



COMPENDIUM OF LESSONS AND INSIGHTS FROM SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY ADAPTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES IN PRACTICING DISTRICTS IN ZIMBABWE.



Funded by the European Union

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Acronyms

ARDCZ	Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBP	Community Based Planning
CCDS	Centre for Community Development Solutions
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFHD	Civic Forum on Human Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAT	District Action Team
DDC	District Development Coordinator
DDF	District Development Fund
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGDA	Lower Guruve Development Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NCT	Nyahunure Community Trust
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development- Development Assistance Committee
PC	Provincial Council
PDC	Provincial Development Committee
PRMF	Public Resource Management Framework
PSAM	Public Social Accountability Monitor
RDC	Rural District Council
RDDC	Rural District Development Committee
SAP(s)	Social Accountability Project(s)
SEG	Socio Economic Group
SSO	Social Services Officer
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
VfM	Value for Money
VIDCO	Village Development Committee
WADCO	Ward Development Committee
YVTF	Youth Vocational Training Facility

Executive Summary

The Civic Forum on Human Development (CFHD) is implementing a four-year project titled “**Strengthening Civil Society Capacity for Scaling – up Social Accountability in Rural Local Authorities of Zimbabwe**” in three Provinces of Mashonaland East: Chikomba, Goromonzi and Murewa Rural District Councils (RDCs), Mashonaland Central: Guruve, Mbire and Muzarabani RDCs; and Mashonaland West: Chegutu and Makonde RDCs. The aim of the project is to enhance meaningful participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in inclusive, accountable, resilient governance and service delivery in rural local authorities of Zimbabwe. The project is being implemented by the CFHD in partnership with the Association of Rural District Councils of Zimbabwe (ARDCZ), Centre for Community Development Solutions (CCDS), Lower Guruve Development Association (LGDA) and Nyahunure Community Trust (NCT). The project is being up-scaled following the successful implementation of the Strengthening Social Accountability in Rural Local Governance Systems of Zimbabwe Project that was implemented between January 2016 and June 2019 in partnership with the ARDCZ and CCDS. The project sought to promote sustainable and accountable governance in the management of public resources at the local government level for the progressive realization of basic human needs.

The compendium captures **lessons learned** and **knowledge gained** from the process of implementing the two Social Accountability Projects (SAPs). This includes the positives, negatives and critical success stories that we believe are key to CSOs, CBOs and rural districts councils across Zimbabwe. This is because there is a growing need to incorporate accountability mechanisms into local governance structures to counter corruption and mismanagement. Differences in local contexts have made it crucial for CFHD and its partners to develop responsive models for use by the different RDCs in strengthening their governance systems.

Success stories emerging from the SAP sites are on Public Resource Mobilisation Framework (PRMF), the 3 plus 2 approach, the light touch model and stakeholder engagement. The success stories emerge from the SAP as evidence based themes that can be replicated in their districts for strengthened social accountability in improving service delivery to communities.

Introduction

This compendium on learning insights is part of the old and new SAPs. The two projects focused on enhancing meaningful participation of civil society and community-based organizations in inclusive, accountable, resilient governance and service delivery in rural local authorities of Zimbabwe. The key result areas of the two projects are summarised below:

Key Result Areas (KRA)	Old Social Accountability Project	New Social Accountability Project
KRA 1	Strengthened mechanisms and strategies for improved engagement between CSOs, including women's rights organizations, citizens and local governance institutions on service delivery	Inclusive and gender-sensitive service delivery needs and priorities effectively integrated into local government planning and budgeting processes
KRA 2	Mainstreaming of inclusive service delivery and social accountability approaches by local government (supply side) and CSOs and CBOs (demand side) in the management of public resources	Increased operational space, capacity and voice of CSOs and CBOs in advocating and monitoring the delivery of quality services for all citizens (including vulnerable, disabled people).
KRA 3	Increased evidence-based dialogue between supply (local government) and demand (citizens and oversight) from a rights-based perspective	Improved transparency and accountability in performance management of elected and appointed local government officials and providing oversight at all levels of the Local Governance
KRA 4	Lessons and experiences on the effectiveness of inclusive service delivery and social accountability in promoting effective local governance documented and disseminated in relevant fora	Increased capacity for civil society driven partnerships in implementation of resilience building initiatives within their local communities
KRA 5	Increased documentation, learning and dissemination of lessons, experiences and best practices at local, provincial and national level	Increased documentation, learning and dissemination of lessons, experiences and best practices at local, provincial and national level

Examining the old project with the benefit of hindsight, we have sought to gather evidence about the impact of engagement between CSOs, CBOs and local authorities in strengthening social accountability in rural local authorities of Zimbabwe. This paper is not an evaluation of the two projects by any means, but a comparative learning exercise to gather as much as we can about key success factors experienced by the 14 RDCs (6 old, 8 new), to inform future programming.

