



**CFHD Human
Development Bulletin,
December, 2025**

Welcome to this special edition of the CFHD Human Development Bulletin, marking 30 years of dedicated service to promoting inclusive, participatory, and human-centred development. This milestone celebrates the collective achievements of our partners, communities, and stakeholders who have been part of our journey in advancing human and sustainable development in Zimbabwe and sharing emerging good practices with regional partners in Southern and East Africa..

Snapshot

- CFHD celebrates 30 years of human-centred development services in Zimbabwe and Beyond.
- 30 milestones anchor our celebrations in partnership with Government, Local Authorities, Communities, International NGOs, Local NGOs, the UN and various Stakeholder.
- Regional learning and collaboration creates avenues for disseminating good practices in community based planning, social cohesion and social accountability for inclusive and gender-sensitive service delivery.
- Over 16 local authorities becoming learning centres of excellence in community driven development integrated with social accountability benefiting from local governance resource centres and learning network on social accountability creating an ecosystem for sustained improvements in service delivery and locally-led development.
- Five evidenced based strategic focal areas provide a foundation for future programming for CFHD: (i) Scaling-up human settlement information and influencing work (ii) Strengthening local governance and accountable service delivery, (iii) Strengthening community resilience and protection (iv) Scaling-up support for women girls and youth Empowerment and (v) Environment, Energy and Climate Change building on CFHD track-record in these areas.
- Great apprehension for our long-term partners and donors such as International Labour Organization (ILO), Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (HIVOS), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), European Union (EU), Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Practical Action, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat). – Let us continue to collaborate together in the future for sustainable human development.

CFHD at 30: Honouring the Journey!!

This celebration marks more than just a milestone, it reflects our shared commitment to inclusive growth, community empowerment, and participatory governance. Through multiple platforms of reflection, celebration, and storytelling, CFHD honours the people and partnerships that have shaped our mission and impact. As we look to the next 30 years, our vision remains clear, to advance human development, promote local transformation, and institutionalize participatory approaches that leave no one behind. CFHD's 30-year journey reflects a deliberate evolution of approach, capacity, influence, and geographic reach. Each phase built on the gains of the previous one strengthening systems, deepening participation, and expanding impact. Together, they form the institutional foundation for CFHD's next strategic direction.

CFHD went through several phases of organisational evolution while building its resilience to external threats and challenges. In its formative phase from 1995-2008, CFHD focused on supporting civic participation in housing in 21 urban local authorities and facilitated the progressive development of human settlement policies through multi-stakeholder consultation processes. We have remained a key partner in the development and public launch of the current Human Settlement Policy launched on **September 2, 2021**. From 2009 to 2019, we focused more on supporting over 16 rural district councils strengthening civic participation, local governance and social accountability to improve inclusive and gender-sensitive delivery. During this phase, we also supported renewable energy awareness in rural areas, movement building for women against gender-based violence and implemented a pilot gender-sensitive sanitation in peri-urban areas. From 2020, our emphasis has been on scaling-up our human centred approaches in the areas of local governance and social accountability, community strengthening and human protection, women, girls and youth empowerment as well as energy, environment and climate change. We have also forged learning and collaborative partnerships at regional and international level sharing lessons, experiences and best practices in human-centred development for transformation and impactful development change at community level.

Strategic areas/achievements anchoring the 30 milestones/ traceable impacts through stakeholder reflections.

CFHD strategic collaboration model which involves working with strategic government stakeholders at national, provincial and district level, local NGOs, CBOs and INGOs including UN agencies with support of local leadership and communities themselves have resulted in significant milestones over the past thirty years. The main achievements highlighted by stakeholders who participated in our 30th Anniversary Webinar were in the following areas:

- Inclusive human settlement policy development and support
- Fostering inclusive and gender-sensitive local governance practices
- Empowerment of local community-based organizations and communities
- Operationalization of social accountability systems for efficient service delivery
- Regional learning and collaboration for best practice sharing and growing our influence

Theme I: Inclusive Human Settlement Policies and Practices

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Housing and Social Amenities, Engineer Kudzanayi Chinyanga expressed his gratitude to the support of the Civic Forum on Human Development over the past 30 years. He stated that:

“The collaboration with CFHD was instrumental in ensuring that the National Human Settlement Policy truly reflected the voices of our citizens and aligned with inclusive, rights-based development principles.”

He then encouraged the organization to continue working closely with the Ministry on Human Settlement issues and revive its information booklets and technical briefs to civic groups and other stakeholders on housing policy and technical issues for public dissemination.



Hon. July Moyo giving opening remarks during the Human Settlement Policy Validation Workshop held at Margolis Resort, Harare on 15 August 2019.

