VOLUME THREE

Dispatches on peace and sustainable development

A collection of dialogue proceedings facilitated by AFSC in Zimbabwe

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About AFSC

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that promotes lasting peace with justice as a practical expression of faith in action. Drawing on continuing spiritual insights and working with people of many backgrounds, we nurture the seeds of change and respect for human life that transform social relations and systems.

Our work in Africa began in the late 1950s and ’60s, when we provided relief services and skills training to Algerian refugees in Morocco and Tunisia during the Algerian struggle for independence from France.

Today our work in Burundi, Kenya, Somalia, and Zimbabwe promotes lasting peace and reconciliation by helping youth, women, and men heal from the trauma of violence, develop marketable skills, and bring divided communities together.

Our Dialogue and Exchange Program (DEP) extends the impact of this work to an additional 20 to 25 countries. DEP brings together grassroots, civil society, and government leaders so they can learn, exchange ideas, and collectively solve problems. In addition, our Washington, D.C.-based Public Education and Advocacy Program works in the United States to educate people about Africa and engages African diaspora communities to influence U.S. policy on Africa.

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Monthly Learning Group Meetings (LGMs) originated from a conflict mapping exercise conducted by AFSC in 2009 to assess capacities for handling conflict dynamics in Zimbabwe. The meetings started in 2010 when Simon Fisher was Country Representative for Zimbabwe and got unwavering support from Lawrence Oduma and then Nthabiseng Nkomo, who took over the position in 2012 and 2015, respectively. The process was coordinated and facilitated by Ronah Mugadza from Development Education Innovations Southern Africa Trust (DEISAT), who worked closely with AFSC staff member Definate Mudzingwa, who worked with the Zimbabwe program on building social and community cohesion.

This publication would not have been possible without the development practitioners, academics, and community members who took part in the learning sessions. We also deeply appreciate the contributions of the resource persons for each session. Special thanks go to those resource people who presented papers that have been incorporated in this publication. We appreciate the valuable contributions of many other resource persons whose names have not been mentioned in this publication because the topics they facilitated could not be included here. We are also grateful to Porticus for their support, which led to the development of this publication.

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Dispatches on Peace and Sustainable Development (Volume 3) is a collection of dialogue proceedings based on some of the Learning Group Meetings (LGMs) facilitated by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) in Zimbabwe in collaboration with Development Education Innovations Southern Africa Trust (DEISAT).

LGMs began in 2010 as a way to offer support, stimulate discussion and ideas, and serve as a resource for those working on conflict transformation and peace building in Zimbabwe. Interested people from various fields of development met regularly to discuss, study, share, explore, and learn from each other’s experiences with the hope of deepening and increasing their individual and collective capacities to break the culture of violence and build peace in Zimbabwe and beyond. The sessions focused on issues that participants considered to be of practical importance to their work and professional development.

LGMs were held every third Thursday of the month. Participants included representatives of civil society organizations, academic institutions, international organizations, public institutions, and community members. Sessions were highly interactive and participatory. Each session started with group discussions where people engaged one another and shared their perspectives, values, passions, and experiences on the topic at hand. The discussions were enriched by input from a resource person with in-depth experience and insights into the topic. Each session ended with a summary of key points.

This third volume presents documented discussions from Learning Group Meetings held from June 2014 to May 2015. It’s our hope that readers will find the material informative, enriching, and useful in stimulating further discussions on issues that enhance peace-building processes in Zimbabwe and other parts of the world.
## Contents

1. Zimbabwe’s socio-economic and political situation: The present and the future .................................................. 7
2. Child care and protection in Zimbabwe ........................................................................................................... 11
3. The new constitution, human rights, social justice, and sustainable peace .................................................... 18
4. Toward strengthening collaboration between civil society and government .................................................... 23
5. Learning from the community: A visit to the Hatcliffe extension factory shell .............................................. 30
6. Citizen apathy on issues of service delivery .................................................................................................... 34
7. Gender justice and social vulnerability ........................................................................................................... 38
8. Mapping donor priority areas for community-based peace building in Zimbabwe ........................................... 42
9. Development and peace nexus ....................................................................................................................... 45
10. Increasing understanding of the mandate of the national peace and reconciliation commission ................ 49

Appendix ............................................................................................................................................................ 54
Acronyms

**ACPDT**: African Center For Publishing Development Trust

**ACRWC**: African Charter On The Rights And Welfare Of The Child

**AfDB**: African Development Bank

**AFSC**: American Friends Service Committee

**AIPPA**: Access To Information And Protection Of Privacy Act

**BEAM**: Basic Education Assistance Module

**CBOs**: Community-Based Organization

**CCMT**: Centre For Conflict Management And Transformation

**CIT**: Cash In Transit

**COPAC**: Constitution Parliamentary Committee

**CSO**: Civil Society Organization

**DEISAT**: Development Education Innovations Southern Africa Trust

**ECD**: Early Childhood Development

**ESAP**: Economic Structural Adjustment Program

**ESSP**: Enhanced Social Protection Program

**GBV**: Gender Based Violence

**GNU**: Government Of National Unity

**GPA**: Global Political Agreement

**IMF**: International Monetary Fund

**MDC**: Movement For Democratic Change

**MLGPWNH**: Ministry Of Local Government Public Works And National Housing

**MoPSE**: Ministry Of Primary And Secondary Education

**MOPSLSW**: Ministry Of Public Service Labour And Social Welfare

**NAP for OVC**: National Action Plan For Orphans And Vulnerable Children Program

**NGO**: Non-Governmental Organization

**NSSA**: National Social Security Authority
**ONHRI:** Organ For National Healing, Reconciliation, And Integration

**PLWD:** People Living With Disability

**POSA:** Public Order And Security Act

**RDC:** Rural District Council

**UNCRC:** United Nations Convention On The Rights Of The Child

**VFC:** Victim Friendly Courts

**VFU:** Victim Friendly Unit

**ZANU PF:** Zimbabwe African Nation Union Patriotic Front

**ZIMASSET:** Zimbabwe Agenda For Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation

**ZSE:** Zimbabwe Stock Exchange
Zimbabwe’s socio-economic and political landscape changed significantly in 2014 due to a number of factors, including poor harvests that left 2.2 million people in need of food assistance, economic growth that slowed to around 3 percent that year, persistent de-industrialization, and a growing informal economy. As a result, the nation continues to grapple with challenges, including company closures, significant reduction in productivity & capacity utilization within the manufacturing sector, liquidity crisis in the banking sector, a high level of unemployment, and donor withdrawal from education programs such as Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM).

The June 2014 Learning Group Meeting explored opportunities and threats to peace and sustainable development in the context of current challenges. The meeting started with a presentation of a paper by Mr. Edknowledge Mandikwaza.

Introduction

Mr. Mandikwaza started by pointing out that Zimbabwe’s current socio-economic and political developments were principally driven by the economic blueprint, Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET), which emerged from the ZANU PF’s 2013 election manifesto.