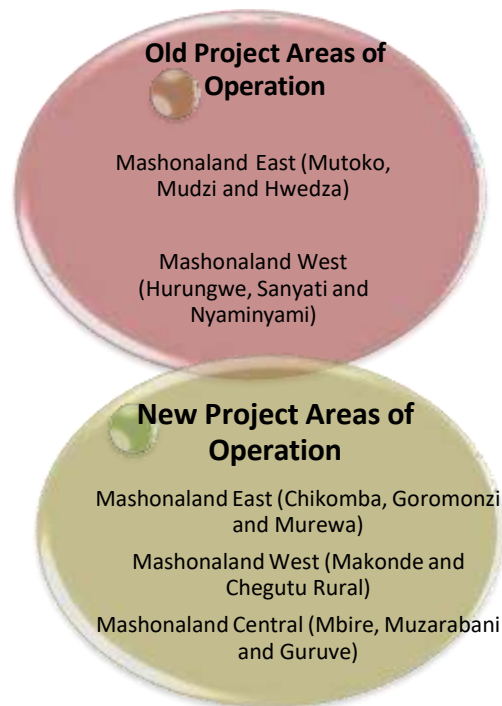


Figure 1: Areas of operation in the old and new social accountability projects

The Social Accountability Project

The current project is aligned to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries in the context of the previous Strengthening Social Accountability in Rural Local Governance Systems of Zimbabwe Project. Key challenges particularly faced by both the demand side (CSOs, CBOs, communities) and the supply side (local authorities) in the target districts of the old and new project are varied and a summary is as given below;

