



THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT NEWS

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Break the Bias: Gender equality for sustainable human development



From the Director's Desk

Welcome to our first edition of **The Human Development News** in 2022. In this edition, we share with you some of our exciting work in a society with increased levels of gender based violence, child marriages and other social injustices. The Civic Forum on Human Development (CFHD) continues to aim for a society which is inclusive, just and resilient with local institutions empowered to drive their own development. The economic situation in the country as well as the COVID-19 pandemic still affect the day to day lives of the majority of people in Zimbabwe.

As the CFHD, women are at the core of our programming which is why this issue runs under the theme **"Break the Bias: Gender Equality for Sustainable Human Development."** This issue will show how our work on social accountability led to increased gender inclusion in development processes and strengthened the voice of local institutions. We will also highlight the Women's Day commemorations which were held in two of the districts we work in. Our work in the first half of the year also includes humanitarian work and a research on the foods that the urban populace is constantly being bombarded with and the health repercussions. Enjoy.



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Social Accountability Project Progress



The Social Accountability Project is now in its third year of implementation. During the period under review, the CFHD managed to support the development of a gender policy for Chegutu District at a workshop attended by different government departments of health, social services, engineering and councillors. The organization also developed a gender needs assessment framework to guide the participatory mapping of gender needs. The framework consolidated and analyzed the findings from the CBP process. This process was guided by the 3 plus 2 model used in identifying women and youths' priorities at ward level. The approach entails that for every five priorities that are jointly agreed at ward level, at least one should address a youth priority, one for women whilst the other three priorities address the general ward priorities. An analysis conducted by CFHD on the jointly agreed priorities shows that the priorities for women were centred on water, clinics, mother shelters, nutritional gardens, ECD learning centres and road rehabilitation.

The CFHD also worked on a Gender Manual that guides the mainstreaming of gender in local authorities. The manual also serves to ascertain whether or not local government processes that define, generate and deliver services to rural communities are sensitive to differences in the needs and situations of women and girls compared to men and boys. This led to formulation of possible solutions and strategies to close the identified gaps and needs. The CFHD also developed the vulnerability to resilience building framework which seeks to enable programme staff to engage more systematically with community resilience issues emerging from ward based community planning and profiling of socio-economic groups, CBOs and various CSOs that are active in these communities.

In addition to this, the CFHD developed a CBP briefing pamphlet which captures the lessons learnt during this process. CBP is an approach that is now supported by the Government of Zimbabwe in areas where it has been successfully applied using a collaborative approach. The CBP brief demonstrates the benefits of the approach in promoting ownership and fostering accountability and positive role of civil society actors in the development process.





Social Accountability Project Progress Continued

CFHD conducted trainings and facilitated the development of Service Delivery Charters and Strategic Plans in Chegutu, Chikomba, Makonde and Muzarabani Districts. The service delivery and district strategic planning workshops were attended by relevant stakeholders across the 4 districts who comprised of CBOs, councillors and DAT members. Duty bearers, CSOs and CBOs were able to use the development of service charters as a basis for building durable social accountability relationships. A client service delivery framework has been developed. It was agreed that the strategic plans should form a basis for annual performance assessments for CFHD annual reflection workshops and should enrich the inclusive local governance and social accountability facilitation which will become a public and user friendly evidence based tool.

A two-day training workshop on community-led resilience building that was targeted at CBOs, CSOs, DAT was also held. Its purpose was to reflect on effective community-led coping and resilience building strategies to address environmental, climate change and economics shocks. The workshop gave a platform for interaction of CBOs, CSOs and RDCs on possible strategies of ensuring that local communities through their respective CBOs and CSOs are active partners in building local capacities and capabilities in the adaptation and responsiveness to the impacts of natural disasters.

An exchange visit of District Action Team (DAT) members and CBOs was also conducted by CFHD. Exchange visits are intended to benefit beneficiaries through an open exchange of ideas, knowledge and sound practices. The workshop was conducted to exchange lessons, best practices, share emerging challenges and avenues for strengthening collaboration and engagement with CBOs and SEGs with local authorities to ensure inclusive, accountable, resilient and accessible service delivery in rural local authorities. Access to information by local CBOs was a contentious point during the exchange visits. As information is regarded as the key to power, access to data is very limited within local authorities. The CBOs and RDCs were urged to continuously engage and share information on financial management, services being delivered, budget set on service delivery and feedbacks. The key emerging lessons learnt from the workshop include;

- i) exchange and learning visits should be extended to other DAT members working in the project,
- ii) need to harness the opportunities provided by CBOs and grassroots groups operating within the targeted districts for improved service delivery and
- iii) capacity building of CBOs to create effective demand structures.