He then listed the four areas that form the basis for the economic blueprint’s vision and mission: food security and nutrition; social services and poverty eradication; infrastructure and utilities, and value addition and beneficiation. If fully implemented, the assumptions are that the economy will grow by an average of 7.3 percent through 2018 (by 3.4 percent in 2013, 6.1 percent in 2014, and continue growing to 9.9 percent by 2018).

The situation runs counter to predictions by institutions such as the World Bank, which estimated that the country’s economy would grow by 2 percent in 2014. Mr. Mandikwaza noted that the projections also run counter to the deflation situation on the ground, which indicated that about 75 companies shut down their operations in 2013, and unemployment is over 85 percent while 9,617 jobs were lost in 2013. He asserted that in such a situation the 2.2 million jobs promised by ZIMASSET are proving to be a pipedream.

He noted that to fund ZIMASSET, Zimbabwe needs about US 27 billion, with the bulk of it earmarked for energy, water, sanitation, and social sectors, but the funding sources are nonexistent or impossible. The government hopes to fund ZIMASSET through domestic resources, external borrowings, diaspora bonds, and joint ventures. It also wishes to tap into the 29.1 billion euro fund set aside for the Caribbean and Pacific countries under the 11th European Development Fund, and determine how to benefit from Islamic bonds which have over $110 billion in reserves.

Mr. Mandikwaza’s noted that the EU restrictions on Zimbabwe, and the arrears owed to the World Bank and IMF of more than $6 billion, make Zimbabwe an unattractive candidate for funding. Domestic arrears are over $97 million, which leaves regional borrowing as the only borrowing option.

Signs of de-industrialization

- 10 companies are closing every month, 60 closed so far in 2014 (NSSA).
- 75 companies shutdown in 2013
- 11 companies delisted from the ZSE in 2013 (Cairns Holdings, Celsys, Chemco Holdings, Interfresh, Gulliver, Interfin, Lifestyle Holdings, Phoenix Consolidated, Steelnet, and financial services firm Trust Holdings).
- 90 percent of them have 3 months wage arrears

Current socio-economic situation

Mr. Mandikwaza described the situation as dire because the economy is sliding back from Government of National Unity (GNU) gains to the 2008 era when people could not...
afford basic needs including food, shelter, health, and education.

He noted that the 2014 growth projections were adjusted from 6.1 percent to 2 percent and deindustrialisation was characterized by company closures, shut downs, delisting from ZSE, wage arrears and soaring unemployment.

Other social and economic challenges facing Zimbabwe and its people include access to food, which is worsening due to the deflationary environment in the country, increasingly poor service delivery, and electricity rationing/load shedding. Furthermore, access to water has become a nightmare, access to healthcare has become a preserve for the rich, and corruption and inefficiency in public offices are common.

The government also is failing to meet its financial obligations, including paying civil servants’ salaries. As of June 2014, Zimbabwe no longer followed fixed dates for civil servants to get paid.

**The present political situation**

Mr. Madikwaza said the prevailing political situation was full of uncertainty and internal factional struggles and succession politics in ZANU PF and MDC.

He said internal politics was characterized by stalled parliamentary business, the politics of patronage – unresolved issues around the electoral bill, policy inconsistencies compounded by rent-seeking and log-rolling – the contested indigenization policy, and the controversial policy on compulsory fuel blending; in effect, self-centred vs. people-centred politics.

The country has witnessed some level of international re-engagement by the U.S. and Europe, following the relaxation and partial removal of targeted sanctions. The Eastern Block, Zimbabwe’s so-called “all-weather friends,” are the Chinese. China continues to support the regime politically and invests with total confidence of protection by ZANU PF. Mr. Madikwaza noted that China is failing to fund ZIMASSET as anticipated by ZANU PF, a fact that signals fluctuating relations between Zimbabwe and China. International investors remain skeptical about investing in Zimbabwe because of the political risks.

**Implications of the socio-economic situation**

According to Mr. Mandikwaza, the socio-economic situation presents a dilemma for the government and its people. He described it as a sign of irredeemable and inevitable national decay.

He stressed that ZIMASSET was less likely to achieve real social and economic development goals given that it is a political manifesto with political objectives, implemented to meet electoral timelines rather than national development timelines with long-term goals and objectives. The introduction of ZIMASSET exposes it to political and electoral business cycles rather than development policy cycles.

The presentation painted the economic outlook as very gloomy characterized by severe deflation—which replaced an inflationary environment—and huge inequalities between the poor and the affluent. It noted that in the event of the reintroduction of the local currency, the Zimbabwean dollar ($), it’s likely that the country would return to the 2008 hyper-inflationary era, which could lead to economic violence similar to the ESAP era.

Mr. Madikwaza also said that other implications include increased unemployment, increased informal sector activities (which will be stalled by lack of real money), increased electricity rationing/load shedding, water cuts, and decreasing industrial capacity utilization.

**Political implications**

The presentation noted that the broader political arena is likely to be influenced by internal dynamics in political parties, including alleged unconstitutional succession in ZANU PF and splits in the MDCs. He warned that violent political developments over succession in ZANU PF is likely to result in a national political crisis, possibly leading to a negotiated caretaker government forced by economic challenges rather than political will, and slow state recuperation.

Mr. Madikwaza also noted that there was ongoing hypocritical statements and politicking with regard to the real state of the economy. For instance, Zimbabwe’s unemployment level has been heavily debated, with industrialists placing it at above 80 percent, while the government has maintained a conservative figure of 10 percent.

**Hope and restoration**

The presentation noted that despite socio-economic and political challenges, there is hope from the international community as demonstrated by:

- The IMF’s willingness to engage the existing regime (appointing a Resident Representative after 10 years).
- AfDB’s willingness to support Zimbabwe’s efforts to lower its national debt (May 2014 in Kigali).
• The Swiss government establishing direct contact with the Zimbabwean government for 2015 plans.

• Europe’s engagement with Zimbabwe on sanctions and trade. (Belgium is Zimbabwe’s top tobacco export destination in the 2014 marketing season, with more than 3.7 million kilogrammes—worth US10.6 million—having been sold to Belgium).

What Zimbabwe needs for socio-economic and political turnaround

The presentation highlighted that within ZIMASSET, Zimbabwe needs to achieve macro-economic stability, policy consistency, clarity and predictability, vision, resource mobilization, and economic transformation. The country also needs to pursue a defined economic development strategy and stimulate the economy.

The following prerequisites were highlighted:

• The country needs non-political and responsive public institutions.

• Competent and politically independent judiciary; an autonomous central bank; independent regulatory agencies; agencies that guard against anti-competitive practices in private industry, banking, and trade; a competent parliament that provides oversight and control over the executive branch and the nation’s resources; social institutions that uphold a national vision; a credible, trusted, independent, and predictable policy shift from politically driven policies to professionally driven policy interventions.

• Review of policy and regulation (e.g., guarantee of property rights—indigenization).

• Spreading economic partnerships from “look East” to “look everywhere” (East, South, North, and West).

• Reengagement is important as Zimbabwe must drive the engagement process rather than wait for international partners to do so.

