizens across all districts are not fully informed about resource governance in their communities. 56% of respondents acknowledged that they are partly informed while 44% are not even informed when duty bearers make decisions to do with public resources. However, citizens' involvement is critical not only for community development but for national growth as well as it ensures transparency and accountability on public resource use.

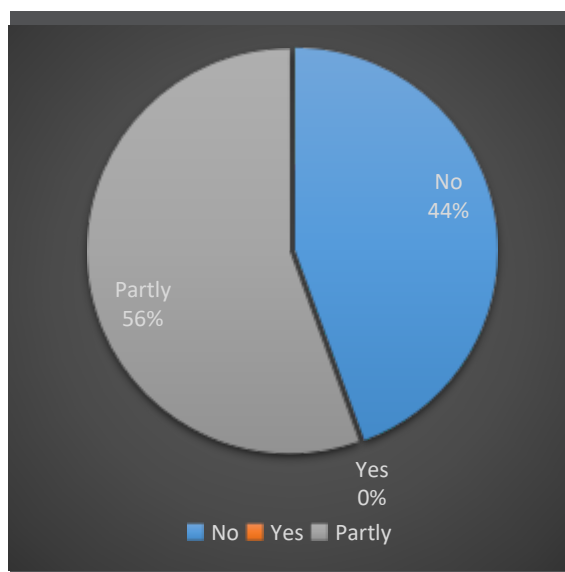


FIG 3: INFORMED ABOUT THE EXPLOITATION AND USE OF PUBLIC RESOURCES

Community participation in use of public resources is more than just a way of improving the quality of the life of citizens. It also functions as a feedback mechanism to the government's performance in public resource governance. It affords

local people an opportunity to air out their grievances and input into how public resources can be utilized to address issues for local service provision.

5.4 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON PUBLIC RESOURCES

Access to information promotes good public resource governance through improved transparency and accountability. Access to information allows the citizens to monitor and determine how public resources are used. Fig 4 below presents the findings of the survey on citizen's access to information on public resource management.

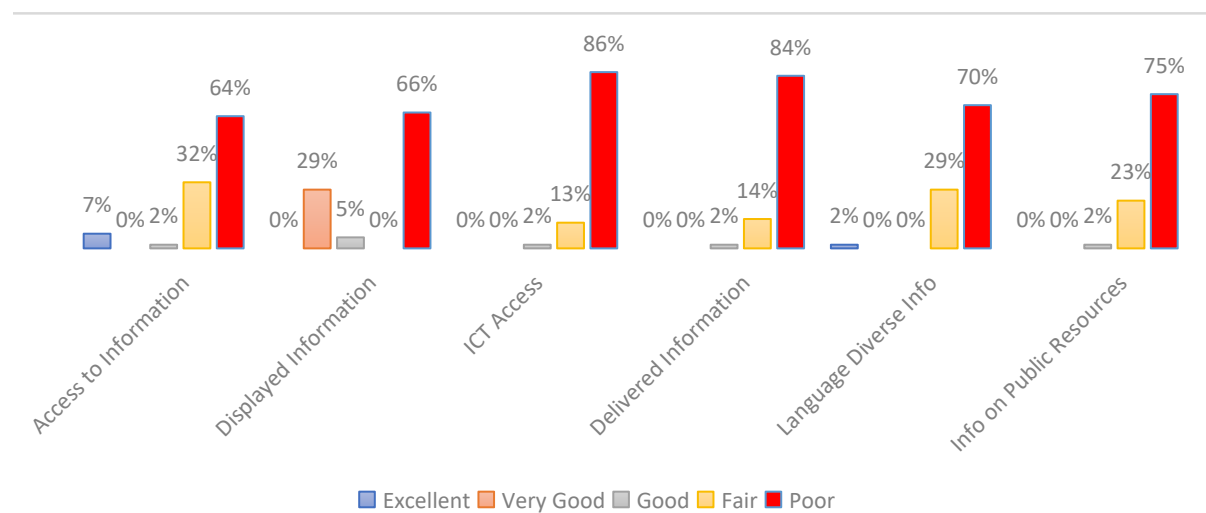


FIG 4: ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON PUBLIC RESOURCES AT COMMUNITY LEVEL

The survey found out that most respondents generally lack access to information on public resource management at community level. Access to information received a poor rating across all variables as indicated above. Access to information in one central source was rated poor by 64% of the respondents; access to clearly displayed and printed community information rated poor in 66% respondents; free access to computers and the Internet in public places was rated poorly by 86% respondents; followed by access to community information that is delivered in person to people who may have difficulty in leaving their home which was rated poor by 84% of respondents.

Access to information on natural and public resources such as minerals and wildlife was rated poor by 75% of respondents while Community information that is available in different languages was rated poor by 70%

respondents. Overall, the findings indicate poor access to information across the 55 districts thereby making it difficult and almost impossible for the citizens to hold the government to account in respect to its fiduciary responsibilities.

5.5 PUBLIC RESOURCES ACCESS BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Access to public resources was assessed and disaggregated by different demographic groups comprising the elderly, people with disabilities, youth and women. As with access to information, access to public resources was rated poor across all demographic groups i.e. 86% of respondents rated poor the access to public resources by people with disabilities; followed by access to public resources by the elderly which was rated poor by 63% respondents; for the elderly 54% and 45% for women as depicted in fig.5 below:



FIG 5: ACCESS TO PUBLIC RESOURCES BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Across the districts, almost half (45%) of the respondents also reported that access to public resources by women was fair denoting that advocacy around equitable access to resources by women has begun to bear fruit however, there is need to scrutinize if there is fair and equal access to resources by various women categories.

This is because equality rather than inequality fosters national development and growth. Therefore, the disaggregation of public resources according to gender, age and disability status is pivotal to entrench social and economic justice.

5.6 ACCESS TO DEVOLUTION FUNDS INFORMATION

Devolution remains key to achieving an upper middle-income economy by 2030. The implementation of Devolution in Zimbabwe has however, been constrained despite the policies and

legislative framework that supports its full implementation. These include inter alia the Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013), Provincial Councils and Administration Act (29:11), Urban Councils Act (29:15), Rural District Councils Act (29:13), the 2021 National Budget, the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1), and Devolution Policy.

Zimbabwe's devolution desires are stated in Chapter 14 of the Constitution which provides for Provincial and Local Government. The section establishes the primary institutional framework for devolution and local government in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is thus governed by Provincial Councils, Metropolitan Councils, Urban Local Authorities, and Rural Local Authorities (Rural District Councils).

Nevertheless, a myriad of factors intersect to impede on devolution which include but not limited to lack of political will, unavailability of timely and sufficient resources, corruption as well as partisan interest.

CHAPTER 5.0 PUBLIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SURVEY FINDINGS

Of the sampled 55 districts, 51 districts (93%) reported to have access to Information on devolution funds and local authority budgets information while in 4 districts (7%) CORAs reported limited access to such information. The 4 districts where there was no access to information on devolution and local authority budget information are Binga, Bubi Chipinge and Insiza.

Within the 51 districts where CORAs reported to have access to information, the level of information differs, with other districts aware of just the devolution allocation without knowledge of expenditure such as (Beitbridge — ZWL\$16,5million was allocated for devolution funds; Bindura — ZWL\$9million; Chirumanzu — ZWL\$9.2million; Epworth/Ruwa — ZWL\$11 million; Gokwe ZWL\$38million; Kariba and Lupane — ZWL\$20million each; Masvingo — ZWL\$49million; Mutasa Rural — ZWL\$219 million; Zvishavane — ZWL\$162.8million; Mutoko — ZWL\$13.6million. The table below shows the allocated devolution funds for 2021 and how the moneys have been used by local authorities in selected districts:



**THE CASE BELOW ILLUSTRATES WHAT
HAS BEEN ACHIEVED BY DEVOLUTION
FUNDS IN BINDURA:**

**Case: Bindura Water Project and
Devolution funds**

When the Acting Town Clerk Mr. Kelton Chinowaita said they are looking at implementing people-centred projects and \$60 million will go towards water augmentation to ease water challenges in the town, it was indeed made true with devolution funds. The construction of a water pipeline to Masembura Dam using devolution funds to revamp waterworks redistribution and pumps saw the connection of water pipes from ward 2 (Hay Road) taking place in July 2021.

Construction of the pipeline from Bindura to Masembura Dam in Bindura South became a priority following heavy siltation of Mazowe River, which was the primary source of water, and stakeholders from ZIMWA, Trojan Nickel mine, and Freda Rebecca Mine and some local youths who were 89 in number took up the task to assist the local authority in completing the Masembura water pipeline and connection of pipelines to areas that have serious water supply shortage because of the terrain.

Bindura Municipality did set aside \$1 million for the Masembura Dam project and is the one being used to ensure that the project runs smoothly. The project is still yet to be complete but significant progress has been made to ensure that there's a clean water supply to service the growing population.

Areas that are still to have new connections

made with plastic pipelines are Chiwaridzo, Chipadze, New Phase Garikai, and parts of Shashi View. This is all a result of public resource monitoring and follow-up that saw the former employee of the Council being arrested for misusing public devolution funds. Below are the pictures of the water project being undertaken by Bindura with devolution funds.