Annual Reflection Workshop

A two-day national annual reflection workshop on the Social Accountability Project was convened from the 23th to the 24th of February 2022 at Chinhoyi University Hotel. The workshop was organized by the CFHD to collectively review progress on implementation of the Social Accountability Project across 8 districts of Zimbabwe (Makonde, Chegutu Rural, Mbire, Muzarabani, Guruve, Chikomba, Goromonzi and Murewa districts). The workshop was also convened to reflect on challenges, lessons learnt and emerging avenues for strengthening collaboration and engagement with CBOs and SEGs with local authorities for the delivery of inclusive, accountable, resilient and accessible service delivery in rural local authorities of Zimbabwe. The workshop gave a platform for interaction of development partners and RDCs on possible strategies of strengthening multiple resource leveraging. It was out of this meeting that the future road map of the project and the sustainability plans were discussed.

Major Highlights from the Workshop

- The need for support of local authorities in the development of service charters that are gender sensitive
- Establishment of Gender stand-alone committees across all the districts
- Recognition of CBOs and SEGs in RDCS and effective collaboration in service delivery.
- Recognition of indigenous knowledge systems in disaster risk reduction and prevention
- Training of traditional leaders and strengthening of WADCOS and VIDCOS on their roles and social accountability mechanisms
- Reviewing of the social accountability tools to align with the current policies

Recommendations

- The Social Accountability Project must reach its intended objectives before the end of the project and a sustainability plan need to be in place across all the districts.
- As part of resilience building, there is need for the recognition of indigenous knowledge systems in disaster risk reduction and prevention
- Training of traditional leaders and strengthening of Ward Development Committees (WADCOS) and Village Development Committees (VIDCOS) on their roles and social accountability mechanisms.





Learning Platforms

One-day training workshops of CBOs, SEGs and CBOs in the use of social accountability tools in monitoring and implementation of local plans were conducted in Murewa (08 March 2022); Makonde (25 March 2022); Mbire (18 March 2022) and Chikomba district (29 March 2022). The activity was conducted parallel to the CBP process which enabled the project to map, profile and impart relevant knowledge and information to local CBOs and CBOs operating in the district. The activity was welcomed by the RDC and their respective CBOs who highlighted that they were not working together in the past in promoting local development and service delivery. For instance, Mr Majaya, CEO for Mbire District, highlighted that the profiling of the CBOs was a stepping stone to further collaborations with the CBOs in their district.

The capacity building workshops were attended by a total of 149 participants (52 males and 97 females) representing 54 CBOs. It was agreed during the training workshops that there is need for continuous mentorship of CBOs so as to improve their capacities in the areas of monitoring of the local plans, resilience building, disaster preparedness planning, resource mobilisation and organizational development. The project engaged CBOs and CSOs in the development of CBP plans and the project learnt that CBOs still needed some targeted mentorship support for effective participation and monitoring.

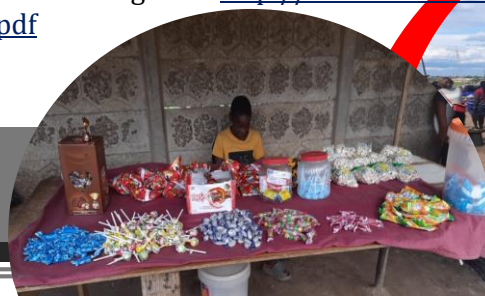


URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS RESEARCH

CFHD participated in a scoping assessment on urban food systems spearheaded by Training and Research Support Centre (TARSC). The assessment was done in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Child Care (MoHCC) and the Regional Network for Equity in Health in East and Southern Africa (EQUINET) from February to May 2022. The research came about because urban areas in East and Southern Africa experience a combined burden of under-nutrition, obesity and non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Liberalised trade and a rise in urbanisation has shifted consumption to imported ultra-processed foods (refined foods with additives such as high sugar, salt, trans-fats, preservatives, flavours, colourants and limited or no whole food) at the expense of locally grown foods. With limited published evidence from Zimbabwe, this scoping assessment explored the contribution of urban commercial ultra-processed food markets and urban agriculture to local food systems and diets in Harare. The assessment covered document review of laws, policies, research papers, interviews with key actors, group discussions with Harare residents and a checklist on ten tracer food products in eleven vending sites in Harare. A stakeholder meeting which discussed actions to promote health in Harare's food system and evidence gaps for substantive formal research was held on the 27th of May 2022 where a summary of the findings with a more detailed report were presented. Recommendations from the scoping assessment are summarised as follows:

- Promote and widen public awareness on the health risks of ultra-processed foods and the alternatives in health promoting foods and food systems.
- Strengthen communication, inclusive participation, co-ordination, dialogue and a proactive partnership within and between authorities, residents, vendors and producers involved in urban agriculture, grown food vending and processing and in measures to address ultra-processed foods.
- Promote and expand current initiatives that recognize and provide land, Agritex support for on and off plot urban agriculture and ensure adequate land for urban agriculture in city master plans.
- Provide tax, innovative financing, technology, research and development, skills and market support for healthy, organic food producers, processors and retailers and work with 'early adopter' business leaders and health professionals to promote healthy processed alternatives.
- For ultra-processed products, review current laws to control their import and consumption, revise labelling laws to add health warnings and visual symbols, and to prevent ultra-processed product advertising and sale in areas frequented by children and young people.
- Increase council provided market spaces, accredit health, environment and hygiene standards in all vending sites, provide prototype food vending stalls and microfinance support.
- More assertively promote locally grown and traditional diets in urban dwellers and young people, drawing on local civil society, youth peers and social media used by young people.
- Strengthen monitoring of food quality and safety, monitor compliance with labelling and advertising laws, and require public display of certification of food handler medical checks.
- Improve resources for a wider local presence of inspection services, a strengthened role of mandatory Standards Association of Zimbabwe assessment of foods and use useful apps to widen monitoring by civil society and community monitors.