Mr. Madikwaza concluded by noting that in order to build a modern, healthy, functional, integrated, development-oriented state with a vibrant, socially just, and green economy that takes pride in leaving no one behind, Zimbabwe needs policies that focus on inclusive growth and poverty reduction, while ensuring macro-economic stability and job creation anchored in infrastructure development, food security, and social services delivery.

Discussion after the presentation

Four critical points were raised in response to the presentation:

• More focus on politics has come at the expense of economic development and people’s social life and livelihoods.

• The practicality of the ZIMASSET is put into question when looking at the number of companies closing every year.

• The rhetoric on sanctions is likely to take center stage as many investors seem to be taking a wait-and-see attitude.

• Zimbabwe needs national rebranding and image management spearheaded by citizens and not politicians.

Opportunities and threats to peace and sustainable development in the context of the challenges

Opportunities

The group identified opportunities in terms of three key needs:

• Increase national preparedness to handle looming problems ushered in by the prevailing situation. There could be a number of development partners willing to assist in this area.

• The church must revisit its national mandate and focus more on social and moral issues.

• Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) must form complementary synergies.

However, the group noted that some of the opportunities could be blurred by lack of a clear distinction between opposition political parties and civil society in pushing for democracy and human rights and by lack of clarity on where CSOs get their mandate. Some of the issues raised during the discussion had to do with the strategies used by NGOs to advocate for democratization, which are sometimes similar to those used by opposition political parties, thereby creating confusion as to whether the two are one. The confusion could be lessened if NGOs go back to their values and vision and focus on their role of manifesting interests and will of the citizenry and playing the watchdog role while developing a unity of purpose, and sensitizing donors to critical issues affecting the country.
The plenary noted that not all civil society organizations are neutral. Some CSOs are divided along political lines, hence the need to reconsider their mandate and to unite in pushing national issues.

One of the recommendations was for CSOs to undergo training for transformation to enable them to realign their mandates with the needs of the people. There also is a need to consider consortium programming and establishing a collective approach to development.

**Challenges**

The challenges for peace and development initiatives in Zimbabwe include insecurity and fear of victimization, as well as lack of accountability and corruption in public institutions. Also, participants noted that CSOs have limited capacity to influence government, some NGOs do very similar work, and many initiatives are donor driven rather than community driven. Some proposals were not informed by the needs of the people but by organizational needs.

**Key learning points**

Current socio-economic and political developments are assumed to be driven by the economic blueprint, Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-economic Transformation (ZIMASSET), which emerged from a political party manifesto. However, operationalization of the blueprint is a challenge due to lack of financial support.

The economy is sliding back from GNU gains to the 2008 era when people could not afford basic needs including food, shelter, healthcare, and education.

The prevailing political situation was said to be full of uncertainty and internal factional struggles and succession politics in ZANU PF and MDC, the main political parties in Zimbabwe.

The implications include increased suffering for the majority of the people, which could trigger another political crisis. Zimbabwe’s hope lies in the country’s ability to achieve macro-economic stability and strengthen institutional capacities.

Opportunities for peace and sustainable development lie in building capacities to handle looming problems.

The challenges include unclear CSO mandates and their limited capacity to influence government on problems be-deviling public institutions.
Introduction

Despite numerous laws that protect children’s rights—including provisions in the new Constitution of Zimbabwe—as well as child protection and welfare organizations established by the government and civil society, reports of child abuse (particularly sexual abuse) are rampant in Zimbabwe. For this reason, AFSC and DEISAT decided to focus the July 2014 Learning Group Meeting on Child Care and Protection in Zimbabwe.

Most of the participants came from organizations involved in the care and protection of children in Zimbabwe. They shared knowledge, experiences, and insights on what they are doing to eradicate child abuse, particularly child sexual abuse, in our society. They also explored ways of strengthening existing strategies. The discussion started with small group work followed by plenary sharing, watching a video of the situation of children in Chingwizi camp (a camp in the southern part of Zimbabwe where people affected by the Tokwe-Mukosi floods were temporarily sheltered by the government), and the presentation of a paper by Maxim Murungweni, who is the Child Rights Governance Officer from the Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children. The meeting ended with an open discussion.

The discussion and presentation were guided by the following key questions:

- How would we define a child and what rights are children in our society entitled to?
- How effective are the strategies used to prevent child abuse and promote care and protection of children’s rights in families, communities, and society at large?
- In what ways do you see the prevailing legislative framework, as well as religious and traditional systems, providing or failing to provide adequate protection for children?
- What can be done by families, communities, churches, traditional leaders, government, and civil society to strengthen care and protection of children from sexual abuse?

The new Constitution of Zimbabwe (Article 81) defines a child as a boy or girl under the age of 18 years of age. According to the constitution, children are entitled to, among many other things:

- Equal treatment before the law
- Be heard
- Family and parental care or appropriate care when removed from the family environment
- Protection from economic and sexual abuse
- Adequate protection by the courts, particularly the High Court.

Definition of a child and the rights that children have in Zimbabwe

The group defined a child as a human being or minor below the age of 18 years. Their age often puts children at a vulnerable position in society. They have unique needs and therefore need special protection and safeguarding.

The term “children’s rights” was said to refer to entitlements that every child has or those things that they should be allowed to do. The rights articulated during the discussion included the right to education, to play, shelter, food, etc. These were seen as human rights, connected to each other and equally important. The group also noted that children’s rights are defined in terms of what is best for children in a particular situation, and what is critical to life and protection from harm. Since children’s rights are human rights, they cannot be given up.

Children were categorized as the right holders, while the state, parents and communities were duty-bearers. This means children can claim their rights from the duty-bearers and they are not to be treated as little adults.

Effectiveness of strategies used in Zimbabwe to prevent child abuse and to promote care and protection of children’s rights in families, communities, and society at large
The group identified and analyzed strategies used at the family, community, and national levels, as well as by government and civil society, to prevent child abuse and promote care and protection as outlined below:

(i) Family level strategies

- **Effective parenting:** The group felt parents (i.e., fathers and mothers) have the primary responsibility of raising their children and doing those things that help them achieve their goals in life. Parents are expected to provide for the physical well-being of their children (i.e., feeding, clothing, healthcare, shelter, and education). They are also expected to communicate well with their children, give them ethical and moral guidance, be exemplary, and enforce morals. There were different views on how moral values can be enforced. Some said it has to be done with love and discipline rather than punishment, while others thought morals can be reinforced by setting limits, curfews, and grounding children for bad behavior. Participants said they believed that when children are effectively parented, they feel better about themselves and are able to get excited about life and learn how to love and respect other people. The term parenting was also seen as going beyond the responsibility of the father and mother (nucleus family) to that of extended family members, the village, and the community where the child lives. The wider community has a role to play in caring for and protecting children, particularly those who have lost their parents to HIV and AIDS or are growing up in vulnerable situations.

- **Extended family system:** Extended families consist of parents, children, and close relatives such as uncles, aunts, cousins, in-laws, grandparents, and others who live together or nearby and share a close bond. The extended family normally collaborates with parents in reinforcing aspects of positive discipline and guiding children toward appropriate behaviors.