**5.7 COVID-19
RESOURCES AND KEY
ISSUES**

The government's COVID-19 management has been ineffective with the vaccine roll out encountering a lot of challenges as illustrated by the case studies below:

**CASE: MAN DIES IN A VACCINATION
QUEUE IN KUWADZANA, HARARE**

Staff at the Kuwadzana Polyclinic are not forthcoming with COVID-19 vaccine information while there is evident staff shortage, with only one health worker, doing the vaccinations at the health facility. Due to overwhelming numbers and stampedes to get vaccination, the situation is becoming so dire that the

vaccination point has itself become a super spreader. On the 15th of July 2021, at around 11:00hrs a male adult collapsed and died at Kuwadzana Polyclinic whilst awaiting his turn to undertake his vaccination, presumably due to COVID-19 complications. As for understaffing at the Polyclinic, the local authority's Corporate Communications Manager reported that outstanding arrears by residents in the form of bills and rates and outstanding debt by business and government has adversely affected service delivery and payment of salaries to local authority workforce.

CASE: MUSHROOMING OF UNREGISTERED SCHOOLS IN EPWORTH

Almost any four roomed house in Epworth is being turned into a school. Epworth community is also known to have a huge population which according to 2012 national census is the fifth largest city with people. The suburb has only 4 secondary and 7 primary schools with about 5 registered private colleges.

During COVID 19 lockdown, these colleges operate regardless of what is expected by the government. Most of the colleges are even known by the duty bearers but efforts to make sure COVID 19 restrictions are being followed is just a myth. Considering the number of Epworth residents this is also a danger to the spread of corona virus.

CASE: THE SOCIAL COST OF INCREASED VACCINE UPTAKE IN CHITUNGWIZA

There is generally low acceptance of COVID-19 vaccines by some front-line workers who are concerned that they may develop some unknown side effects. Citizens have also expressed worry over the lack of health education and particularly on the side effects of taking the vaccines which seem to differ from one person to the other.

The government is also on record coercing citizens to get vaccinated through threats which communicated that vaccination will in the near future be a condition for accessing public resources. Some organisations such as the Grain Marketing Board have also followed suit and gave workers an ultimatum to be vaccinated by end of July or risk not being allowed to report for duty from August.

This fear pushed a number of people to get vaccinated including those in the informal sector. On the other hand, instead of getting vaccinated, other people have resorted to buying COVID-19 vaccination cards between USD\$25-\$50 from corrupt staff at some council clinics in Chitungwiza thereby causing harm to the general populace. This was evidenced by Police's investigation of the theft of 457 COVID-19 vaccination cards that went missing at Seke South Clinic in Chitungwiza.

The recent Auditor General's special report on COVID-19 funds attest to the failure of Zimbabwe's COVID-19 pandemic management as approximately US\$ 89 022 103 meant for vulnerable Zimbabweans heavily affected by COVID-19 was looted.⁸ The money was meant to cushion the elderly, people with disabilities, small-to-medium enterprises whose operations have been affected by lockdowns, child-headed households, food-insecure households, and chronically ill people. The report noted that the ZW\$89 million could not be accounted for because:

"The processes of identification and assessment of intended beneficiaries were not properly coordinated, resulting in unreliable databases of beneficiaries, processing of payments to duplicate beneficiary names and beneficiaries who had similar identity numbers, but of different gender and dates of birth.

However, the abuse of public resources by public officials is not a new phenomenon in Zimbabwe. The Office of the Auditor General continues to unearth abuses of public finances in its reports, but no one has been brought to book. 2017, 2018, and 2019 audits reports attest to this verdict.

The implications of the abuse of public resources for COVID-19 are heavily felt by the masses who struggle to get their jabs. This can be evidenced by areas such as Chiredzi, Masvingo, Kariba, and Karoi where from time-to-time citizens who were seeking first doses were told to come back some other time as the available vaccine was reserved for those coming for second doses. As of 29 July 2021, the government had used US\$93

million of the US\$100 million it set aside for the purchase of vaccines since the 31st of January 2021. The dry-up of COVID-19 funds is a cause of concern as citizens begin to reflect on the disastrous and lethal nature of the COVID-19 3rd wave. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the Minister of Finance and Economic Development Mthuli Ncube failed to allocate an incremental budget to the Ministry of Health for COVID-19 vaccines.

5.8 NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Zimbabwe is endowed with strategic deposits of diamonds, gold, silver, black granite, asbestos, copper, and Platinum Group Metals (PGMs) which consists of palladium, ruthenium, osmium, rhodium, iridium, and platinum. The Zimbabwean mining sector plays a critical role in national development and growth as it contributes to national GDP for example 7% in 2019, and 7.7% in 2020⁹. Nonetheless, the potential of the mining sector has not been fully harnessed due to the opaqueness of the sector, weak and fragmented legal and regulatory frameworks, resource leakages, and the government's failure to involve citizens in resource governance.

The July PRM Situational report notes that local communities continue to be neglected in natural resource governance while their resources benefit Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and the political elites. Fig 6 below shows the percentage share of natural resources among women, men, and youth. The findings from the survey show that 54% reported that

8. <https://nehandaradio.com/2021/08/07/us89m-covid-19-funds-may-have-been-stolen-chiwenga-tried-to-conceal-report/>
9. Ten most mined minerals in Zimbabwe – Mining Zimbabwe

benefits of natural resource extraction are to a lesser extent distributed fairly among youth, men and women while 46% reported that benefits of natural resource extraction are not at all shared equitably among youth, men and women.

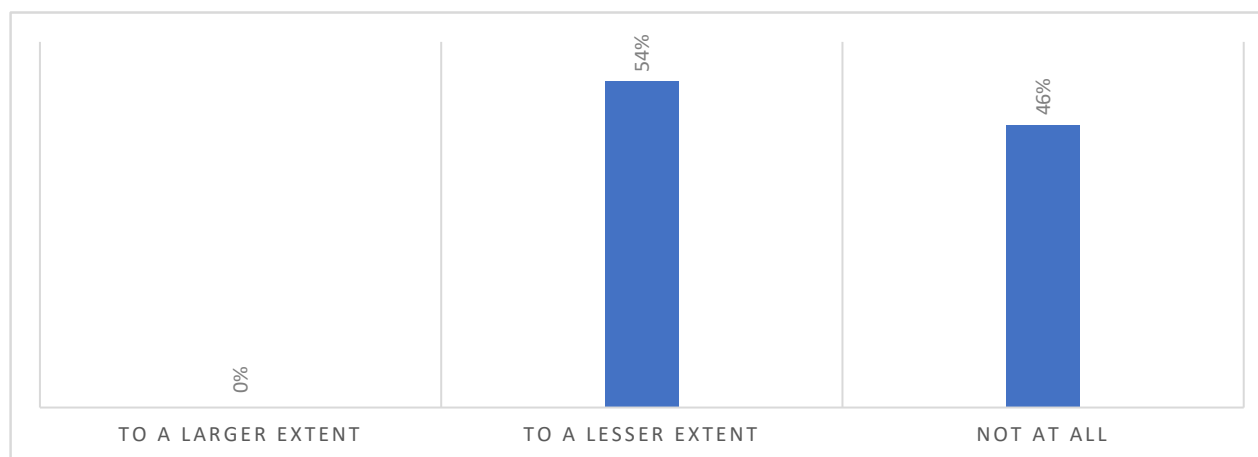


FIG 6: EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF NATURAL RESOURCE BENEFITS AMONG YOUTH, MEN AND WOMEN

CASE: COMMUNITIES BEARING THE BRUNT OF ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS

Chiadzwa is famous for the missing US\$ 15 billion through smuggling. In 2016, the then-president R.G Mugabe noted that Zimbabwe lost approximately US\$ 15 billion in revenue due to corruption and foreign exploitation in the diamond sector¹⁰. Since then, nothing was done to guarantee transparency and accountability. Zimbabwe has lost approximately US\$ 32.179 billion to illicit financial flows in the last two decades¹¹.

This has huge ramifications not only on mining communities but on national development and growth. Interviews conducted by one of ZIMCDD CORAs revealed that Chiadzwa which is in Ward 30 under Mutare rural district has 25 villages all of which depend on one clinic which is in Chiadzwa village. As a result, people from Zikani and Rombe villages walk for approximately 8 kilometres to access healthcare.

According to the key informant, some of the villages in Chiadzwa no longer practice farming as the land was given to mining companies and also the fear by the government that they might find diamonds while farming.

Chiadzwa is among the most vulnerable communities in Mutare rural. Ironically, it relies on donations, yet it has vast deposits of diamonds. This is propelled by the exploitative nature of the mining companies that operate there who do not give back to the community.

10. www.news24.com/amp/news24/africa/zimbabwe/missing-15bn-diamond-revenue-fears-mugabe-might-spill-the-beans-20180604
 11. Chikono, M. (2020) Zimbabwe losses US\$ 32bn due to illicit financial flows. [Online]. Available at [http://www.thezimbabweanews.com/zimbabwe-loses-us32bn-due-to-illicit-financial-flows/#:~:text=ZIMBABWE%20has%20lost%20in%20excess%20of%20US\\$2432%2C179%20billion,for%20the%20whole%20of%20the%20southern%20African%20region.](http://www.thezimbabweanews.com/zimbabwe-loses-us32bn-due-to-illicit-financial-flows/#:~:text=ZIMBABWE%20has%20lost%20in%20excess%20of%20US$2432%2C179%20billion,for%20the%20whole%20of%20the%20southern%20African%20region.) [accessed on 13 June 2021].