In building civic capacity, the Homeless People's Federation (HPF), represented by Mr Shadreck Tondori, also shared their opinion on milestones achieved through the Civic Forum support. He noted that:

“As the Homeless People's Federation, we have seen how citizen participation transforms settlement development. When informally housed families are included in consultations, solutions become realistic, affordable, and truly responsive to the needs on the ground.”

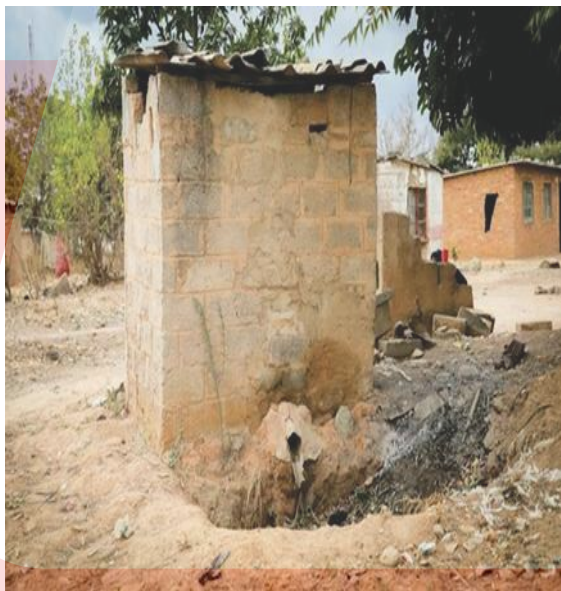
The Civic Forum helped through the development of a toolkit on housing information and technical briefs which supported emerging community based organisations like Homeless People's Federation and established groups at community level to share technical information and strategies for addressing human settlement issues through social dialogue, consensus building and more purposive action and coordination. As a result, community groups working on human settlement and building materials production become more self-organised, networked and participating in shaping human settlement issues through multi-stakeholder dialogue processes, which is a big complement to the work of the Civic Forum.



An example of a house constructed in Dzivarasekwa through Homeless People's Federation (HPF)

An off-shoot of CFHD work on human settlement issue, is the issue of safe water and sanitation through pilot gender-sensitive sanitation in peri-urban areas like Epworth. Through forging partnership with the UN –Habitat and the private sector, CFHD embarked on a project piloting the use of easy-flush toilets in Epworth targeting vulnerable households. This project targeted 30 households, enabling access to clean sanitation. The benefits of easy-flush sanitation include:

- Improved hygiene and reduced risk of water-borne and sanitation-related diseases
- Enhanced safety, privacy, and dignity, particularly for women, girls, and persons with disabilities
- Reduced water usage compared to conventional flush toilets, making them suitable for water-scarce areas
- Ease of use and maintenance, even in low-income and high-density settlements
- Lower environmental contamination through improved waste containment
- Increased community awareness and adoption of improved sanitation practices



An installed easy-flush toilet in Epworth, Ward 3

Theme 2: Strengthen Citizen Participation and Local Governance Transformation

Working closely with Association of Rural District Councils Zimbabwe (ARDCZ), a strategic partner of CFHD, a comprehensive plan for shifting focus to strengthen citizen participation in local governance and service delivery was developed. It involved working on the supply and demand side to foster positive dialogue and leverage existing capacities within local government and rural communities to co-create strategies for participatory local governance, gender-sensitive service delivery and strengthening participatory planning and budgeting processes ensuring that the needs and priorities of vulnerable communities are effectively addressed.

Reflecting on the first phase of this local governance work, Mr Karaza from Mbire rural district, said the creation of District Action Teams(DAT) was a game changer in bringing all stakeholders involved in service delivery in understanding participatory approaches that are anchored on community based planning,

innovative resource allocation prioritization frameworks and multiple resource leveraging by all stakeholders as key foundations for sustainable service delivery in the rural areas. Community based planning was quickly adapted by local authorities and a new framework for prioritization was applied successfully. This new model was based on the 3 plus 2 approach which implied that for every cycle of five top priorities 3 would address general community needs and for the other 2 priorities one would focus on women priorities while the other one will address the top youth priority. Practical living examples of 3 plus 2 prioritization approach are evident in some of districts in local authorities of focus.

In Murehwa Ward 4, the 3 general priorities were Muchinjike Road Rehabilitation, Muchinjike ECD construction and the top priority for women was the Women Training Centre and the youth top priority was development of the Muchinjike Home Industry for skills development and employment creation. By the end of the project, Muchinjike Road Rehabilitation, the Muchinjike ECD construction, and the Women Training Centre had been completed, while the Muchinjike Clinic Construction and the Muchinjike Home Industry had been initiated with the involvement of over 150 community members.