- **Religion:** Religious beliefs and doctrines were seen as a strategy used by many families to influence and shape the life and behavior of children, and as way to protect children from influences that families find inconsistent with their own spiritual values.

(ii) Community-level strategies

- **The old African proverb, “it takes a whole village to raise a child,” was seen as a good principle that gives everyone in a community the responsibility to care for and protect children in order for them to grow into happy, healthy, and hopeful people. Children are seen as not belonging only to their parents but also to the community.

- **An indigenous food security strategy commonly known among the Shona people as Zunde raMambo (which loosely translated means “the chief’s granary”) is a traditional arrangement that has been revived in an attempt to improve the welfare of vulnerable rural people, particularly orphans and families where children are the heads, from food insecurity during drought or famine.

- **The Child Protection Committees:** These have been formed at the community and school levels to deal with challenges facing children. They are comprised mostly of volunteers who work as child abuse whistle blowers, advocates, and needs identifiers. Their roles include, but are not limited to, ensuring the protection and well-being of children in a village, neighborhood, local community, or school.

- **Community youth groups and clubs:** These serve as confidence-building forums where children learn to express their opinions and rights.

- **Schools:** The group noted that schools run educational programs that give children skills to help them identify dangerous situations, prevent unwanted forms of touching and contact, and other abusive ways in which offenders groom survivors, how to refuse indecent approaches and invitations, how to break off insecure interactions, and how to summon help. The program also included elements of reporting ongoing abuse and counseling children who have been abused to reduce negative consequences of abuse.

(iii) National level strategies

Strategies used at national level included awareness-raising campaigns by both government and civil society, institutional care by religious groups, mainstreaming of child protection issues in development programs, education and the positive framing of child protection issues, establishment and support of child rights organizations, juvenile programs, the analysis of the use of the laws, and the judiciary system (Victim Friendly Units and Victim Friendly Courts), and child participation (e.g., child helplines and toll-free hotlines).
(iv) Government strategies

- Participants noted that government strategies were outlined in the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children Program (NAP for OVC II) – 2011 – 2015, implemented through the Ministry of Public Service Labor and Social Welfare (MoPSLSW). The child-sensitive social protection programs are based on four key pillars (i.e., household economy, child protection; access to basic services [BEAM & Health Assistance], and program coordination).

- By February 2015, the child-sensitive social protection program had covered 20 districts of Zimbabwe, reaching a total of 55,509 households with a total of 247,645 people. In these households there is a total of 154,008 children, which is 62 percent of the total beneficiaries. Out of this total number of children, 49,028 children are orphans, which is 20 percent of the total.

- It focuses on three levels, namely, the output level (strengthen the purchasing power of targeted households), outcome level (empower targeted households to increase consumption above the food poverty line), and impact level (increase the consumption of goods and services [basic needs] and improve nutrition, health, and education, and reduce mortality).

Specific activities implemented include the Harmonised Social Cash Transfer Program, the BEAM (Basic Education Assistance Module), school feeding, school psychological services, the National Case Management System and the Early Childhood Development System, among others.

- The Harmonised Social Cash Transfer Program is a bi-monthly, unconditional cash transfer averaging $20/month/household. The program targets labor-constrained, food-poor households. It uses household targeting surveys and employs a cash-in-transit (CIT) cash delivery system. It outsources targeting and cash delivery to private companies and is managed through a coordinated MIS database.

- BEAM is part of the Enhanced Social Protection Program (ESSP) launched by the government in 2000 as a community-based social safety net system for children. Its primary objective is to ensure access to education for vulnerable children. Since 2011, this program has been reaching an annual average of over 500,000 orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) with 50 percent% of these beneficiaries being girls. Resources to support this program have been and are coming from both government and donors with the former supporting secondary and the later primary schools.

- A Health Insurance Scheme was started for poor and vulnerable households and individuals to be able to access health services from government health institutions on a referral basis. Processes were under way to redesign the Health Insurance Scheme through an Assisted Medical Treatment Order (AMTO) review process that is expected to result in improved access to health services by children.

- A national case management system was developed to make sure that ALL children, especially OVC, receive holistic/ wrap-around services in a seamless manner. The system will facilitate and improve service coordination between and among service providers. Hence this will facilitate delivery of a “minimum package of services” to OVC and youth. In 2012 a protocol on the Multi-Sectorial Management of Sexual Abuse was instituted which promotes a coordinated and integrated approach to sexual violence and abuse, and reinforces this responsibility by outlining the principles that guide responses and setting out the roles and responsibilities of children and adults, professionals, communities and organizations involved.

- A school feeding program being spearheaded by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) targeting 50,000 OVC in schools. The aim of the program is to boost the nutritional status of OVC and to improve their school attendance and completion rates. The program is also supported by other development partners such as World Food Program and Christian Care.

- Schools Psychological Services is a special unit within the MoPSE responsible for providing guidance and counseling services to schoolchildren. There is a strategic plan document that provides guidance on life skills, sexuality, and HIV/AIDS. Psychologists have been assigned to each province. They are responsible for doing assessments especially targeting kids with special needs and making recommendations for their placement in special schools. These psychologists also provide counseling support to abused children and child-headed households.

- The Early Childhood Development (ECD) program prepares young children for psycho-motor development as early as possible and prepares them for formal education. The government has made a considerable in-
vestment in ECD teacher training. It has become mandatory for all children, including those in rural areas, to pass through ECD. Hence the government has recommended that all primary schools have these facilities.

- The Junior Parliament empowers children to stand up for other children.
- Other initiatives include the National Action Plan against Rape, the Victim Friendly Unit, and the Juvenile Diversion Program.

(v) Civil society strategies

The role of civil society is to complement government efforts in the protection of children. Various local and international NGOs and religious groups have programs that address different aspects of child care and protection.

Ways in which the prevailing legislative framework, as well as religious and traditional systems, are providing or failing to provide adequate protection for children in Zimbabwe.

- Legislative framework: Children’s rights, care, and protection needs are provided for in international conventions such as the United Nations Convention On The Rights Of The Child (UNCRC); African Charter On The Rights And Welfare Of The Child (ACRWC), and in the new Constitution and national laws such as The Children’s Act (CHAPTER 5:06). The state has an obligation to ensure that the rights of children are respected at all levels of society. The prevailing legislative framework was seen as weak in that there was poor implementation of provisions of the new Constitution and lack of a political will where there is reluctance to implement the set laws.

- The extended family system was seen as no longer effective in preventing child abuse. Family ties have been distorted by modernization and increased individualism associated with the changing socio-economic environment. Families have become more dispersed and independent, making it more difficult for children to establish relationships with extended family members. In cases where there is still a close bond, extended family members are no longer trusted as there are many stories of girls who have been abused by close relatives within the homes.

- The Zunde raMambo concept was seen as a good idea but poorly resourced. The benefits are highly politicized and polarized.