The above narrative resonates with an article written by Newsday on the 11th of June titled “Chiadzwa Villagers Turns to Fishery”¹². This is further reinforced by a case study below from a CORA in Marange:

Case: Marange residents resort to Fish farming as Mining Companies failed to give back to the Community

The economy continues to suffer as mining companies continue to loot minerals and leave citizens in host mining communities to suffer. This has been witnessed by people from Mukwada in Marange who have not benefitted anything in the form of corporate social responsibility by mining companies and this has deepened their suffering. Living in one of the world’s richest diamond fields, Marange diamonds fields for almost one and half decades, since the discovery of the precious gems in 2006, villagers’ anticipation has been turned into nightmares as the diamonds they were supposed to benefit from have been endlessly siphoned from them through well-orchestrated syndicates.

Companies who mine diamonds in Marange have failed to develop the community where they are exploiting the precious gems. The roads that lead to the diamond fields are in a bad condition and there is no Cooperative social responsibility benefited from the mining companies. It is also worrying to note that some residents were relocated, and they were not compensated.

Following several Indabas on Natural Resources management and Public Finances Management by ZIMCODD,

community members self-organised to speak out against the economic injustices as they have been prejudiced and not directly benefitted from diamonds being mined from their community. Villagers in ward 30 of Mukwada village in Marange decided to come together to establish a fish farming project to build resilience against socio-economic challenges the community is faced with. The project is anticipated to be the game changer to this community. Currently, the Tilapia fish are now ready for market, and they have about 60 000 fish in three dams.

“We decided to have these projects after realizing that the villagers were not directly benefitting from the diamonds. We also realized that it is dangerous to become illegal panners, so we wanted to change the game by embarking on fish farming” said one of the community representative.

The lack of stewardship, transparency and accountability has robbed the nation and mining host communities of the much-needed socio-economic development and has not rescued communities out of poverty. In some instances, community members have resorted to alternative means of livelihoods as presented in the case above.

The reliance on fishery by villagers in Chiadzwa after they have failed to benefit from diamond points to the absence of robust social protection and fiscal mining regimes that safeguards the interest of mining communities. This can be further projected by the fact that the government had to intervene in Dinde, Hwange district after residence protested against a Chinese mining company¹³

12. <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2021/06/chiadzwa-villagers-turn-to-fishery/>

13. <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2021/04/govt-defends-disputed-dinde-mining-project/>

The same happened in Chiredzi when villagers denounced coal mining companies¹⁴

This is because the villagers have learned from other communities about the exploitative nature of foreign-owned mining companies and the non-intervention stance that the government takes as challenges in the mining sector runs deep into the structural system of the country. A report by Southern African Resource Watch (SARW) titled “Decrypting illicit Gold Trade in Zimbabwe” attest to the above fact as it states that the Zimbabwean mining challenges have been made complex and perplexing by the involvement of the security sector which is partly responsible for facilitating illicit financial flows and mining under dealing¹⁵

14. www.thenewshawks.com/chiredzi-villagers-denounces-coal-mining-firm/
15. <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2021/06/11/security-forces-deep-in-gold-smuggling-report/>





6.0 SOCIAL SERVICES DELIVERY FINDINGS

There is an intrinsic relationship between public resource management and the nature of service delivery in any given country. For this reason, this situational report presents the state of service delivery in Zimbabwe as assessed by several variables. It is worrying to note that, again in this issue, the state of service delivery paints a gloomy picture illustrative of poor public resource management

6.1 AVAILABILITY OF TRAINED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

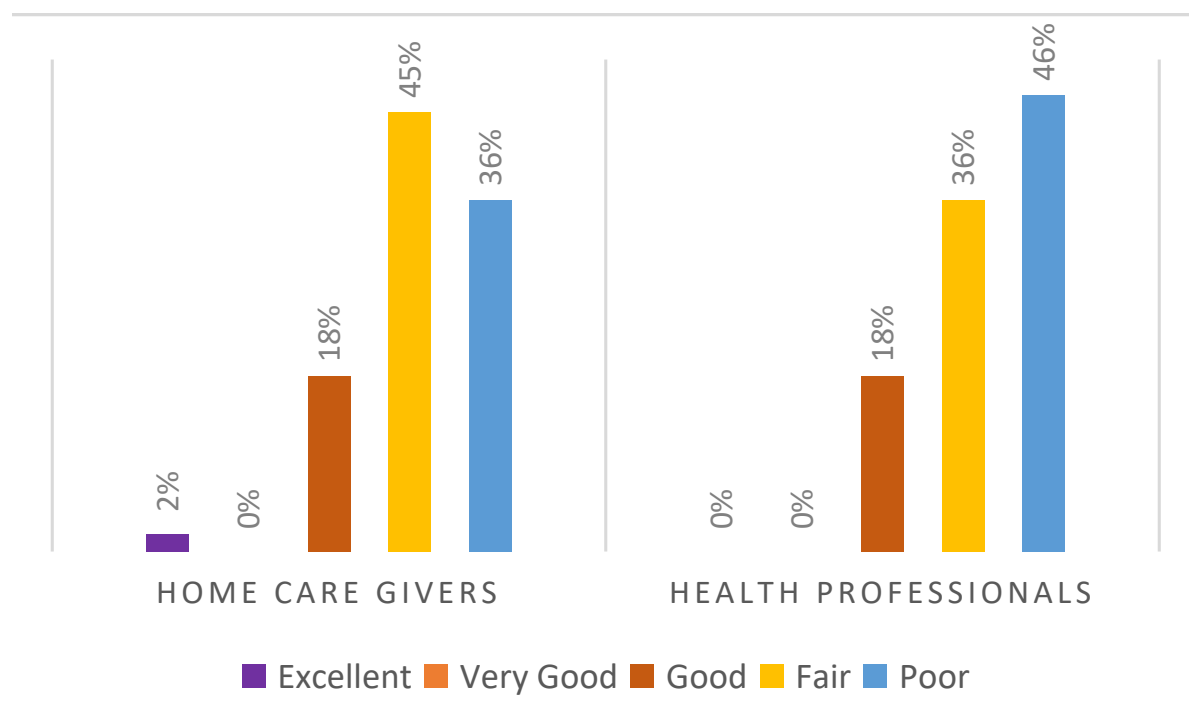


FIGURE 7: AVAILABILITY OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, professional health care remains the most integral component of pandemic management.

The availability of home caregivers, certified nurses and health care specialist in local communities strengthens the decentralization of COVID-19 management and attest to the organizational capacity of the health sector. Health caregivers and health professionals are the custodian and fountains of health knowledge

The findings from the survey show that Zimbabwean primary health care is under threat from limited human capital. Home caregivers are the first line of defence against the COVID-19 pandemic and their

presence should never be underestimated as their proximity to communities allows them to interact with local people more than certified nurses and health specialists. Across the 55 districts, 2% were rated Excellent in respect to the availability of home caregivers, none were rated as Very Good, 18% were rated Good, 45% rated fair, and 36% rated Poor.

The health crisis is not only limited to primary health care, as referral hospitals are also encountering the same challenges. The survey indicated that in respect to the availability of certified nurses, only 18% were good, 36% fair, 46% poor and none was rated excellent.

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Case: Nurses Exodus Hits Harare City Council

Local Authorities in Zimbabwe have been failing to pay incentives to nurses since the emergence of the pandemic. This has resulted in the mass exodus of nurses. A good example is that of Harare City Council which has vacancies for over 240 posts¹⁶.

The departure of nurses due to poor remuneration has generated public interest as residents of Harare need to understand why the council is failing to pay nurses when it's collecting revenue. The citizens are concerned whether the council is collecting revenue to chew and finance the lavish lifestyles of directors rather than provide essential services to the public.

The vaccination program has been affected in areas such as Belvedere Polyclinic as the clinic is understaffed. Gweru City Council has also been facing the same predicament. The City of Gweru operates eight clinics which are Child Welfare, Senga, Totonga, New Life Centre, Mkoba Polyclinic, Mukoba, Ivene and Mtapu Clinic. The clinics are serving only 50 people per day as they are constrained in respect to human capital.

Local Authority	DEVOLUTION ALLOCATION (ZWL\$)	Expenditure
Bulawayo City	56 538 482	Rehabilitation of Thorngrove infectious Hospital; COVID-19 frontline allowances and council staff vaccinations; construction of 2 classroom blocks at Vulindlela Primary School and rehabilitation of Barbourfields stadium
Chipinge	\$3 872 050	Road construction.
Chiredzi Rural	228 000 000	Construction of 32 schools and 15 clinics; Drilling boreholes, installing solar systems.
Gweru City	13 000 000	Purchase of high lift pumps for drawing water from Amaponongwe Dam to Gweru City.
Harare City	1 100 000 000	\$9.3 million was disbursed for the rehabilitation of Morton Jeffray Water works. Road maintenance and Drainage cleaning.
Marondera	7 000 000	Rehabilitation of Longlands water treatment plant; solar installations at council offices; supply of water bowsers; drilling of 16 boreholes; routine water pumps and road maintenance.