The final report can be access on our website on the following link: <http://www.civicforum.co.zw/e-library-download/urban-food-systems-report1655386320.pdf>



Human Rights Project

The CFHD, through funding from SIDA/IOM, supported the hosting of CSOs and CBOs learning platforms in four districts that were aimed at equipping CBOs and CSOs in the areas of resource mobilization, project management and local governance. The project enabled local CSOs/CBOs to transform themselves into decentralized knowledge and information centres for human rights protection and promotion at the local level and to develop referral mechanisms for support in the event of specialised services being required on human rights monitoring and protection.

The project led to the development of two key network building and GBV learning papers with the purpose of providing an amalgamation of emerging lessons, experiences and opportunities from the networking building initiative. The emerging issues were collected from key informants, practitioners, diverse organisational experiences and community feedback. The development of the learning papers was based on elements which ensure continuity with the work done by CSOs, CBOs and other stakeholders and innovations. The learning papers are designed to illustrate key processes, steps, approaches and tools that strengthen participatory civil society constructive engagement and collaboration. This is done together with the central government, local government and service providers in responding to human rights protection and monitoring based on practical lessons and experiences in the field.

Key Outcomes

- The network building approach has resulted in the development of linkages that have enabled communication and learning among groups and organizations with similar programs within our areas of operations.
- In Mashonaland East through coordination of Nyahunure Community Trust, the CSOs network building approach has created locally driven platforms to coordinate programs, activities and resources of multiple groups and organizations to achieve shared policy or program goals.
- In Mashonaland Central it was noted that network building approach has the potential for establishing jointly-governed bodies for managing coordinated human rights related programmes implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Such a body can be created through continued support from the CFHD to the established local network.
- Strengthening human rights monitoring and protection initiatives to End Violence against Women and Girls requires a multiplicity of actors to come together and share experiences in the district as GBV cases of GBV continued to rise.
- All actors should ensure that women and girls are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in leadership and decision-making around all areas of program/policy design and implementation, to ensure that GBV prevention, response, and coordination approaches can be carried out in a way that is context-specific, sustainable, and adapted to the gendered dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic.





International Women's Day Commemorations

The 8th of March each year is International Women's Day. The CFHD celebrated the occasion on the 15th of March in Murewa and 31st of March in Muzarabani under the theme *"Break the bias."* Key objectives for the commemorations were to reflect on success stories, milestones and challenges faced by women and girls in the realization of their human rights space in the development agenda. It is interesting to note that Muzarabani district was identified as the major hotspot of gender-based violence and child marriages. The issues of gender are key to the CFHD current projects, specifically the recognition and empowerment of women across the districts.

A representative from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development in Muzarabani, Tafadzwa Mashambanhaka, indicated that the work of the CFHD brought positive changes in the district especially on issues of inclusive service delivery and gender sensitive planning. The work was also celebrated by Mrs Munyoro, gender champion of Murewa district, for necessitating the establishment of a gender committee responsible for the monitoring gender sensitive programming in Murewa district. The GBV awareness raising workshop was commended for educating children and women on human rights issues and the existing referral pathways in place within the provinces.

The event was well attended by women and girls from all walks of life who were able to freely share their experiences and views. Major take-aways from the event included:

- The teaching of little children on GBV and human rights issues was pivotal in changing the societal beliefs as young girls now have big dreams and look forward to having promising careers.
- The appointment of the girl child councillor in Muzarabani motivated other girls on the need to participate in local leadership.
- Women from the communities were celebrated for contributing to local economic development through the idea of Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL).
- The presence of women-led CBOs and women-led village heads show-case the impact of the women empowerment programmes in the target districts.
- There was inclusion of all vulnerable groups in society including those living with disabilities, the pregnant mothers as well as all age groups that were invited to attend the commemorations.

Main issues that were raised were as follows:

- Lack of confidentiality when one goes to report a rape or child abuse case at police stations discouraged victims from following up on their cases.
- Fear of victimization of family members by family and the community at large
- There is still a gap in the documentation, reporting and feedback of GBV cases.
- There were several cases when victims changed their story once the issue had gone to law enforcers. This made it difficult to arrest perpetrators for lack of witness or evidence

Recommendation

- During the commemorations the local communities requested for the development of resource material on gender mainstreaming that is easy to comprehend for local communities with low levels of literacy.