- The effectiveness of religious systems to protect children from abuse, particularly sexual abuse, was highly debated. There were strong feelings that religion was no longer protecting children, as some have been sexually abused by religious leaders or the so-called “Man of God” within religious circles. The role of the church in child protection was viewed as invisible and ineffective. It is blurred by its failure to address cases of sexual abuse among its congregation, the gospel of prosperity (which seems to have moved other activities down the list of priorities), and virginity testing practiced by some churches. The counter argument presented was that some churches have stratified their work with a specific focus on education of child rights and obligations of members in protecting children from abuse.

- Traditional systems used to protect children but people have shunned tradition and this has resulted in a more cases of abuse. Experiences shared were that people who decide to respect their tradition, such as the Tongas in Binga, had low levels of abuse. However, the group agreed that traditional systems have fallen out of favor.

- Some people believed that the difficult economic environment was to blame for the abuse of children. It has created poverty which is pushing people to do anything in order to get money. Participants said child abuse would likely be less prevalent if the socio-economic environment were to improve.

- Child protection committees were said to have done a lot in speaking out on issues of child rights. However, they have been politicized, corruption was said to have crept in, and they have limited capacity to deal with some bad cultural and religious practices such as child marriages, which violates the rights of the girl child.

- Government strategies were perceived as weak in coordination of children’s issues, slow in aligning laws to the new Constitution, and poorly resourced. In particular, corruption was seen as having pervaded the BEAM program as often undeserving children benefit at the expense of the vulnerable.

- The Victim Friendly Unit (VFU) and Victim Friendly Courts (VFC) were seen as good ideas but they are not well resourced and poorly marketed.

- The juvenile programs are poorly resourced and implementation is still in the pilot phase.
• Aspects of discrimination were also identified in selection of child parliamentarians.

• Civil society programs address different aspects of child protection and care but are often limited in scope and they are fragmented. Their reach is not significant because not every child is visited or has access to the programs because of inadequate resources. The other weakness is related to coordination and measuring the impact that NGOs are making with regard to child protection. There was a lot of duplication of duties, mistrust between government and civil society, fragmented approach in implementation of projects, etc.

• Participants said there was a need to improve relations between the government and civil society, especially those within the child rights sector.

Other issues related to child protection and care

The following issues were also raised during the discussions:

• Loss of ethics and abuse of authority by school teachers who bring things to sell to children in school.

• Some young men were said to be in prison for statutory rape after having consensual sex with minors. Most of them did not know that it’s a crime to have sex with a minor.

• Children abusing their rights and the rights of other children in schools (bullying) and homosexuality and sodomy in same-sex schools. This is an area of children’s rights that need to be investigated and proper action needs to be taken.

• The morality and legality of circumcision being carried out by the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare on young boys. Was it not part of the abuse violating the rights of the boy child? What is the role of children’s rights organizations in preventing this? Views expressed indicated the issue of rights challenges the cultural, religious, and healthy correctness of circumcising children.

• We have shunned our traditional systems and that’s why there are increased cases of child abuse. For example, in Binga there are few cases of abuse because they have decided to uphold traditional values. However, there appears to be lack of political will to protect the child at the national level.

• The very people who should protect children are the ones who abuse them. One participant noted, “Vakuru ndivo vanokonzera nhumbu dzemabhesi vana vekubhesi” (The elders are the ones who cause pregnancies from political bases, it starts with them).

Video viewing

Participants watched a 10-minutes video on the plight of children at Chingwizi Holding Camp, where victims of the February 2014 Tokwe Mukosi floods were sheltered. The video showed violation of rights and insecurity of the girl child. It was also reported that from February to December 2014, about 97 girls became pregnant. The group was informed that a booklet of laws governing children’s rights in Zimbabwe can be obtained from the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs.
Actions that can be taken by families, communities, government, churches, traditional leaders, and civil society to strengthen the care and protection of children from sexual abuses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Actions needed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>• Effective parenting, communication, and use of extended family members</td>
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</table>
| Community              | • Strengthen the capacity of children's committee at the local level and encourage communities to be supportive  
                          | • Religious education for school children                                     |
|                        | • Strengthen the Zunde raMambo concept                                        |
| Civil society          | • Awareness campaigns                                                         |
| organizations          | • Organization—do they look into some of these issues?                         |
| Government             | • Alignment of laws with the new Constitution                                  |
|                        | • In the face of oppressive parents, “it is the state that should serve as the ultimate guardian of a child’s freedoms and choices.” |
| Traditional leaders    | • Custodians of community culture and values that uphold humanity and equal rights for all. Highly respected within the community. Also plays the tradition role of conflict resolution among disparate community groups. |
| Churches               | • Voice of the disadvantaged.                                                 |
|                        | • Providing a sanctuary and protection for abused children.                   |
|                        | • Conscience of the community and provision of counselling services and religious education to both victims and perpetrators. |

Recommendations

- Laws such as customary and marriage laws, the Sexual Offences Act, as well as traditional practices need to be aligned to the Constitution to make them effective.
- The government needs to improve coordination of child protection activities in the country to increase social protection and services.
- Increased budget allocation for children’s activities (i.e., child-friendly budgeting).
- The National Prosecuting Authority must take seriously the ever-increasing reports of alleged corruption and unnecessary delays in dealing with child sexual abuse cases in order to complement efforts by the Zimbabwe Republic Police Victim Friendly Unit.
- The Judicial Services Commission and the National Prosecuting Authority must encourage all Magistrates and Prosecutors, in particular, to continue to handle matters of child abuse proactively by ensuring that all matters are dealt with sensitively and that all perpetrators get the maximum sentences possible.
- Active, continuous engagement and sensitization of communities and various religious groupings like the Apostolic Sect on those in higher political and business offices on children's rights.
- Continuous training of children on children's rights through various groupings and representations like Junior Members of Parliament, Junior Councillors, Child Protection Committees, etc.
- CSOs can work on strengthening the capacities of child protection committees to improve their performance.
- Need to educate boys on how to stay safe and avoid pre-marital sex.
- Need an oversight board for children’s rights
- There is also a need to address abuse of children among children, particularly those in same-sex schools
- Investigate the issues of homosexuality and sodomy in same-sex schools and provide relevant sex education and awareness in these schools.

Key learning points

- A child is a boy or girl below the age of 18 years. Their age often puts them in a vulnerable position in society
• Children have rights to which they are entitled, including care and protection from harm and exploitation, because they are still minors and not little adults.

• As rights holders, children can claim their rights from duty bearers who include parents, communities, and the state.

• The extended family system was seen as no longer effective in preventing child abuse because most family ties have been distorted by modernization and increased individualism associated with the changing socio-economic environment. In addition, close family members have been known to abuse children within the homes.

• Religion was perceived to have been weakened by sexual abuse that take place in churches, characterized by too much emphasis on the gospel of prosperity and anti-social practices such as virginity testing of girls.

• Respect for traditional systems of child care and protection have been lost due to cultural practices such as child marriages.

• Incidences of child sexual abuse, particularly of girls, are said to have increased due to increasing levels of poverty.

• The capacity of Child Protection Committees was perceived to be very low. As a result, they are not able to deal with some bad cultural and religious practices such as child marriages.

• Government strategies on child care and protection are outlined in the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children Program (NAP for OVC II) – 2011 – 2015 implemented through the Ministry of Public Service Labor and Social Welfare (MoPSLSW).