Table 1: Implementation of Devolution Funds in selected Local Authorities

16. <https://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/nurses-exodus-hits-city-council/>

6.2 QUALITY OF HEALTHCARE

COVID-19 continues to ravage the country with the health sector in turmoil due to infrastructure dilapidation and poor access to maternal health and ambulance services. The service capacity of the Zimbabwean Health Sector has been found wanting as the government is failing to maintain its vital infrastructure. This has a grave impact on the quality of the health services that citizens are receiving. The findings from the survey illustrate the poor state of health care in the sampled districts.

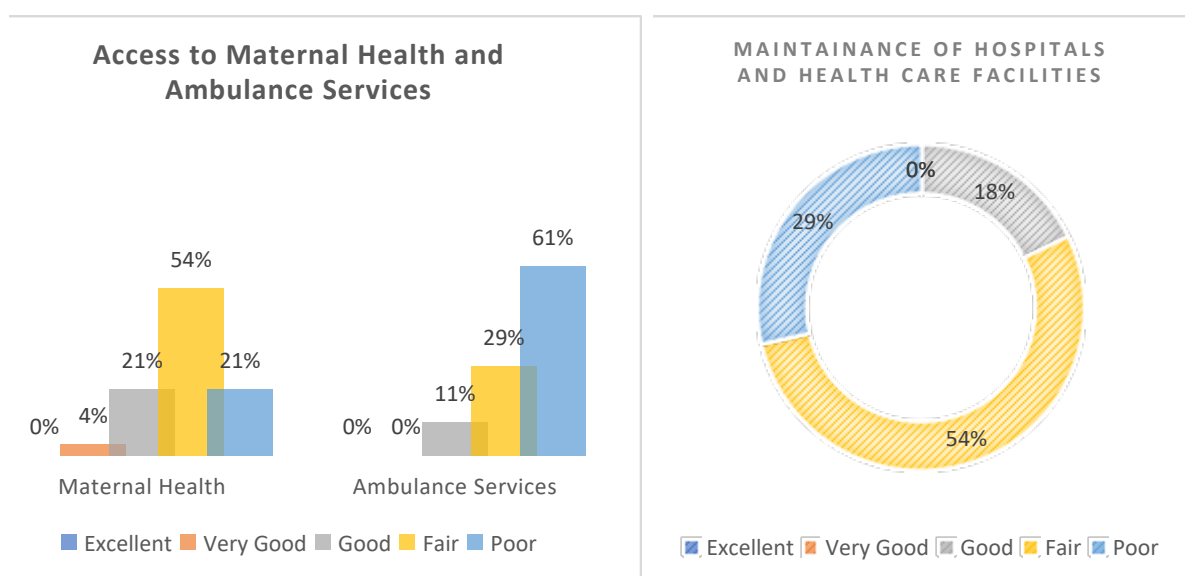


FIG 8: STATE OF HEALTHCARE

Access to maternal health has been rated fair in 54% of the districts and good in 21% districts up from 19% in the previous month and poor in 21% districts, down from 33% in June. This illustrates some improvement in access to maternal health in some districts although a lot still need to be done to enhance maternal health in the COVID-19 era. Access to ambulance services has remained poor across districts as it was rated poor in 61% districts, fair in 29% while good in only 11% of districts. This calls for the need

to prioritize purchase of ambulances to increase access to emergency healthcare. Since COVID-19 has placed an extra-burden on women and girls, it is prudent for the government to revamp its health service delivery system and infrastructure to improve access to healthcare. Maintenance of hospitals and other healthcare facilities (as rated fair in 54%; poor in 29% and good in 18% districts) remains critical in improving access to healthcare

CASE: LUPANE

In Lupane the government is yet to finish building the Provincial Hospital it started in 2004¹⁷. Hypothetically, the building of the new provincial hospital would have gone a long way in improving the quality of healthcare ranging from maternal health, elderly health services as well as Ambulance services. It is now 17 years since the government started constructing the hospital and it seems to be failing to finish it. The delay in the completion of the provincial hospital deprives access to health care as well as the quality of the service.

This is because Matebeleland North Province uses St Lukes as a provincial hospital and at times patients are referred to Bulawayo¹⁸. Matebeleland Province has a population of approximately 700 000 people therefore, relying on other provinces for health facilities undermines the very access and quality-of-service received. However, the government has committed ZWL \$ 47 million and set a target of 18 months to finish the construction of the hospital. It is critical to note that, the Lupane Provincial Hospital is not the only project that the government has failed to complete in Matebeleland.

This can be substantiated by the Matebeleland Zambezi Water project which started way before independence in 1912 and a century has passed since the idea of solving the chronic water woes of the Matabeleland region¹⁹. The project when conceptualized was expected to spur socio-economic growth by creating a green belt of agricultural projects in the region.

6.3 ACCESS TO SAFE SANITATION AND SOCIAL AMENITIES

Local Authorities in Zimbabwe have been failing to provide adequate public toilets and to consistently collect refuse, to provide care centres and housing for the elderly in their jurisdiction. This is so even though every month local communities pay for these services to their councils. Refuse collection has become one of the most important aspects of global discourse for health and environmental protection.

The same can be said of public toilets, elderly housing, and care centres. In 2008 – 2009 Zimbabwe was faced with a cholera epidemic which culminated in 98 585 reported cases and 4 286 reported deaths, making it the deadliest and largest in the history of Zimbabwe²⁰. Poor refuse collection, dilapidating public toilets, elderly housing and care centres were among the major reasons why citizens were exposed to cholera.

This underscores the need for robust refuse collection, public toilets, and elderly housing and care centres to promote hygiene and the environment. Fig 9 below presents the findings on access to safe sanitation and social amenities

17. <https://www.thestandard.co.zw/2021/08/08/lupanes-long-wait-for-hospital/>

18. http://www.mohcc.gov.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=368:completion-of-lupane-provincial-hospital-a-top-priority-vp-chiweng&catid=84&Itemid=435

19. https://www.academia.edu/3361764/Zhou_Gideon_and_Chilunjika_A_2013_A_Peep_into_the_sources_of_policy_implementation_inertia_in_Africa_The_case_of_the_Matabeleland_Zambezi_Water_Project_MZWP_in_Zimbabwe

20. Z. Mukandavire, S. Liao, J. Wang, et al., "Estimating the reproductive numbers for the 2008–2009 cholera outbreaks in Zimbabwe," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 108/21 (2011), pp. 8767–8772

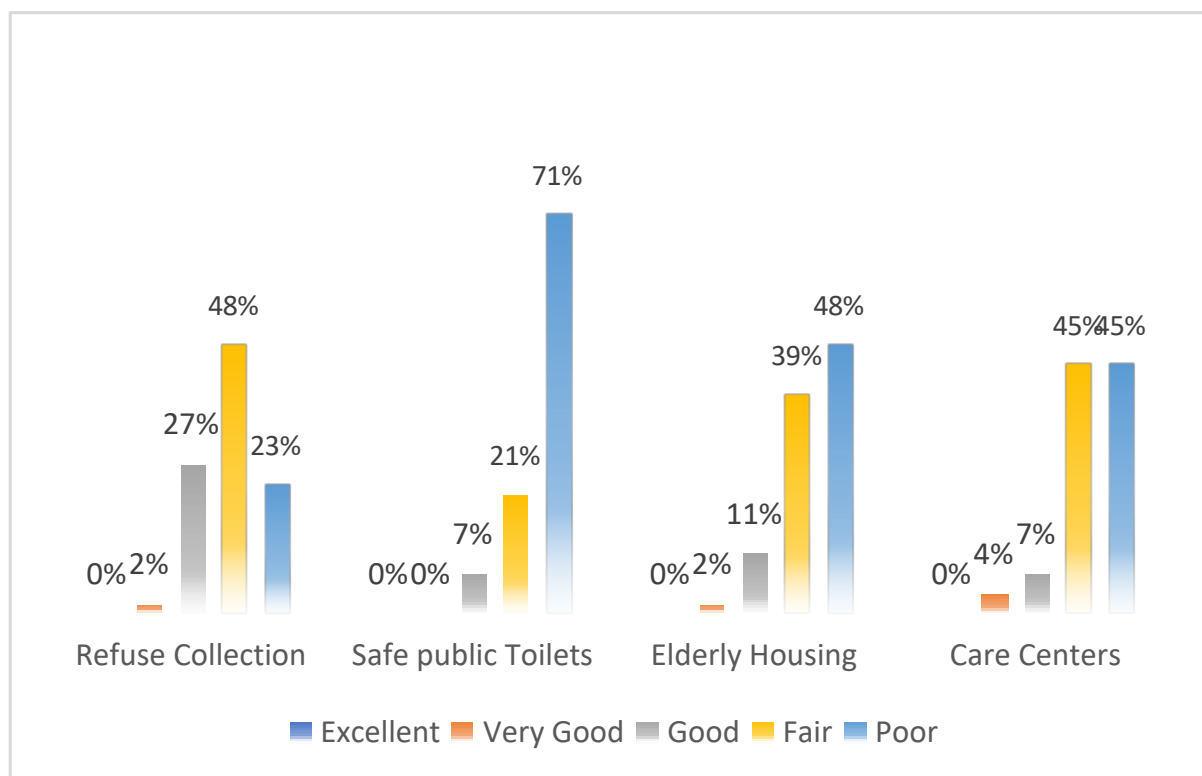


FIG 9: COMMUNITY RATING ON ACCESS TO SAFE SANITATION AND SOCIAL AMENITIES

On safe public toilets, local authorities were rated poor in 71% districts and fair in 21% of the districts, signalling the need for local authorities to prioritize the issue. Access to housing by the elderly was poor in 48% districts, in June and rated fair in 39% of the districts while availability of care centres was rated poor in 45% of the districts and fair in 45% districts. Refuse collection is slightly improving from the previous month as only 23% of the districts rated it poor, down from 30% in June, while 48% of the districts rated it fairly, up from 42% recorded last month.

SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Case: Chinhoyi

The Municipality of Chinhoyi is battling to collect refuse from its residential areas culminating in the dumping of garbage in undesignated places like open fields, roadsides and stormwater drains. Residential areas like the high-density areas of Gunhill, White City and Chitambo now having areas called “pamarara” meaning dumpsite. This presents a huge health hazard as soiled diapers, maggot-infested decomposing food leftovers, and used sanitary pads litter roadsides and stormwater drains.

The Council schedule shows that they collect refuse once a week from every residential area and twice in the Central Business District. This is barely enough due to the high volume of waste that is generated by the households in the town. This leaves households especially in high-density areas with no choice but to dump garbage wantonly under the cover of night as they have no sufficient yard area to keep it.

Further compounding the problem is the fact that the local authority has only two garbage compactors which service the whole town. Consequently, the council is often not able to stick to the set-out garbage collection schedule. This means when this truck is unavailable rubbish will not be collected in the whole town. The tractor and trailer which substitutes it has a limited carrying capacity of only 8 cubic meters so it only services the Central Business District and the Chinhoyi University of Technology leaving the residential areas un-serviced. This uncollected rubbish dumped in undesignated places is a huge health

hazard as kids often play on it looking for anything they can use as “toys” as they play. Stray dogs also scavenge these dumps for food. This is a ticking health time bomb and brings reminiscence of the 2008–2009 cholera outbreak. The rubbish is also a potential cause of floods as it is dumped into stormwater drains causing them to be blocked. In the rainy season, rainwater flows over bridges damaging roads and entering people’s houses.

When the Chinhoyi CORA approached the Municipality’s Finance Director Mr. Zephaniah Chirarwe he pointed to a shortage of diesel as the reason why the council is not adhering to refuse collection schedule. He asserted that all the fuel stations in the town sell fuel in forex but since the council gets its revenue in local currency it has no ready access to forex that it can use to purchase fuel to ensure the smooth running of the refuse collection department.

In 2013 the Council purchased a Benz garbage compactor from Germany which worked for less than a year before it was decommissioned due to unavailable and expensive spare parts. This truck has been parked and rusting away at the Council Engineering depot for the past seven years. With grass and weeds growing beneath it. The Chinhoyi refuse collection situation can be summarized by the pictures below. The top picture shows residents of Chikonohono walk past an illegal roadside garbage dumpsite

The bottom left picture shows rubbish dumped near some houses in Gunhill, Chinhoyi

The Bottom right picture shows an almost

new garbage compactor rusting away at
Chinhoyi Council Engineering Depot



Case: Mutare

At the fruits and vegetable market in Mutare, Chikanga vendors/farmers pay to the local authority \$1USD per day for them to sell their produce. There is inadequate infrastructure at the market as there are no sheds or vending stalls for vendors to sell their goods from. They are not being protected from the wind, sun and rain. Farmers are incurring losses since their goods would be exposed to the sun and rain yet they would be paying their trading licenses to the local authority. The market is now located where it is easily accessible to farmers.

There is also a lot of litter and refuse in the market as the council barely comes to collect refuse. For a food market, which has become a cosmopolitan place not only for Mutare but for surrounding areas, the council's failure to collect refuse puts the lives of residents at risk. Uncollected refuse is breeding ground for cholera, diarrhea and malaria.

Case: Bindura

Although councils across the country are struggling to collect refuse, it is prudent to give credit to Bindura Municipality which has made positive strides towards refuse collection. Bindura has intensified efforts to collect waste in the community after serious follow-up community meetings that took place in May and June 2021.

The Council engaged the community in the feedback meetings after it promised to always engage the community on service delivery. In its effort, Bindura cleaned the litter and refuse on undesignated sites which had been there for over 4 months. Bindura Municipality embarked on community engagement and campaigns

with Trojan mine and Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE) on making awareness to the residents to avoid dumping waste on undesignated sites

Case: Chegutu

Chegutu Municipality has started sewer rehabilitation in areas such as Kaguvi 1 and the other side of C section, residents have welcomed this new development since sewer busting had been a problem in Chegutu for so many years due to the ever-growing population which meant more pressure on the old sewer system in Chegutu.

In the previous month, the Chegutu CORA engaged the Municipality's finance chairperson, who highlighted that resident need to clear their arrears to improve service delivery in Chegutu especially on the provision of clean and portable water, road construction as well the renovation of sewer lines. This also calls for residents to play their part in service provision although the COVID-19 induced socioeconomic impacts on citizens should not be underestimated.



6.4 WATER SUPPLY

While clean water is essential for the survival of humanity and is essential to the realization of all other rights. Sadly, in Zimbabwe only 27% of local authorities supply water regularly while 64% supply water irregularly and 9% of local authorities do not supply water at all as presented in the figure below:

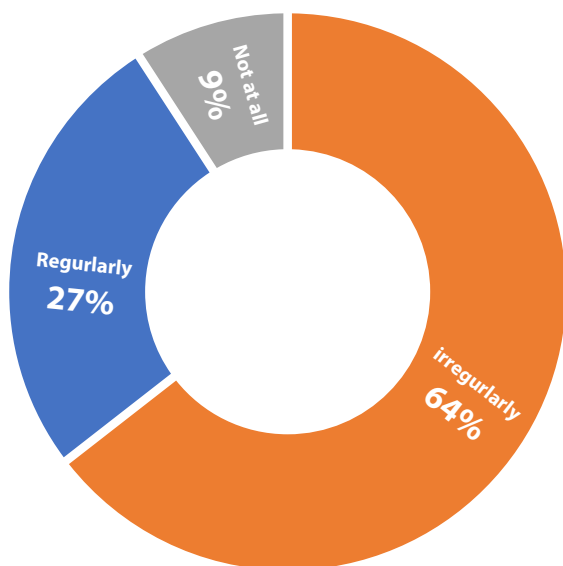


FIG 10: FREQUENCY OF WATER SUPPLY

On the 28th of July 2010 the United Nations General Assembly through resolution 64/292 recognized the human right to water and sanitation. to this end, Zimbabwe is a member state of the UN and has an obligation to its citizens to deliver clean, safe, and affordable water particularly during this pandemic period where water is also regarded as crucial in defeating the virus. Nonetheless, Zimbabwean local authorities have been struggling to provide clean, safe, portable and affordable water as substantiated by the findings of this survey.

Case: Rusape

The water crisis in Rusape is a threat to livelihoods and COVID-19 management. Rusape Town Council is failing to adequately supply water for residents in Magamba, Vengere and Mabvazuwa. In areas like Ridgemont park, residents get water once a week or not at all.

This is against, section 77 (a) of the constitution which notes that “Every person has a right to safe, clean and portable water and the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within the limits of the resources available to it, to achieve the progressive realization of this right”. Thus Section 77 (a) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Amendment No. 20) guarantees the right to safe, clean, and portable water. This provision reflects Zimbabwe’s obligations to provide water to people in Zimbabwe as required in the human rights instruments that the country has accepted that include.

–The African Charter on the Rights of the Child

– Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa

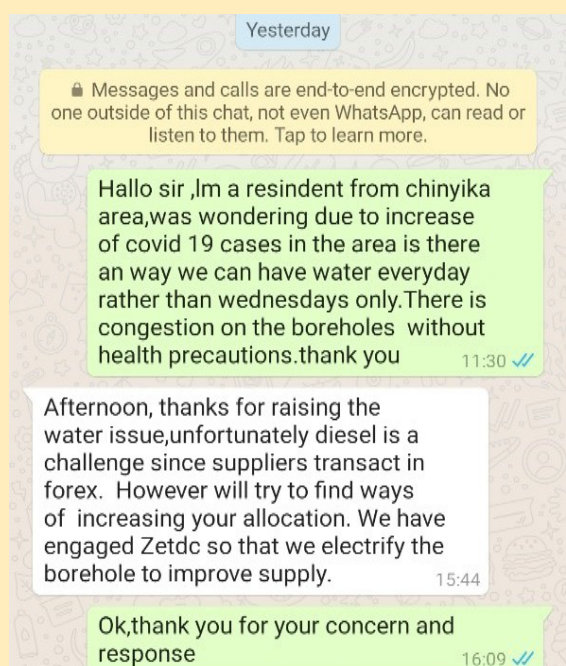
Rusape town water pumps are failing to cope with demand due to obsolete equipment at the Jack Needham water plant.