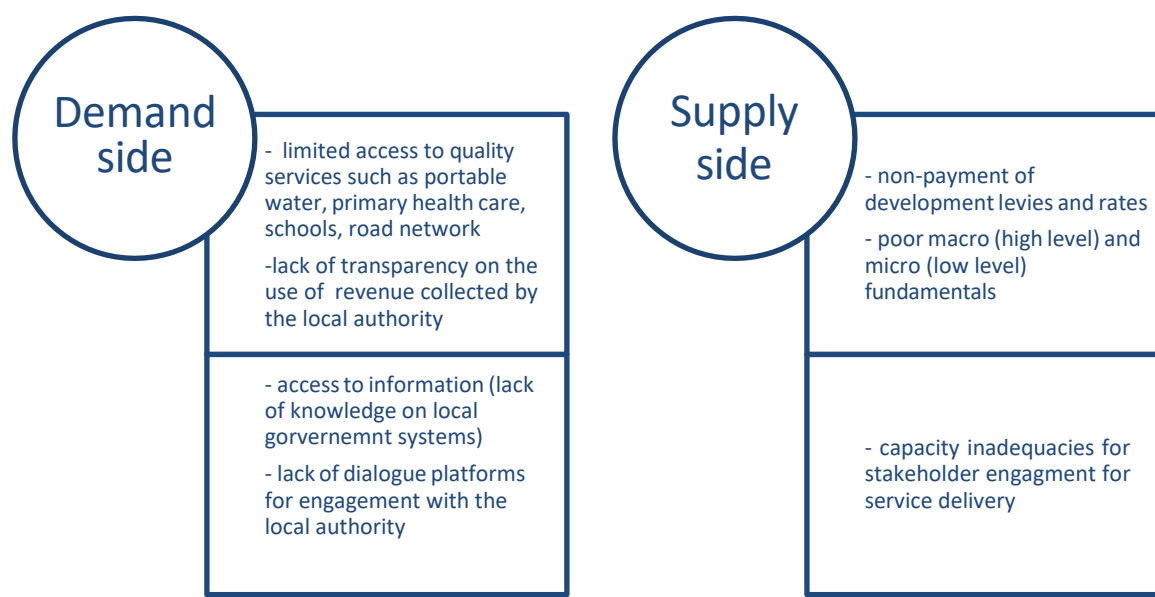


Figure 2: Key challenges faced by the demand and supply side

CFHD, together with its partners managed to implement the social accountability project in collaboration with CSOs, CBOs, traditional and elected leaders, RDCs and other stakeholders. This enabled the project to respond to challenges faced with varying degrees of success as will be explained by this compendium on learning insights for selected local authorities. The CFHD consortium conducted responsive capacity building of the above-mentioned groups using the four key models that are the Public Resource Management Framework, 3 plus two Approach, Light touch Model and Stakeholder Engagement.

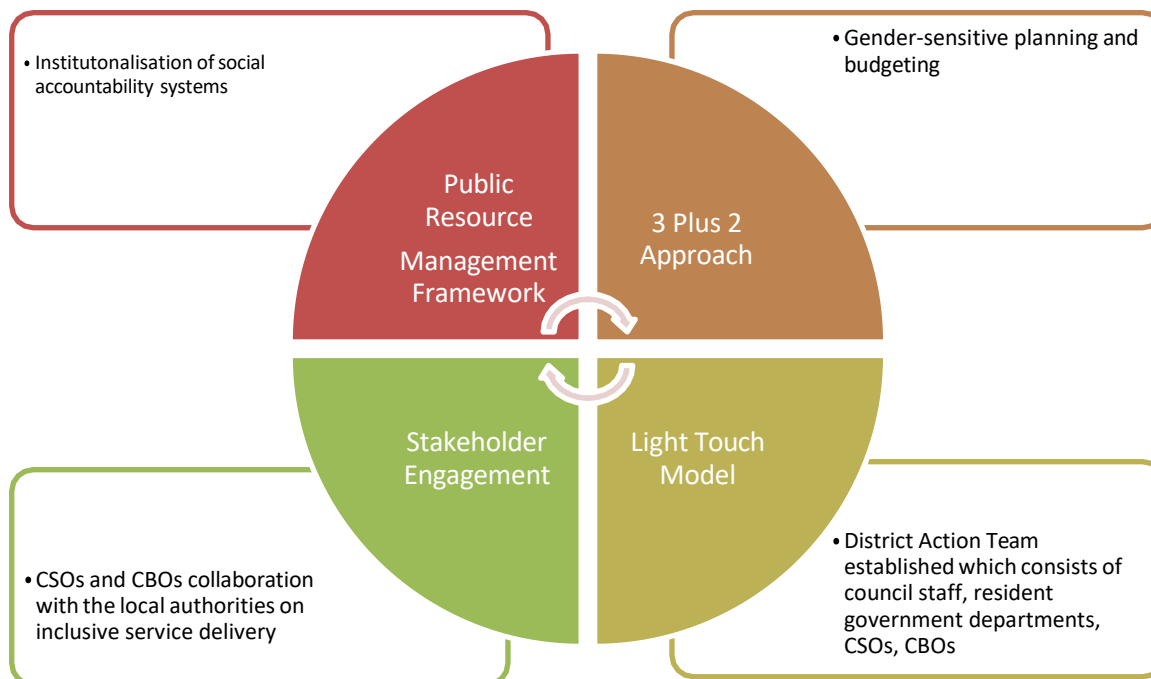


Figure 3: Social Accountability Models under the SAP

a. Public Resource Management Framework

Through capacity building on Public Resource Management Framework (PRMF), the targeted RDCs now have clearly defined and publicly shared institutionalized mechanisms for use in responding timely to citizen needs and priorities. The project emphasised the importance of the participating local authorities in the maintenance of aggregate fiscal discipline with the interaction between two variables: revenue and expenditure. Through capacity building of the local authorities staff and other stakeholders, CFHD and its partners imparted skills and knowledge for ensuring that public resources remain allocated to agreed-upon strategic priorities and spur reallocation from lesser to higher priorities to ensure allocation efficiency. This framework has been institutionalised in the local authorities through the engagement of various stakeholders during budget consultations. There is however need to scale the practice for more tangible results on public resource management.

b. 3 plus 2 Approach

From the previous Social Accountability Project, the project was able to pilot the use of a 3 plus 2 monitoring model at the district level, which was aimed at strengthening local level monitoring of citizen priorities. The model provides additional evidence for the interrogation, allocation of resources and monitoring of progress being made in the implementation of the community based plans.