Muchinjike Clinic in Murehwa Ward 4

Another shining example of the community-based planning and social accountability approach was shared from Mbire Rural District Council, Ward 10, where three general community priorities focused on the construction of a community hall for ward development activities, promotion of community-led resilience plantations, and establishment of nutrition gardens in the ward. The top priority for women was the drilling of a borehole, while youths prioritized beekeeping and honey processing initiatives.

By the end of the project, the community hall construction, community-led resilience plantation activities, and nutrition gardens had been completed, while the borehole drilling and beekeeping and honey processing initiatives were at various stages of completion.



Community-led resilience plantation in Mbire, Ward 11.

A major lesson from the dialogue process was that implementation of community projects may take longer due to resource constraints but the focus on strengthening multiple resource leveraging from various stakeholders operating in the ward has proved very successful in some of the wards. For example, in Murehwa, the local authority allocated part of its annual budget to rehabilitate two community water points and upgrade access roads leading to the business centre in Murewa district. In addition, communities in Murehwa mobilised labour and local materials to repair classroom blocks, contribute toward borehole drilling, and establish a small revolving fund for maintenance of shared assets. With support from a development partner, a safe house was constructed in Murewa, offering temporary protection and a safe living space for GBV survivors. In Chikomba District, the community based plan leveraged government devolution funds for expanding clinic infrastructure and purchasing solar power systems to ensure uninterrupted service delivery.



Mupatsi clinic funded by devolution funds in Chikomba District ward 26

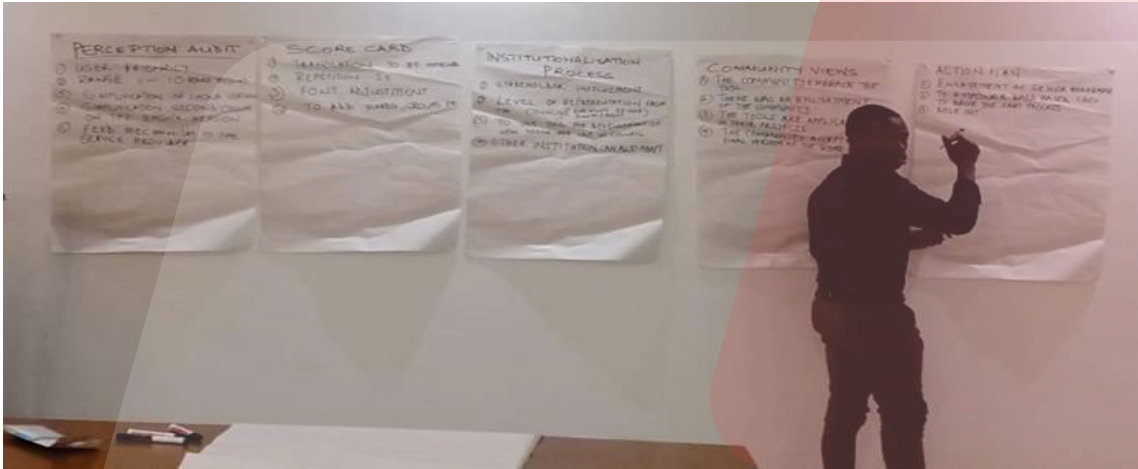
The examples above demonstrate what happens when a participatory community based planning process creates several avenues for local development from the ward level. CFHD has supported community based planning processes in 14 rural district councils in Zimbabwe which involved 18,000 community representatives and benefitted over 1 million people through direct training, improved access to information, funding of prioritized projects and ongoing participation in participatory planning and budgeting as well as service delivery monitoring. Generic manuals and technical briefs are available for sharing with interested development partners and stakeholders through CFHD's Local Governance Training and Resource Centre (LOGTRAC). Commenting on the impact of the community based planning approach, Mr Karaza, from Mbire RDC said: *"the CFHD-facilitated community based planning process have moved communities from being passive recipients to active participants through local plans and budgets that truly reflects their priorities and realities in the district."* Mr Pawandiwa, a CBO representative from Nyahunure Community Trust working in Murehwa and Mutoko, observed that *"CFHD's capacity-building initiatives empowered community-based organizations to engage confidently and constructively, transforming dialogue platforms into spaces of genuine accountability and collaboration."*

Theme 3: Strengthening inclusive and gender-sensitive service delivery and social accountability

After years of supporting citizen participation in local governance, participatory reviews and multi-stakeholder dialogue meetings, CFHD was urged to focus on strengthening inclusive service delivery and social accountability systems of rural local authorities. To date CFHD has worked with fourteen local authorities with support from the European Union to operationalise inclusive and gender-sensitive governance and social accountability systems for effective service delivery. This entailed working on the supply (local authorities and government stakeholders) and demand side (communities and community-based organisations) to institutionalise participatory dialogue processes on the available social accountability system and tools appropriate to each local authority situation. Through process based and responsive capacity building approaches local authorities, government stakeholders, communities and community based organisations resolved to start with inclusive community based planning process as a basis for the social accountability training followed by practical demonstration of social accountability monitoring processes based on service delivery priorities from the community based plan.