• Although there is adequate legislative framework for caring and protecting children, the government was seen as weak in implementing protocols and national laws.

• Most public programs and institutions are not well resourced and suffer from corrupt practices by those directly involved in the implementation.

• To strengthen care and protection of children in Zimbabwe there is need for increased awareness, alignment of the laws with the new Constitution, proper coordination of activities, and capacity building of community-based Child Protection Committees.
The new constitution, human rights, social justice, and sustainable peace

To what extent does the new constitution guarantee basic human rights, social justice, and sustainable peace in Zimbabwe?

1. Introduction

Human rights, social justice, and peace are preconditions and foundational values that should be enshrined in a constitution. Zimbabwe wrote a new Constitution that was overwhelmingly endorsed by the wider population in March 2013. This brought hope to the people of Zimbabwe but concerns have been raised over delays in bringing existing legislation into alignment with the new Constitution, which could deprive citizens of their fundamental rights. To what extent does the new Constitution of Zimbabwe guarantee these rights?

2. Background

The August 2014 Learning Group Meeting started with introductory discussions held in groups, followed by a plenary presentation, input by the resource person, Shumi Magwada Kupara from African Community Publishing and Development Trust (ACPDT), open discussion, and a reflection on what was learned. A summary of the process and learning outcome are outlined in this article.

Group discussion questions

1. What do you understand by human rights?
2. What is the link between rights and responsibilities?
3. What human rights have you enjoyed?
4. What examples can you give of responsible leaders or individuals who protect the rights of others?
5. While all human beings are born with human rights, some groups are more vulnerable to human rights abuses. List the groups that are more vulnerable.
6. In your family and community life, what problems have you experienced in relation to rights abuses?
7. What other problems can rights abuse lead to?
8. What are the root causes of rights abuses?
9. What can we do together to help promote and protect human rights included in the Constitution?
10. Think of a proverb, creative phrase, poem, or song to promote human rights.

people. Everyone has a right to enjoy their rights as well as a responsibility to protect the rights of others.

iii. Rights that the people said they enjoy include the right to life, education, freedom of expression and movement, as well as the right to have a name and language. The new Constitution goes further to give economic, social, cultural, and religious rights.

iv. Examples of organizations and individuals that have a responsibility to protect the rights of others include the Africa Human Rights Commission, civil society orga-
nizations, the police, parents, legislators, and govern-
ment institutions.

v. Groups vulnerable to human rights abuses include Orphans and Vulnerable Children, children in general, women, those living with disabilities, rural people, minority groups, internally displaced persons, lesbians and gays, prisoners, PLWD, and albinos.

vi. Problems experienced in relation to rights abuses were noted as unemployment (people are educated but there are no jobs), lack of identity, loss of parents, unsafe water, living in an unsafe environment, etc.

vii. Rights abuses can lead to anti-social behavior and lawlessness.

viii. Root causes of rights abuses include ignorance, poverty, lack of political will to uphold rights, negative attitudes, abusive religion and culture, lawlessness, etc.

ix. Activities that can promote and protect human rights include sensitization of the public, strengthening of the judiciary system, and protection of human rights defenders.

x. Proverbs, creative phrase, poems, or songs that promote human rights include “kakara kununa hudya-
kamwe” (fat animal feed on other animals) and “regai dzive shiri mazai haana muto” (let the birds hatch, eggs do not make soup).

PRESENTATION BY SHUMI MAGWADA KUPARA

In her presentation, Shumi covered issues of human rights provisions in the Constitution, identified sections of the Constitution that addressed social justice issues. Below is a summary of her presentation.

Human rights provisions in the Constitution

(i) Declaration of Rights (These are provided for in Chapter 4 of the Constitution)

- Section 48: Right to life
- Section 49: Right to personal liberty
- Section 50: Rights of arrested and detained persons
- Section 51: Right to human dignity
- Section 52: Right to personal security
- Section 53: Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment
- Section 54: Freedom from slavery or servitude
- Section 55: Freedom from forced or compulsory labor
- Section 56: Equality and non-discrimination
- Section 57: Right to privacy

(ii) Application and interpretation of Chapter 4 of the Constitution

- Section 44: Duty to respect fundamental human rights and freedoms
- Section 45: Application of Chapter 4
- Section 46: Interpretation of Chapter 4

(iii) Enforcement of fundamental human rights and freedoms

- Section 85: Any person acting in their own interests or on behalf of another person who cannot act for themselves or as a member, or in the interests, of a group or class of persons or acting in the public interest or any association acting in the interests of its members is entitled to approach a court, alleging that a fundamental right or freedom enshrined in this Chapter has been, is being, or is likely to be infringed, and the court may grant appropriate relief, including a declaration of rights and an award of compensation.

(iv) Limitations of basic human rights

- The fundamental rights and freedoms set out in this Chapter of the Constitution must be exercised reasonably and with due regard for the rights and freedoms of other persons.

- The fundamental rights and freedoms set out in this Chapter of the Constitution may be limited only in terms of a law of general application and to the extent that the limitation is fair, reasonable, necessary, and justifiable in a democratic society based on openness, justice, human dignity, equality, and freedom, taking into account all relevant factors.
• Section 87: Limitations during public emergency—Fundamental rights and freedoms in the Declaration of Rights may be further limited during a period of public emergency but only to the extent permitted by this section.

• Section 48: Right to Life—Provides for the death penalty to be imposed on a person convicted of murder committed in aggravating circumstances.

• Section 78 (3): Sexual orientation—Marriage rights state that persons of the same sex are prohibited from marrying each other.

(v) Chapter 13: Institutions
- Human Rights Commission
- Gender Commission
- Media Commission
- National Prosecuting Authority Public Protector

3.1 SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Elaboration of certain rights: Sections 80 - 84 relates to issues of social justice, in the following order:

• Section 80: Rights of women
• Section 81: Rights of children;
• Section 82: Rights of the elderly;
• Section 83: Rights of persons with disabilities;
• Section 84: Rights of veterans of the liberation struggle

Sustainable peace

• Section 95: Limits the President to two five-year terms. This measure will not be applied retrospectively and legislation can no longer be vetoed by the president; Chapter 14 devolves power to 10 provinces; Section 252 creates independent prosecuting authority; Section 254 creates an anti-corruption commission and guarantees independent electoral commission, Section 251 establishes the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission, Section 252 outlines functions of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission

• Limitation to sustainable peace: Section 296, Zimbabwe Land Commission, and Section 98 which talks about Presidential immunity.

Strategies the government and civil society could use to strengthen prevailing constitutional provisions

Three strategies recommended by the presenter include awareness raising and making the constitution accessible to the public, alignment of the laws with the new Constitution, and constitutional practice and culture.

Awareness and accessibility

Many Zimbabweans know there is a new Constitution but most have never read it to know what is going on. There is need to raise awareness, make sure people understand it, and make it accessible (free copies from ACPDT are available in three languages). Also making use of the social media – mediated through art, sharing in homes and churches is very important. On how the social media can effectively be used, it was realised that ACPDT was working on getting a mobile constitution that can be available on phone. The group was also informed that Deputy Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs is on Star FM every Thursday between 8.00 and 9.00 pm. A live programming of Parliament sessions is also broadcasted on TV every Wednesday.