“As women, we also had aspiration that whenever we have community meetings men should also allow us to contribute so that we can also have developed that address the specific issues brought forward by women. We are now happy because of the new community based planning method brought by the project that always gives us women an opportunity to put forward our key development priority issues. This is a big change from what used to happen in the past. We thank the EU because it has enabled women’s opinions to be respected at all local planning forums” CBO representative

The purpose of 3 plus 2 approach is to influence on resource allocations being made by the local authority or other service providers to target marginalized groups in the community such as women and people with disabilities.

The model promotes young women and girls to become more involved and more committed in local development processes through participation on decisions that affect them. The local authority and other service providers are challenged through the model to prioritize inclusive gender sensitive service delivery; and to enable women, youths, disabled and other marginalized groups. The advantages of the approach are elaborated below.



Figure 4: Advantages of the 3 plus 2 Approach

c. Light Touch Model

One of the approaches used by the CFHD in its programming is the Light Touch Model, which leverages capacities of local stakeholders in the implementation of project activities. The Light Touch Model is an approach that seeks to empower local actors from the RDCs, government departments, CSOs and CBOs to drive the whole planning, implementation and capacity building process at district and sub-district level with demand driven and technical support from the CFHD and its project partners. Local actors become the District Action Team (DAT). To

achieve inclusive service delivery and social accountability, the approach has been successfully tested for facilitating dialogue amongst key district stakeholders. The model also creates a strong foundation for increased evidence-based dialogue between supply side (government) and demand side (citizens and oversight) from a human development perspective. The advantages of using the light touch model are that:

- There is project ownership by key stakeholders in the district
- Stakeholders collectively work together to mitigate external and internal shocks
- There is information dissemination from facilitators who are well versed with community dynamics

d. Stakeholder Engagement

The project enabled the CBOs, CSOs and the citizens to effectively engage with the local authorities to monitor the implementation of the service delivery plans that were developed through Community-Based Planning (CBP) and incorporated into the annual budget.

“...the community has benefited from a more engaging and respectful local authority. The RDC’s commitment to the principles of social accountability is evidenced by the accommodative environment created by the RDC which has enabled the implementation of citizen engagement tools for ensuring effective accountability of duty bearers through service performance management, financial oversight and equitable resource allocation and budgeting in response to expressed CBP priorities of women, youths and other vulnerable groups. We have now seen the council coming up with many projects that are improving the delivery of social services across all villages all because of this programme....”
Motoko Ward 21 Councillor during a story of change interview

The mechanisms for stakeholder engagement include councillor’s feedback meetings, inclusive CBP, joint planning, budgeting meetings, and service delivery charters. Formal channels to express dissatisfaction with a service and demand redress are very much existent in these districts.

3.0 The Building Pillars for Social Accountability

Social accountability by nature seeks to provide a platform for dialogue between those who demand services and those who are supposed to supply them. Whilst in the past, the development debate has pitted the two concepts of top-down and bottom-up approaches to development and service delivery. However, the idea of social

accountability is to find a common ground between these two by ensuring that both sides (supply and demand) are aware of their responsibilities. The conceptual framework for the building pillars for social accountability are depicted diagrammatically below.



Figure 5: Building pillars for Social Accountability

The projects have promoted social accountability and social cohesiveness as explained below:

- i. **Planning and resource allocation** – *participatory plan at grass roots level through ward based planning and resource allocation using the 3 plus 2 approach.*
- ii. **Expenditure management of public resources** – *ensuring that expenditure of public resources are conducted using the guided principles. It involves close monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the government budget process i.e. from planning, allocations, disbursement, and implementation to the final stage of assessing the impact of budget.*
- iii. **Performance management in delivering quality services** - *this is the management and use of resources available to deliver services in line with the strategic plan in the most efficient, effective and economic way possible so as to progressively realise people's needs. The evaluation of*

the Performance Management process is done by assessing the outputs of the process.