Mr Ndlovu from CFHD taking participants through the community score card tool before they administer it to the communities on the first day in Mbire District



District Action Team (DAT) members giving feedback on their views on the social accountability Monitoring tools and action plan in Chikomba District

At the 30th Anniversary Webinar, this flagship project attracted a number of reflections from the participants coming from various districts who highlighted the impact of simplified tools such as scorecard and perception index in building a transparent and accountable relationship with service providers based on priorities agreed in the service charter. Mrs Anesu from Ward 5, Murehwa noted that the community scorecard helped them to move from a culture of complaining to a culture structured engagement with service providers to understand progress and challenges and suggestions for improvement. This was also emphasised by Mr Karaza from Mbire Rural District Council who boldly stated that “ interface meetings changed the relationship between service providers and citizens. Instead of confrontation, we now sit together to analyse scorecard results and agree on solutions.” Mr Mutangadura from Murehwa Rural District Council claimed that “the use of simplified social accountability tools ensured that women’s priorities, like boreholes and training centres, were included in the development agenda and service providers have to create gender-sensitive feedback mechanisms.”

Theme 6: Regional Learning and Collaboration

The human-centred and inclusive approaches and practices by CFHD have attracted interest from regional partners working towards sustainable human development, community stabilization and social cohesion in conflict-affected areas. In Eastern Africa, CFHD engaged in collaborative learning partnership with IOM Somalia on supporting social accountability training and facilitating the development of a social cohesion strategy for the South West State, Baidoa, Somalia. In reflecting on the learning partnership, Mr A. Osman said that:

“The collaboration with CFHD brought a new level of inclusion and accountability to Baidoa’s planning process, ensuring that even the most vulnerable voices were heard.”

In Southern Africa, CFHD has established a collaborative learning partnership with IOM Mozambique following successful collaborative learning in Somalia. The major basis for learning partnership is on sharing expertise on community based planning in war-torn Cabo Delgado Province where communities need to build community resilience and effective linkages with service delivery agencies to restore their livelihoods.

Through this collaboration CFHD facilitated a community based training course for IOM staff, government stakeholders and their civil society partners. Reflecting on this learning partnership, Alex Okello, said:

“Working with CFHD helped us adapt CBP to the realities of displacement and insecurity, enabling communities to shape recovery plans that reflect both immediate and long-term needs. The success of this training has resulted in the adoption of the CBP approach in IOM Area Development Programme (ADP) in two new Provinces in Mozambique. This makes it imperative to continue to exchange lessons with CFHD on emerging lessons and experiences.”

The overall reflections were positive on the strategy of regional learning and collaboration for regional scaling-up of the human-centred approach beyond Southern and Eastern Africa. CFHD was urged to lead the emerging learning network on local governance and social accountability as it is increasingly becoming a Centre of Excellence on human-centred local governance and social accountability in Southern and Eastern Africa.

Theme 7: Building consensus on the future

There was consensus by participants to the 30th Anniversary Webinar that CFHD has developed a solid foundation for scaling-up its human-centred approaches through more creative and adapted pathways to sustainable human development including:

- Strengthening documentation of the emerging practices from all the geographical areas of work to feed into national and regional learning networks and collaboration partners.
- Continue to sharpen tools and resource guides for community based planning, training for transformation and social accountability.
- Continue to focus on public dissemination on relevant human settlement, local governance and citizen participation that enhance public awareness, understanding and engagement in public policy.
- Seek funding for scaling up work through more strategic sharing of CFHD approaches and its impacts at local, national and regional level.
- CFHD to continue to consolidate its work across the four integrated portfolios of Local Governance and Social Accountability, Community and Social Cohesion Strengthening, Women, Girls and Youth Empowerment and Environment, Energy and Climate Change working closely with its network of partners at national, regional and international level.

CFHD acknowledges the continued support from our partners and donors, which has enabled us to reach remote communities, vulnerable groups, and conflict-affected populations. We extend an open appeal for continued collaboration to further scale impact at both local and regional levels. Over the past 30 years, CFHD has received funding from EU, USAID, HIVOS, KAS, ILO, UNHABITAT, IOM, PRACTICAL ACTION, ACTION AID.