

NEWSLETTER ON SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN RURAL AREAS OF ZIMBABWE.



INTRODUCTION

CFHD BULLETIN NO. 4

Civic Forum on Human Development (CFHD) recently concluded the implementation of a 5 year EU funded project titled Strengthening Local Governance and Citizen Participation in Rural Areas of Zimbabwe (LGCP: 2010-2015). The project demonstrated the effectiveness of participatory local governance and decentralized planning approaches in strengthening the supply and demand side of local governance in rural areas of Zimbabwe. The CFHD was able to fuse elements of Social Accountability on the LGCP project that had been learnt from its learning partnership with the Public Accountability Service Monitor (PSAM) since 2011, a Rhodes University (South Africa) affiliated institution which has vast knowledge in social accountability capacity building. Fusing the LGCP project with the 4 key principles of Social Accountability resulted in the project demonstrating the importance of social accountability approach as a weapon in the fight for better governance and service delivery in rural local governance of Zimbabwe. Below are five examples of how the CFHD was able to apply the social accountability approach in the LGCP project:

1. Budget Consultation

CFHD supported Mutoko, Tsholotsho, Mutoko and

Chipinge RDCs with financial resources and technical assistance during the period 2010-2015 in participatory budget and planning consultation processes. Local authorities are required by the legislation (specifically Rural District Councils Act and Urban Councils Act) to consult citizens when developing budgets and plans. The activity has immensely contributed to increased citizen participation in budgeting and planning processes as well as improved prioritization of issues affecting citizens in planning and decision making process. The success of the project was demonstrated by more than 8000 people who participated in Chipinge district budget consultative meetings which resulted in increased revenue flows from 58% in 2009 to 76, 5% in 2010. As a result of the consultations, Chipinge and Mutoko initiated 25% and 30% cash plough back incentives per

ward to be used in the implementation of project chosen by the community of that respective ward. The process has also resulted in improved capacity of traditional leaders especially in revenue collection has been reported, previously they were not even aware of their role in the budget process and now village heads are now allocated 15% of the total revenue they collect from communities as incentives,

2. Public Expenditure Tracking System

CFHD is of the view that in order for public institutions to be responsive to people's needs and address issues of corruption, they have to be transformed into a social accountability system using



Ward 27 Community leaders during budget consultation gathering with DAT member, Ms Mutasa.

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using an array of strategies such as the Public Expenditure Tracking systems (PETS). The system was aimed at improving citizen participation in financial management systems of local authorities. This have to some extent resulted in financial transparency of the targeted local authorities to minimize conflicts arising from unclear financial operations and to enhance cooperation by residents and relevant stakeholders in revenue generation efforts for improved service delivery. Communities managed to apply their PETS skills through their successful Income Generation Projects such as school uniform and poultry projects in Nyaminyami and Mutoko respectively.

3. Engagement

CFHD is of the view that increasingly interaction between demand for and supply of more effective service delivery will result in good governance at local level, hence the organisation has been

constantly emphasising on effective engagement and collaboration of relevant stakeholders. Stories of change that emerged from LGCPP in the targeted districts have demonstrated that working relationships between community, council and government department have remarkably improved. The engagement has improved dialogue between local authorities and citizens for example in formulation of innovative revenue generation mechanisms using grain (maize) as a payment of development levy to council by communities who are facing cash challenges.



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The engagement enabled Mutoko Rural District Council (RDC) to collect revenue in the form of grain worth \$17 000 from 300 farmers in 2011. Also in Nyaminyami community participation towards developmental projects was illustrated through the construction of block at Mamvuramachena Secondary School Project wards 8.

4. Oversight role

CFHD managed to provide technical and financial assistance of training of councillors who play oversight role in the implementation of council plans and budgets. The process managed to revitalised local development structures which include Village Assembly, Ward Assemblies, WADCOs and VIDCOs for council feedback meetings. Some of

the targeted councillors and communities have demonstrated that they are now more development focused rather than focusing on politics alone through their interaction in the local governance structures. The level of awareness of citizens on council programmes and plans have tremendously increased through council feedback meetings led by councillors in their respective wards.