“Before the project started the relationship that existed between the local authority and the ratepayers can best be characterised as full of resentment and mistrust. We never thought a day would come where we would sit in a meeting with the ratepayers and discuss ways to end our challenges. Among council officials, no one would dare attend a meeting organised by ratepayers, as they would take that as an opportunity to embarrass us. However, because of the Social Accountability project brought by CFHD, the relations have drastically improved such that we now sit together in meetings and discuss community issues of interest without trading insults as used to happen in the past ” Chipso Abhasi, SSO Hwedza RDC

- iv. **Public integrity and transparency in the use of public funds-** *Public integrity is not just a set of moral values but it is a set of practices within the public resource framework aimed at seeking to effectively deliver public services. The set of standards and integrity are stipulated in National Constitution, RDC Act, and PFMA among others.*
- v. **Oversight and accountability systems open to scrutiny by all actors**
- Oversight is a cross cutting function that enables and ensures effective execution of the other social accountability processes. This is done by councillors at district level, CSOs and CBOs in ensuring that there is good governance of public resources.

Learning Insights

Community-Based Planning

Community-based planning refers to the participatory process whereby local knowledge is packaged into an action plan. Community-initiated plans empower the citizens/resident and set up possibilities for “co-producing” collaborative approaches to developmental challenges. The debate about whether CBP can be used as a viable vehicle for community development initiatives as development practitioners seek a solution to the lacklustre performance of community interventions. In Zimbabwe, this debate has also been fuelled by the devolution debate after the adoption of the 2013 Constitution. CBP is generally built on the number of principles as explained below:

- The desire to develop planning and development systems that are realistic and practical, and a planning process that is implementable using available resources within the district/local government.

- The idea that planning should not be a once-off exercise but should be part of a longer process.
- The need to develop a planning system that is people-focused and empowering.
- The desire to have a process that is learning-oriented and which promotes mutual accountability between community and officials.
- The need to demystify the planning process should be flexible and simple.
- The idea that there must be a commitment by both the supply and demand sides to the whole process.
- The need to ensure that all people are included in the planning regardless of their status in society as illustrated below:

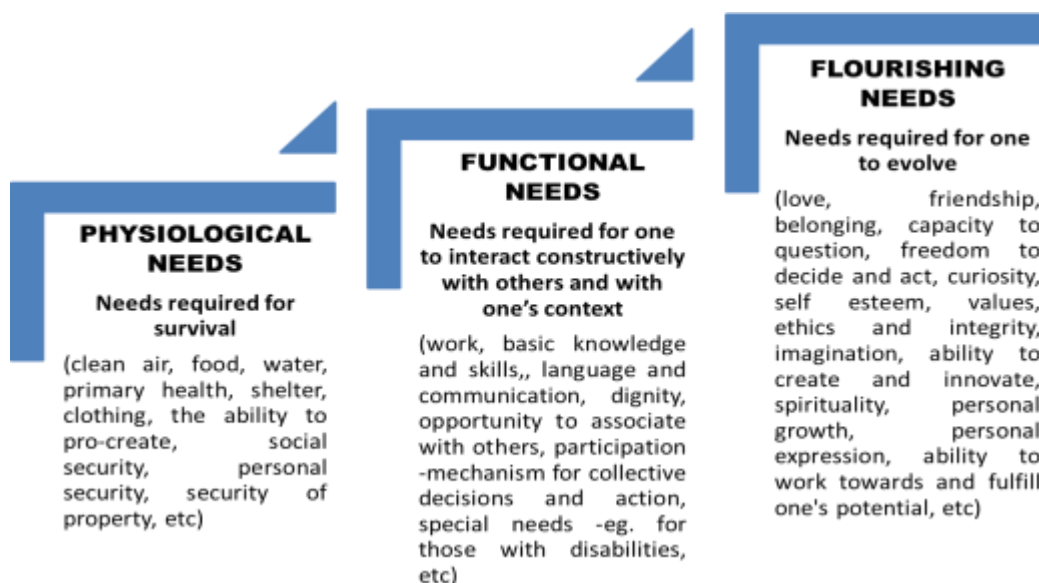


Figure 6: Different status need

Whilst this list of principles is not holistic, however it provides a reflection point for those intending to use the approach that cannot be applied when it suits either the communities or the relevant Government and other stakeholders. As part of the reflection, we have added "development" as a suffix to CBP. This is because in most cases, CBP has been divorced from the implementation. There is an assumption that once the planning process has been undertaken, then the implementation will take care of itself. If anything, this has been the source and cause of frustration with CBP.