Alignment with other laws

While the new constitution does have greater protection of certain rights, the government's failure to amend repressive laws – such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), and the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act – complicates the picture. These laws have previously been used to curtail basic rights and provisions in AIPPA and POSA that provide criminal penalties for undermining the authority of or insulting the president as well as organising public meetings without informing the police, have routinely been used to arrest and prosecute activists.

The group saw the need to amend repressive laws which curtail basic rights, engage in debates with and come up with minimum standards – participation and mobilization in on-going processes, watch live broadcasting of Parliament on Wednesdays to identify gaps in the discussions, putting pressure on political representative, and lobbying the Constitutional Court for alignment of laws with the Constitution.
Constitutional practice and culture

The transition from a set of rules to a way of life for Zimbabweans has been a significant challenge. How do we encourage and teach constitutional principles so that Zimbabweans no longer see the Constitution as a set of rules but rather as a lifestyle and culture, and embrace the basis for democracy? Some of the suggestions made included introduction of principles of the constitutions in schools to build a generation that is cultured (i.e., mainstreaming the Constitution and democracy in the education system).

Plenary discussion

The group noted key changes in the constitution, raised issues relating to limiting of rights as outlined in section 86 of the constitution, interpretation of the terms ‘human dignity’ used in the constitution and then analysed weaknesses and challenges of the new constitution.

Key changes noted in the new Constitution included:

- Limitation of the term of the State President to two five-year terms.
- Legislation can no longer be vetoed by the president.
- Devolvement of power to provincial levels.
- Bill of rights which stipulates freedom of expression and a free media.
- Dual citizenship is permitted.
- Barring of contestation of farms seized of farm under the land reform program.
- Gender equality and the empowerment of women through the reservation of 60 parliamentary seats for women and measures to empower women in employment. Zimbabwe’s previous Constitution had been labelled the worst in the world in terms of women’s rights.
- Explicit protection of the rights of special groups such as youth, women, children, the elderly and, war veterans.
- Independent institutions created include the Human Rights Commission, the Gender Commission, the Media Commission, the National Prosecuting Authority, the Public Protector, the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission, and the Anti-Corruption Commission, which support democratic processes in the country.

Limitation of rights (section 86)

The enjoyment of some rights will be limited in the name of the "interest of defence", "public safety", "public order", "public morality", and "public health." Since these terms are not clearly defined by the Constitution, they could cause problems and allow other considerations to trump and hence dilute some rights. It also places a major responsibility on the courts since they will be expected to interpret these vague terms. Will they have the will and independence to do so?

Interpretation of terms

One of the terms that was not clear to the group was “human dignity.” The group wanted to understand how the Constitution defines “human dignity”? The responses included that it refers to things that affect who you are – what makes a human person, something that a person cannot be robbed of. There was a belief that everyone is born with human dignity (hunhuUbuntu) (e.g., human dignity explains human worth and the essence of humanity).

Weaknesses and challenges identified in the new Constitution

- One of the most notable concerns was the retention of the death penalty. An attempt was made to eliminate the death penalty but Zimbabweans still seem to strongly support retaining the death penalty. By declining to endorse the death penalty, did the Minister of Justice uphold the right to life or violate the Constitution? The responses were that the Minister might have used his administrative power.
- While the creation of independent institutions was perceived as a major step forward, the proposed Human Rights Commission is, regrettably, not established under the terms of the United Nations Paris Principles, which might compromise its integrity and independence. This is a cause of concern on guaranteeing human rights. Another point noted was that the functionality of public institutions depends on the government’s capacity to fund and support them. In the context many institutions do not function as expected because of failure by government to fund, facilitation and animation of democratic processes and constitutionalism.
- Often citizens do not test the functionality of the Constitution.
• Although the new Constitution prohibits same-sex marriages in Section 78 (3), it has a loophole in that it does not outlaw same-sex unions and partnerships. There are still existing laws that do not criminalize homosexuality.

• Section 98 protects a sitting president by stating, “The President enjoys immunity from civil or criminal proceedings for things done in his or her personal capacity until after he or she has ceased to be President.”

• Gender equality: The 60 parliamentary seats allocated to women do not represent a democratic process but was progressive for a start. There is no proportional representation. The new Constitution was progressive as a starting point on equality. Most women were not placed on safe constituencies during election campaigns. There are deep-seated structures of patriarchy which need to be addressed. A lot has been compromised in the new constitution.

• The institutions of democracy are not falling in line with international law (e.g., UN Paris Principles). This is cause for concern because they are not in line with international human rights principles and their independence is questioned.

• The new Constitution is not easily accessible on the Internet.

• Continued existence within the Constitution of the AIPA and POSA contradict fundamental human rights that are enshrined in the Constitution.

• Human rights and social justice are not the same but human rights guarantees social justice.

**Recommendations**

• CSOs should push for copies of the Constitution to be made accessible to the people.

• Sharing the Constitution in homes, in the community, and in churches is important for increased awareness.

• Engage in the debate with lawmakers, engage the public and set standards and measures of success.

• Mainstreaming of the Constitution in school curricula.

• Engage political representatives and the constitutional courts because aligning laws is everyone’s responsibility.

• There is a need for deeper discussions on certain sections of the new Constitution, such as gender equality issues.

**Key learning points**

• Many people are not aware of the provisions of the Constitution.

• Learning groups offer a platform for easy learning than reading.

• Understanding was made simpler through listening to various perspectives.

• Introduce the debate on the Constitution and social justice in universities.

• Participants could not have gotten this legal knowledge elsewhere.

• The Constitution is cultural and religiously relevant.

• The Constitution is not a legal document that stands on its own – it needs to be supported by other laws.

• People think that once they have a constitution their lives have changed without testing it out.

• There are lots of grey areas where people disagree within the Constitution.

• The discussion engaged best presentation and facilitation strategies.

• Participants had an opportunity to engage with and understand the Constitution.

• Deeper discussion is needed to understand the gender dimension of the Constitution.

• The overview of many sections increased knowledge because people usually read sections that they like.

• The Constitution was unpacked in a participatory manner giving room for a lot of different perspectives.
The work of civil society organizations (CSOs), which include NGOs, churches, etc., has grown in response to a constrained capacity of the state to provide for all the needs of the citizens. Some of the challenges that get in the way of a smooth and mutually supportive working relationship between government and civil society, include but are not limited to:

- CSOs’ limited knowledge, skills, and strategies on engaging with the legal & administrative environment of local government.
- Restrictive and unsupportive local government laws and regulations.
- The generally negative attitudes and prejudices of personnel and policymakers.

Thus the ideal relationship between government and CSOs is one of cooperation, complementarity, and mutual respect.

Objectives and group discussion

The October 2014 Learning Group Meeting focused on exploring ways of strengthening collaboration between CSOs and local government.