According to the town engineer, water bursts were also being experienced in the oldest reticulation mains feeding the residential areas. The engineer also revealed that the water system had several underground leakages and small leaks which were estimated to put to waste 300 000 litres of water per year. The aging equipment was compromising the efficiency of the water supply system, making water shortage a regular occurrence in the town of Rusape

Case: Gutu North

The inconsistent supply of tapped water in schools, clinics and households by ZINWA is now a high threat to the spread of COVID 19. Most schools, clinics and some households in Gutu North rely on ZINWA tapped water which is pumped through diesel engines. For the five previous years, ZINWA was not and still not very efficient on the supply of water yet it still collects fixed charges from residents.

The water as at present is only pumped Wednesdays. The system is under the management of Masvingo City Council where it oversees the allocation of diesel, maintenance of water pumps, and collection of rates. Upon consulting a key informant from ZINWA who oversees managing these diesel engines he responded that there is not enough diesel to pump water every day since diesel is being purchased in forex. Below is an extract of the chat that our CORA had with the key informant.



The failure to sufficiently provide water by ZINWA led to congestion of people on community boreholes where health precautions are not being followed.

For example, the visited borehole in Machingambi village is used to water a community garden, serve three villages and two schools primary and secondary. During the first week of July, several people tested positive in the area, health workers took time to come and track the situation, yet people were and still meeting at the borehole without precautions.

6.5 ROAD NETWORKS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Zimbabwean road networks seem to be dysfunctional as there are in a deplorable state. In February 2021, the government declared all roads a “national disaster”²¹. The word disaster denotes a catastrophe which is life-threatening.

On the 28th of July 2010 the United Nations General Assembly through resolution 64/292 recognized the human right to water and sanitation. to this end, Zimbabwe is a member state of the UN and has an obligation to its citizens to deliver clean, safe, and affordable water particularly during this pandemic period where water is also regarded as crucial in defeating the virus. Nonetheless, Zimbabwean local authorities have been struggling to provide clean, safe, portable and affordable water as substantiated by the findings of this survey.

21. <https://www.herald.co.zw/state-of-disaster-govt-moves-to-repair-roads/>

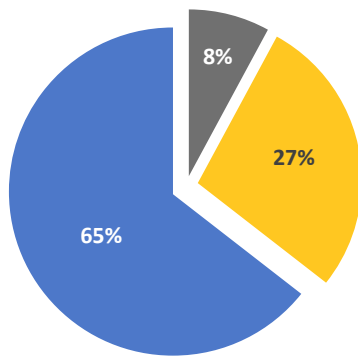


FIG 11: QUALITY AND SAFETY OF ROAD NETWORKS

The move by the government to declare all roads state of emergence and national disaster attests to the scale and magnitude of how bad the road network in the country is.

The findings of the survey demonstrated that local communities are not spared by this “national disaster” as 65% of the districts rated road networks poor in terms of quality and safety and 27% rated it fairly. Only 8% of the districts reported that road networks were good.

Case: Nyanga Rural District

Nyanga Rural District Council is failing to reconstruct a bridge along Nyamabutu river which connects ward 2 and Nyanga Township. The bridge was destroyed in 2012 and the failure by the local authority to reconstruct it has made life too expensive for residents. During the rainy season, it is difficult for school children as well as adults to access facilities such as shops and clinics. There is a need for a sound public finance management system that ensures resources are not being abused but prioritized for the betterment of the community.

Theft and robbery have increased because people now use longer routes to carry out daily routines. The failure to reconstruct the bridge is a cause of concern as the local authority was given ZW\$186,304,738 for devolution. In 2012 it was alleged that World Vision donated 30 bags of cement, but no one accounted for them. Roads and bridges are vital infrastructures that propel community development. Besides tourism, Nyanga is an agrarian community that is known for producing fruits such as peaches, apples and plums as well as potatoes and timber.



Therefore, the availability of a good road network fosters business development and community development while the unavailability of a viable road network deters business growth. The picture shows Nyamabutu River and the bridge which was destroyed in 2012

Case: ZINARA monies diverted to other projects by Kusile Rural District Council – Lupane

Lupane local board has been abusing monies received from Zimbabwe National Road Authority meant to upgrade road rehabilitation projects since 2015 to date where some monies are sometimes channeled to either council staff salaries or travel subsistence allowances for the council staff as well.

This trend had been practiced since 2015 when the Kusile Rural District Council started receiving ZINARA monies from central government. Despite the council having received a tractor and grader for road constructions, the council is failing to maintain roads in this rural area.

The money allocated to Kusile RDC is mainly for road rehabilitation especially for

building bridges and roads maintenance. In 2015 the council received US\$35 000 which was embezzled without trace and was never accounted for.

Meanwhile Lupane Local Board is always allocated monies from ZINARA as well for road constructions within Lupane town, but the monies are also diverted to other projects. This is witnessed at some residential stands where the un-serviced stands are not reachable because poor road network.

Residential stands do not have piped water from Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) because the local board does not pay ZINWA services as a norm. Lupane district in general is lagging in terms of development because of mismanagement of public funds by both Kusile rural district council and Lupane local board town councils.

The allocated funds from ZINARA for 2021 for these 2 councils were not disclosed to the public raising suspicion that there is lack of public finance management within these two institutions.

Case: Zvishavane

The issue of poor roads in most residential areas of Zvishavane has made most rate payers to question the credibility of Zvishavane Town Council (ZTC) on how they handle revenue collected. Evangelist Ruvingo who resides in IZAYI Park said its very worrying how dust particles from the poor roads find their way into households causing eye allergies to children.

ZTC allocated stands to hundreds of people fraudulently and have been failing to own up on their promise of good service delivery to the Zvishavane community. Residents are therefore worried on how they are made to pay bills, yet nothing is being done to improve adequate service delivery especially the roads.

6.6 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Last year the government banned commuter omnibuses in a bid to manage the COVID-19 pandemic²². This is because commuter omnibuses were considered to pose a threat in the spread of COVID-19. However, the provision of public transport has remained problematic across the country as substantiated by the survey findings.

The nature of public transport was assessed in terms of accessibility, affordability, quality, timeliness, safety, and disability friendliness as presented in Fig.12 below. 93% of the districts rated public transport poor in-terms of it being disability friendly; 80% rated public transport poor on safety while 57% rated public transport poor on quality and this poses danger to human life; public transport was rated poor on timeliness in 50% of the districts, poor on accessibility in 45% of the districts and poor on affordability in 38% of the districts.

22. <https://iharare.com/kombis-to-go-for-good-government-says-private-kombis-will-remain-banned-even-after-lockdown/>

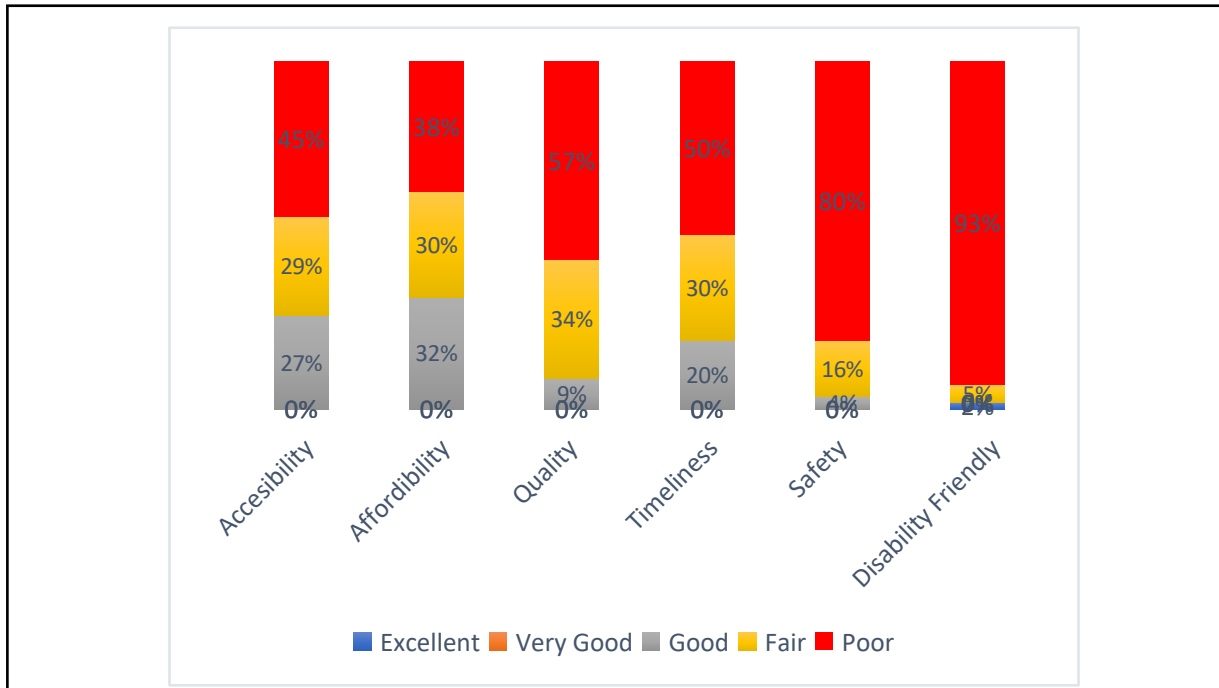


FIG 12: NATURE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Ever since the ban on private transport, citizens have had challenges with transport as the ZUPCO buses and commuter omnibuses are failing to cope with the demand. Citizens end up spending long hours in queues waiting for transport and this has resulted in the proliferation of “mushikashikas” in order to ease transport woes. While the later improves access to transport, it presents major threat in terms of contracting the virus as social distancing and masking up protocols are still not observed as in the ZUPCO case.