4.0 Relevance of the SAP at Global and National level

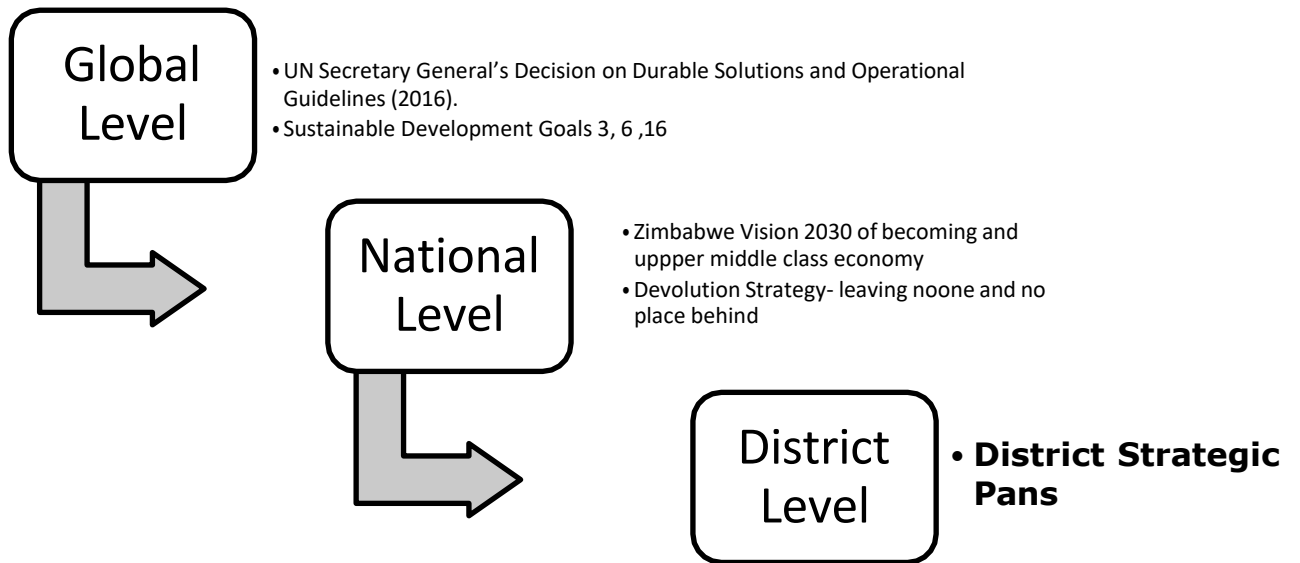


Figure 7: Relevance of SAP across different levels

The SAP is relevant in the current context as it also complements the Devolution Mantra. The devolution process in Zimbabwe is designed to give powers of local governance to the people and enhance their participation in the exercise of the powers of the State and in making decisions on matters affecting them. The process of devolution seeks to promote democratic, effective, transparent, accountable and coherent government in Zimbabwe as a whole. This

Impact

The two projects have made significant contributions towards mainstreaming social accountability in local governance processes at the local and district level hinged on civic engagement in which both women and men participate in demanding accountability from service providers and public officials. In the context of work for social betterment, the impact of the two projects produced results in the form of changes within the target groups and the society. The following sub-sections will discuss the level of impact that has been triggered by the project at different levels that is individual, community, district and national levels.

a) Impact at the Individual Level

The knowledge gained through the workshops hosted by the projects at the community level have helped individuals to honour their obligations with Rural District Councils, but it has also emboldened them to make the duty bearers accountable.