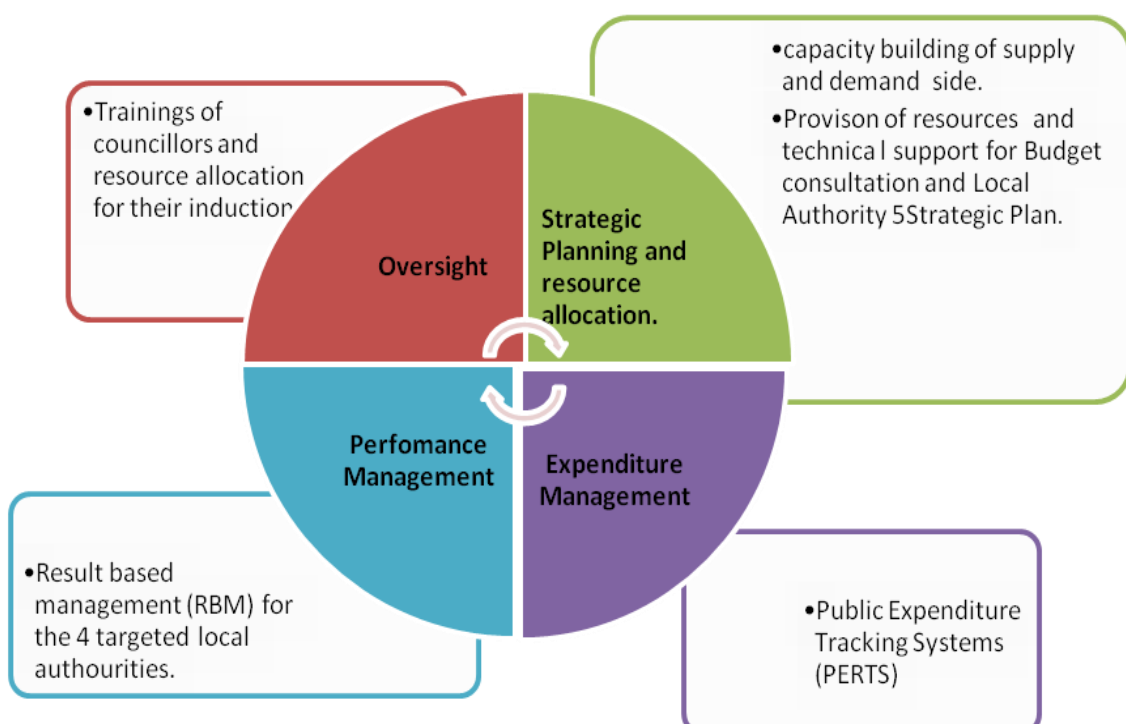
5. Results Based Management

In 2010 the CFHD provided technical assistance to members of staff of the targeted four districts in results based management (RBM). RBM is a performance management tool



aimed at improving staff performance and achieving better results as far as service delivery is concerned. Targeted local authorities have been receptive of RBM since it has enabled them to set realistic targets that are cognizant of available resources and staff capabilities. The Government has since made a mandatory for members of staff in public institutions to undergo training in RBM. Therefore CFHD managed to target 4 processes of social accountability through LGCPP and these are Strategic plan and resource allocation, expenditure management, performance management and oversight.

LGCPP target process of Social Accountability



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Questions that are asked and answered by the Social Accountability Process.

Through its work CFHD has been integrating the Social Accountability approach that sought to answer some of the questions that are used as tools for monitoring public resources management. These questions are generic and used to evaluate the social accountability process to turn inputs into outputs and into outcomes that show progressive realisation of needs of the people.

- **Planning and resource allocation** – What public funds/resources are available to officials or service providers? How do they plan to use these?
- **Expenditure management** – How effectively are public funds spent?
- **Performance management** – How do service providers perform in implementing their plan? Are quality public service delivered?
- **Public integrity** – What mechanisms exist to prevent, or what corrective action is taken in response to the misuse of public resources?
- **Oversight** – Do oversight bodies hold public officials to account for their performance?

2. Legal framework for Public Resource Management in Zimbabwe.

The project has been taking advantage of the legal framework to promote citizen participation in local governance decision making and planning process. The legal framework for public resource management in Zimbabwe is outlined under the following examples of legislations:

- National Constitution (Amendment No. 20)
- Public Finance management Act (PFMA)
- Audit office
- Urban Councils Act
- Rural District Councils Council Act
- Prevention of Corruption Act
- Privileges, immunities and powers of Parliament Act.

Section 13 of the Constitution enjoins the state and various institutions and agencies of government at every level to facilitate citizen participation in rapid and equitable development. The constitution further elaborates that in order to achieve development, people must be fully involved and participate in decision making process. Similarly, the Consti-

tution provides for equitable access of resources by all local communities in order to promote fair development. The PFMA stipulates that public resource management must secure transparency, transparency and sound management of public resources.



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CONCLUSION



A key position of CFHD is that an accountable service provider is only available as a result of inclusive, progressively informed and increasingly evidence-based discourse between local authorities and the citizens as well as their representatives. It articulates that all decisions and actions of the local authorities or service providers must be primarily aimed at progressively realising human rights of citizens within available resources. Therefore in order to ensure that the local authorities realise the rights of its local people, there is need for efficient and effective ways possible that all players need to acknowledge. The LGCPP project has effectively supported local authorities through the main activities that include budget consultations, PETS, engagement of supply and demand side in the governance, result based management and also training of councillors as oversight role players. These activities clearly feeds into social accountability process as they capacitate local authorities to be able to provide explanations and justifications to its citizens on how public resources are managed. CFHD will continue to do social accountability interventions through its new project on Strengthening Social Accountability in Rural Local Governance Systems of Zimbabwe .