7.0 CONCLUSION

Public resource governance continues to deteriorate in Zimbabwe due to multiple challenges such as the lack of transparency and accountability in public resource governance at the very local level. Based on the findings presented earlier, this situational report concludes that the state has failed to fulfil its fiduciary obligations as reflected by service delivery failure in local authorities across the country. The limited access to information on exploration of public resources further points to the opaque nature of natural resource governance at local government level.

The failure to provide sufficient and affordable public services has widened the inequality gap between the rich and the poor and has incited public scepticism which is indicative of the trust deficit between the government and its' citizens. This justifies the need for the creation of social protection systems that are inclusive and serve the needs of all citizens. As with the other issues before, the July issue exposes revelations of a governance scourge underpinned on public resources mismanagement. This is despite the availability of a myriad of legal and regulatory frameworks that speaks to sound public finance management.

7.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Equity in public resource distribution
 - The government should ensure fair and equal distribution of resources between all demographic groups especially women and youth who because of decades of regressive culture and religion have been denied the enjoyment of the national cake. This has widened social and economic injustices within and between communities.
- Inclusion in economic governance
 - The government must create a conducive environment for citizen participation in public resource governance. The involvement of citizens in public resource governance creates a feedback mechanism that can be used by the government as an institutional memory building and learning capacity for economic development.
- Sound social protection is key in post-COVID recovery
 - There is a need for sound social protection systems and robust fiscal mining regimes that protects mining resource communities against exploitative mining companies. The cost of living continues to rise, with prices of basics remaining out of touch for the poor. Social protection initiatives like cash transfers, grants, and free farm inputs to vulnerable members must be accelerated.
- A competitive and efficient public transport system urgently needed
 - There is a need for an efficient transportation system where the

public operator (ZUPCO) competes with private players. As competition increases, prices will fall thereby increasing consumer welfare. Apart from the competition, the ZUPCO fleet is now overwhelmed by passenger traffic (increased demand). Hence, adding private players in the mix will reduce the loss of productive time by the public in the queues and reduce possible COVID-19 infections.

- Central and local government to prioritize service delivery - The government, including local authorities should prioritize and adequately fund service delivery to enable regular provision of safe, clean and portable water and timeous collection of refuse. This reduces the risks of outbreaks of medieval diseases such as cholera. Also, efficient service increases the morale of taxpayers hence reducing the rate of non-payment of rates and taxes.
- Conclude the Lupane Provincial Hospital Project - The construction of the Lupane Provincial Hospital must be given priority to improve the quality of health care in Matabeleland North province. On the pretext that Matabeleland North is one of the most segregated and food deficit-producing provinces in Zimbabwe, expediting the construction of the healthcare facility will go a long way in reducing socio-economic inequalities.
- Full implementation of the devolution agenda - The government must establish a viable meta-governance system that oversees the use of devolution funds. Devolution is crucial for the upliftment of marginalized communities. Devolution of power and spending responsibility to subnational governments is pivotal in enabling communities to determine their budgets and set their community development priorities.



8.0 ANNEX 1: CITIZEN'S VOICES ON PUBLIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

(SELECTED HUMAN-INTEREST STORIES)

Misplaced Priorities: A governance ghost that haunts Zimbabwe

Zimbabwean public officials seem to be out of touch with reality. Their governance decision-making attests to this verdict. Chiredzi West MP Farai Musikavanhu intends to use ZWL 1 million which is half of the Constituency Development Funds (CDF) to refurbish Tshovani Stadium at the expense of the welfare of the people within the constituency.²³

United Chiredzi Residents and Ratepayers Association Advocacy Officer Constance Chikumbo noted that the move to upgrade the stadium was anchored on the MP's ambitions as he is the patron of Chiredzi Start FC. Currently, Chiredzi is at the apex of COVID-19 hotspot with 113 active cases as of 13th July 2021. Therefore, rather than channeling the CDF, ZWL 2 million towards pandemic management and infrastructure that helps reduce the COVID-19 fatality rate the MP saw it fit to refurbish the stadium. It is critical to note that teams in lower divisions have not played games for almost two years now.²⁴

Chiredzi District only has one referral hospital that is Chiredzi General Hospital. Currently, the hospital is dilapidating with infrastructural gaps propelled by population increase and poor service capacity of the government. According to one key informant, "Chiredzi General Hospital has a bedding capacity of 150 and this is not in tandem with the current population. This is evidenced by the fact that cases of women giving birth alone outside the maternity ward are increasing, thus further disregarding the rights of women to good health. At the same time, Chiredzi Polyclinic which is operated by

Chiredzi Town Council is in doldrums as it is failing to provide basic health care. It is the same clinic that the MP Musikavanhu in 2019 visited and threw-out thousands of donations simply because they had been donated by an opposition member²⁵ thereby denying citizens the right to health.

If Zimbabwe is to develop there is a need to re-orient public officials so that they get to understand the plight of the citizens and embrace it in decision-making. Public officials' decisions should be people-centered. Only that way can the state be able to fulfill its fiduciary duties and uphold the concept of social contract which gives it the power to govern. Alternatively, the government could establish a strong meta-governance system that makes it difficult for MPs to decide how CDF can be used without citizens' approval and input.

The Plight of Mbare Informal Traders Amidst COVID-19

While most parts of Harare have been focused on the vaccination roll-out plan, COVID-19 funds, and the upscaling of adherence to COVID-19 regulations, Harare's oldest suburb Mbare has been facing direct attacks on the livelihoods of its people in the form of demolitions. Informal traders in Mbare are being fought on 2 fronts; on one hand by the novel coronavirus which has slowed down business as they know it, and the Council on the other hand seeking to extinguish their sources of livelihoods. This article focuses on the socio-economic implications of the demolitions and shows the extent to which the Harare City Council has worsened the situation rather than improve it.

23. <https://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-national-byo-205744.html>

24. <https://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-national-byo-205744.html>

25. <https://www.zimbabweituation.com/news/zanu-pf-mp-rejects-mdc-officials-medical-donations/>

The operation by the City of Harare in Mbare has left vendors and their families, drawn from the most economically marginalized and vulnerable sectors of the society, without any source of livelihood in the face of this COVID-19 inspired lockdown. With 76% of the economically active population earning their living in the informal sector, Mbare can be described as the hub for informal traders in Harare. Council demolished “tuck-shops” illegal structures around Mupedzanhamo, Magaba Home Industry, Shawasha, and Matapi Flats. Municipal and national police carried out the operation in the justification that the structures are illegal are defacing the image of the city.

Harare City Council has taken advantage of the COVID-19 induced lockdown to execute livelihoods-threatening operations as witnessed in Mbare. By destroying the tuck-shop structures, it has exposed the informal traders even more to COVID-19 as they have resorted to operating out in the open. Social distancing is also not being practiced as the traders have been fighting for selling space, thus resulting in crowding.

The health hazards that can be anticipated cannot be ignored as foodstuffs are in direct sunlight, not to mention the leaking sewers. This operation has also seen a lot of people lose their jobs as the demolitions have resulted in the downsizing of manpower since operations are now in open spaces. The irony is beyond despicable; formal work has been hard to come by and the resort to informal work has not been made any easier. Traffic congestion, which had become a common feature around the area as informal traders had encroached onto the

road, has worsened as the traders have resorted to setting up their wares and foodstuffs for a sell-out in the open. This, in turn, has been making it difficult for motorists to navigate at Remembrance Drive and Simon Mazorodze as well as Corner Cripps and Seke Rd.

While local authorities indeed have a responsibility to decongest the cities and confine informal trading to designated sites, the same local authorities still should do so in a manner that does not infringe on street vendors’ right to livelihoods. Council has been urging those affected to go to designated trading sites, which it says is “empty” at the moment. This is largely because the informal traders would have to incur costs to get to the designated Coke Corner as most of them reside in the Shawasha and Matapi Flats. In the bigger picture, this obstruction of traffic movements at these key points has largely contributed to the traffic congestion witnessed in the CBD due to the interconnected nature of the roads in Harare.

Harare City Council is encouraged to provide convenient designated selling points within Mbare Musika for the informal traders to operate from. This will also ensure improved adherence to the COVID-19 regulations. The criminalization of vending is a just but clear denial of reality as it is the informal sector that is currently supporting and keeping Zimbabwe’s economy afloat. Apart from the serious negative socio-economic bearing, this has on the informal traders, the continued reckless handling of the situation in Mbare could result in a serious surge in COVID-19 cases. The situation in Mbare should therefore be treated with the urgency it deserves as this has the

potential to affect Harare in its entirety.