“...As for me as a responsible villager I have become a hub of knowledge voluntarily teaching other villagers on their rights as far as service delivery is concerned, the importance of them honouring their obligations with the local authority and on the importance of attending local authority planning meetings so that their contributions are submitted to the right people through the official forum for planning. I am teaching fellow villagers that raging and complaining against the local authorities outside the official channels will not bring any change. I am therefore encouraging them to attend budget, feedback and other planning meetings and submit their contributions. Everywhere I go I am teaching fellow villagers to change the negative attitude towards our local authority. The project changed me and raised my advocacy level...” Young person in the mixed Focus Group Discussion in Mutoko.

b) Impact at the Community Level

Interventions implemented under this project managed to make significant contributions towards more united and coherent communities where collective action for community development has become easier. Communities have been awakened to the fact that unity of purpose, contributing locally available resources and taking initiative for community development are the ingredients they need for the community-led development process (CLDP).

“...we have improved relations with our key stakeholders to an extent that we now negotiate rates with the city council.... more so through engagement, we have had with RDC in the past we proposed to pay our rates using our grains because we know the RDC works only with the financial resources we give them. If we do not pay our rates, they will be no development and service delivery in our communities. The gospel of paying rates has sunk into the community...” Councillor for Ward 21 Mutoko

c) Impact at District Level

The projects’ thrust compliments efforts of the RDC strengthening their efforts in performing their mandate. More so, the projects provided platforms for peer learning and sharing of

experiences through workshops and exchange visits in light of the financial constraints they are facing. As noted by an official from a local authority where the project was implemented, stakeholder engagement as a project strategy worked because it helped bring all stakeholders together to address the challenges that were being experienced due to lack of communication among key stakeholders of the local service delivery system.



Figure 8: Level of impact across different levels

Lessons Learnt

There are several lessons learnt across the project components that are relevant to the current project. CFHD and its partners have been able to make a difference in the lives of people that were in the intervention areas and were able to draw some considerable lessons. Below are some of the critical lessons learnt from the two projects:-

- Social accountability is an important vehicle for guaranteeing the participation of communities in local governance in particular and community development in general.
- CBP can be used as a viable channel to bring together different development partners in a symbiotic and synergistic manner. However, there must be a commitment on all sides to go through all the steps of the process.
- CFHD has been developing knowledge products on stories of change that are emerging because of the implementation of the project. The creation of a pool of responsive knowledge resources by CFHD also guarantees sustainability by ensuring availability and accessibility of easy to use resources by communities, local district facilitators, councillors and other interested community-based organizations.
- More involvement of communities in the mining activities has translated to an improved standard of living as more people can now send children to school build better houses, drilling boreholes in their home areas and the cars driven around in those areas.
- Social Accountability can be guaranteed with changes in policy and alignment of local government laws through the policymakers hence the need to invest more in equipping MPs with skills to deliver on this important issue.

LESSONS IN BRIEF

SOFTWARE PROJECT



The expectations of the projects were different since the project aimed at creating positive attitudes towards local government and decisions and different from other projects that brought material benefits.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

PUBLIC INFORMATION GRASPING



Information meant for the public consumption is still a challenge for most people to understand example Public Finance Records

- Proactive engagement with locally based government line ministries as witnessed by the composition of the District Action Teams can lead to more results especially with the new government that is more tolerant to democracy proponents. Suspicion and ambiguity that normally characterises the implementation of civic engagement and accountability projects in rural areas can be avoided if government line ministries are included in the implementation of the project.
- Building strong institutional relationships is important in the advancement of the Social Accountability agenda targeting institutions such as the Rural District Councils in Zimbabwe.
- CBOs also play an important role in sustainable development through monitoring of services being implemented, representing the voice of the voiceless and complementing the efforts of the government.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION



There was improved budget participation from civic groups as they began to be involved in council meetings and effectively engage councillors to demand responsive services



WOMEN PARTICIPATION

Outstanding women CBOs participation that led to gender responsive planning

Conclusion

Social accountability has emerged as an essential means through which residents within Council jurisdictions participate in local governance. Citizens should not be only engaged to rubberstamp decisions exclusively made by Council technocrats but to part of the whole system. Stakeholders from the demand side have long been working to improve accountability of service providers and policy makers towards efficient and effective service delivery. The SAP in this instance has been an increasing interest in achieving this through social accountability, and related mechanisms, which involve the direct participation of users and their interaction with providers. There is need to further analyse the legal framework in Zimbabwe, which provides a conducive environment for the institutionalisation of the PSAM approach; for example, the Constitution has progressive provisions that support social accountability (Sections 13, 119, 141, 194, 298, 299, 300 and 309 – 314).

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