Limited Internet Access and Lack of a Library in Budiro, a Major Hurdle for Remote Learning during the COVID-19 Era

An estimated 1.59 billion students in 194 countries or 91.3% of the world's student population have been affected by schools' closure because of the COVID-19 pandemic (UNESCO 2020). That includes 297 million students across the African continent and 4.13 million in Zimbabwe. As the number of COVID-19 cases continues to increase, a quick reopening of schools seems out of sight.

Given the current context, the internet ought to be an easily accessible resource for everyone, especially for college and high school students who are supposed to be doing virtual learning during the lockdowns. Online learning requires data to carry out the assignments and be able to receive notes from tutors. However, Budiro has proven to be an inconvenient for the students and young adults pursuing their studies, as internet access is a challenge. There are limited spots if not only one, with weak free internet access for the public. This is worsened by the unavailability of a public library.

With support from the World Bank and others, countries are trying to keep education going through remote learning via the internet, social media, radio, and television. (World Bank, 2020). In Budiro and other high density suburbs in most parts of Zimbabwe, however, inadequate internet and low connectivity vis-à-vis the high cost of data threaten to leave most students behind. According to UNESCO 2020, 89% of learners in Africa do not

have access to household computers and 82% lack internet access. This is the case of Budiro residential area, and it has impacted students negatively. Discussing with one form four student who stays with her grandparents, she says her dreams are compromised since she is deprived of internet access. The worst part is she does not even have a phone neither do the guardians have, yet in the public spaces, the internet is not available, except for one spot, the whole of Budiro i.e. Budiro 5.

Internet is only available and open sometimes at OK supermarket in Budiro 5. That is the only public spot where youth gather around for the internet. In the context of COVID-19, this has exposed many to the risk of infection as they gather in large numbers, scrambling for the internet which has very poor connectivity. More often, they will be standing around Ok shop buildings without wearing face masks nor maintaining social distance. Therefore, the scarcity or unavailability of the internet has not only threatened academic success for the students but also their health.

The unavailability of the internet makes digital learning very difficult for most students around the area, save for only a few who are privileged with smartphones and Wi-Fi/ data access in their homes. If learning Institutions could provide free access to their online learning platforms, it would turn the tables around. The below picture showing men using Ok Budiro 5 Supermarket Wi-Fi, where students also gather around for internet as they cannot afford data bundles.



The establishment of a public library in Budiro should therefore be considered. At least if they cannot access internet in their homes, they should have a safe place where they can go and access it. The government should also consider free wifi for learners so that they can access internet even from within their home without getting exposed.

Gweru City Refurbish 2 Roads in Mkoba

The Gweru City Council (GCC) refurbished 2 roads with tar in Mkoba 7. The roads which are almost complete speak a better story about Gweru local authority. In an interview with the Gweru Mayor, Josiah Makombe about the development in Mkoba, ZIMCodd CORA learned that Gweru City Council had contracted Jepnik Contractors to refurbish the approximately 2,5– 3km roads.

The two roads are essential as they connect to two major roads. Swazi road connects Village 12 and 13, whereas Mora Mutambara Road connects Village 12 and 17. Speaking to Councillor Chinene who is the GCC Chairperson on the Committee on Environment and Town Planning Committee. ZIMCodd CORA learned that “the roads are also used by SINO and

UNKI buses to ferry their workers to and from work. So, the importance of the roads cannot be emphasized.” The ZIMCodd CORA tried to solicit information on whether these mining companies have ever tried to commit to repairing the two major roads. Councillor Chinene could not confirm, “Nothing to my knowledge that the companies have done. “Though Gweru has precedence of contracting companies that do not thoroughly do the job, like the traffic lights which did not last more than 6 months after installation.

The same is the case of the council workers who fill potholes with tar that cannot last more than two months. The ZIMCodd CORA was keen to understand the credibility of the contracted company and if the residents of Gweru should have faith in the city fathers.

David Chikoore the Director of the Gweru United Progressive Residents Association commented that “we should never rush to celebrate the work by the council. I do not like how they give tender to people who do a poor job. One will end up thinking like there is a syndicate between our council and contractors. I was not pleased by the traffic lights case of the previous council, and the behaviour is likely the same with this current council.” The road is being refurbished using the funds from ZINARA whose amount was however not disclosed.

While time is the only factor to prove the durability, or the quality of work done. The Gweru residents, particularly those in Mkoba hail the work done by the GCC. “We are happy with the work that was done by our council, it demonstrates that we still have leadership because the dust we were getting from the road was not

pleasant.” Said Chenai Mutasa of Ward 17. “We are happy because we will save fuel, we were now using the longer route to avoid destroying our cars through using the bumpy road.” Said Chadoka, still more needs to be done to ensure value for money and further digging needs to be done on the money paid and work done.

Incomplete Project 23 years Later, Insiza

In the year 1998 the government of Zimbabwe approved the building of a registry offices in Filabusi town. The project was a very welcome development to the Insiza community as it was going to bring relief to the community who still suffer from poor service from the current office which is a makeshift one roomed which offer birth certificates, death certificates and national identity documents.

The plan was to have bigger offices that would better serve the community with all the particulars including passports being issued. Currently, residents must travel to the provincial, Gwanda to get passports and other important documents. The project was in line with the devolution agenda which seeks to empower people to have things done at their local level.

However, 23 years on, project is still at a standstill having been built to window level, with some of the building materials like roofing tiles, planks, window frames and door frames being eaten away by rust and weather conditions. If the project is to continue it would have to start afresh as the current structure is no longer fit to hold the complete structure.

Thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money has certainly been lost through

this abandoned project. The Insiza CORA followed up on the issue with the District Administrator, the Ministry of Public Works and the Registry Provincial Officials but did not yield any feedback as to what stopped the work on the project and whether it would be completed and when.

The project if completed would have changed the lives of the people of Insiza for better, as it would have meant that they wouldn't have to travel all the way to Gwanda for service that they could have got locally, and the staff would have had better working conditions than the current situation where they are cramped up in a very small office space.

The whole situation tells a great story of how public resources were wasted with no consequences and how an opportunity to implement the devolution agenda has been let to go by responsible officials.

The photos below show the incomplete structure and the current small office being used by the District Registry:



The Water Woes Persist in Ward 3, Bulawayo

Water problems for ward 3 in Bulawayo have taken a twist for the worst as the pipes that were used in 1992, when the area was serviced and developed have begun developing fracture lines, rotting and bursting. In the month of July, in one week alone, there were 5 water bursts that occurred in the ward, each one causing water supply disruption and loss of thousands of liters of clean water.



Clean water loss due to burst pipe in Bulawayo Ward 3

According to the City Council, the ward was already set to have a disruption in water supply because of Tuli reservoir, which supplies the area with water, having continuous struggles in maintaining a steady water supply to the areas it should. As a result, there would be a 48-hour localized water shedding program for the areas that are dependent on the reservoir as advertised on the 10th of July.

Access to clean and portable water as per section 77 of the constitution ultimately became a problem as the water pipe bursts meant residents had no option but to harvest the flowing water and reserve it for domestic use as they would otherwise go without, stuck between the bursts and the water shedding program.

According to the residents in ward 3, the city council was quick respond to the reports of the bursts and would dig up and replace them as quickly as they could, which was never an excess of three working days. They however were concerned about the posed hazards to the people, particularly children, as they would leave the 2metre pits open, claiming that another team would follow up and close the pits. To date these pits, remain open and have been so for an excess of the two weeks needed to verify that no new problems in that section arose.



Bulawayo city council workers replace burst 1992 water pipes in Ward 3



Replaced mainline clean water supply pipe feeding an excess of 30 households

Asked to make a comment on the bursting pipes, the city council workers said there wasn't much that could be done except to replace portion by portion as need arises. "The city council has no capacity

to replace all the pipes", they said.

According to the city council reports, the city as of 13 April 2021 had an on the record figure of 2708 outstanding cases of water leaks, bursts and backfilling cases which were reported to be on the increase but could not be attended timeously. Reasons for this failure were said to be due to lack of materials owing to the Council's current financial position. This is despite the increase in revenue collection to 70% as seen in the full council report on 31 May 2021.

Ward Councilor Silas Chigora said he was not happy with the water situation and had raised the matter in council stating that the city was not being fair to the Eastern suburbs as they are the only ones who are being affected by the water shedding program since it was announced by the mayor (Councillor Solomon Mguni) in March. The councilor demanded that the issue be investigated as there were no reasons stated as to the failure by Tuli reservoir to supply water to its area which includes wards 3 and 4. According to records, the city has enough water to last until the end of 2022.

While no comment could be attained as the situation with Tuli reservoir, some of the reasons given to the issue of poor social service delivery were problems arising within the transport sector. "Lack of adequate fuel supplies from time to time and of late the lack of capacity to replace old and dangerous vehicle tires have resulted in lack of essential mobility to attend to these faults timeously", the report read.

In comparison the pipes that are now giving up, an asbestos material make were able to withhold use for almost three decades, and in some parts, are still intact, while the replacement material is a thick plastic type that, according to the council workers may not last as long but is what the council can afford and access. As a result of the closure of industries that used to make and supply these locally, the city has developed a dependency of the regional markets that require foreign currency which the city itself does not have.

As the water shedding program is already underway, the ward can only hope and pray that the bursts hold off until the economy is back on track, if that is not a rotting pipe dream as well.



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