The meeting started with small group discussions followed by plenary sharing of experiences in working with local government structures and systems and brief discussion of the responses. Group discussions were followed by input from Mr. David Matumbike, who gave insights to the origins of local government and its evolution to the present day and plenary discussion on issues that were considered important to the topic.

Ways in which CSOs have engaged local government structures

- Having Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with local authorities and getting letters of clearance to work in specific areas.
- Organizing consultation meetings with district administrators, local authorities, and traditional leaders to get guidance on areas to work on.
- Conducting institutional mapping exercises and sensitization workshops on a given area and produce district/community profiles.
- Consulting representatives of the government structures each time a CSO visits a community. However some organizations bypass these structures when cooperation is slow.

Group discussion questions

1. In what ways have CSOs engaged local government structures and systems in their work at community level?
2. Which local government structures and systems have they involved and what were the benefits and challenges experienced in working with these structures and systems?
3. What capacities do CSOs need to effectively work with local government systems and structures in their work?

Benefits and challenges experienced in working with local government structures

Local government structures and systems that CSOs work with include local authorities such as Rural District Councils (RDCs) and Urban Councils, District and Ward Development Committees, Provincial Governors, and Provincial Administrators. District structures that CSOs usually work with are administrators, traditional leaders (Chiefs, headmen, and village heads) and Ward Assemblies.

Key benefits that accrued from the collaboration with the government were identified as protection, direct and unrestricted communication channels, assistance in mobilizing communities, institutional memory of a given area, and facilitation of development work.
Major challenges experienced in working with local government structures include conflict of interest over the development agenda, incompatible goals, budget uses and timelines, limited capacity of local government structures, overregulation, demand for allowances by some government departments which provide technical services, poor relations due to misconceptions of the work of CSOs, politicization of development work by some district leaders, the need to seek police clearance, and bureaucracy. Some of the challenges were said to be emanating from failure by CSOs to adhere to their values, mission, and goals, lack of a culture of public accountability, failure to remain apolitical, and poor planning.

Capacities that CSOs need in order to work effectively with local government structures and systems:

- Effective collaboration.
- Good public relations.
- Communication and negotiations skills.
- Capacity to adapt to what is on the ground.
- Good knowledge and understanding of the context and processes required prior to intervention.
- Ability to remain apolitical and articulate the agenda of the organization.
- Need to be clear of their goals and what they are doing.

Plenary discussion

Issues raised during plenary discussions related to who has the mandate to represent the people, do CSOs stand by their values, what does the term “politics” mean, how neutral are government structures, the role of CSOs, and public accountability. Below is a summary of key points from the discussions.

Who has the mandate to represent people’s issues?

The emergence of strong opposition politics in early 2000 created a difficult and polarized operating environment for civil society organizations. The issue of a mandate to represent people became one of the central issues in development. Claims were then made that only the elected political parties have the mandate to represent the issues and interests of the people. Allegations were then made that agendas of most CSOs were more externally than internally driven. Government started to regularize activities of CSOs through demanding for MOUs to operate in particular areas. This process was not necessary prior to 2000. The environment became too polarized.

Do CSOs stand by their values when implementing programs?

One of the biggest challenges noted during the discussion was inability of CSOs to stand by their values and clarity is needed on what the organizations do.

Do people understand what the term “politics” mean?

There is a difference between politics and being partisan. There is a very thin line between politics and life skills (civic education) and it was noted that making certain statements can be political.

How open are government structures?

The experiences of the participants were that if CSOs become open with their goals and agendas, they won’t be given permission to operate as often, the work is seen as opposing the agendas of some political parties.

Is the role of CSOs only to complement government efforts?

The government, private sector, and civil society nexus is not valued. Politicization of development has overshadowed the role of CSOs. The three-tier relationship is no longer valued. On public accountability, it was noted that as a nation, Zimbabwe does not have a strong culture of accountability. Development is now driven by power and not responsibility. Power is often advanced at the expense of responsibility.

Who owns development?

One of the problems noted was the desire by CSOs to be visible in areas where they work. Many of the organizations were perceived as having the notion of bringing development to people instead of the community owning and pushing for their development.

Presentation from David Matumbike

Mr. Matumbike said he has been in local government work since 2001. Currently he is working with Local Government Trust as a program officer. However, what he was sharing were his personal views and not that of his organization. Mr. Matumbike’s presentation embraced the definition of
local government, its critical characteristics, evolution of Zimbabwe local government system, proposed changes brought about by the new constitutions, drafting of a bill to harmonize and align the laws with the new constitution, definition of civil society and its role in local government, challenges and opportunities for strengthening collaboration between CSOs and local government structures.

Local government and local governance in Zimbabwe

From the four references that Mr. Matumbike cited in his paper, he chose to use the definition of local government by Marshall (1965:1) which highlights the issue of election or selection of representatives of restricted areas. He found this definition more accommodative of structures other than the elected and useful for the analysis of local government in Zimbabwe which combines both the elected and an extension of central government.

He then went on to define local government as an elected government and or de-concentrated structures of national government at sub-national level whose mandate is to deliver services to citizens that affect their daily lives.

In Zimbabwe local government structures are the semi-autonomous constitutional bodies elected by the people to govern local affairs. It is often referred to as the government that is closest to the people. Local authorities are expected to deliver public service at local level. Local governance was described as "the actors, processes and activities that define the decision-making and participation of citizens in their development and local affairs affecting their daily lives."

Zimbabwe has a three-tier system of government, comprising central or national government, Metropolitan and Provincial Councils, and Local Authorities.

Local government is made up of Metropolitan and Provincial Councils and Local Authorities. The Ministry of Local Government Public Works and National Housing (MLGP-WNH) extends its structure to provincial and local levels through the offices of the Provincial and District Administrators who chair Provincial Development Committees and Rural District Development Committees administered through the Provincial Councils and Rural District Councils’ Acts respectively. In addition, Ministers of State for each province in the country are part of the local government structure and traditional leaders also form structures which are considered part of local government from the village head leading a village, the headman leading several villages, and then the chief presiding over several headmen and their villages.

Evolution of Zimbabwe local government system

Local government structures were established in 1984 by directives from the then Prime Minister of Zimbabwe. The aim was to coordinate service delivery agencies in rural district councils. This resulted in the promulgation of the Provincial Councils Act and the Rural District Councils Act of 1985 and the subsequent appointment of provincial governors and a Provincial Development Committees. The operations at the district council level were being conducted in a smooth and non-parallel or conflicting provision by local authority, central government, and non-governmental organizations.

Proposed changes brought about by the new constitutions

Prior to the adoption of a new Constitution in Zimbabwe, local governments were semi-autonomous statutory bodies administered through the Urban Councils Act, the Rural District Councils Act, the Regional Town and Country Planning Act, the Provincial Administration Act, and Traditional Leaders Act.

According to the new Constitution (Chapter 14), the purpose of devolving government responsibility to local authority is to preserve national unity, enhance democratic participation in government by all citizens and communities, and ensure equitable allocation of national resources and participation of communities in their development.

Drafting of a bill to harmonize and align the laws with the new Constitution

The country is in the process of aligning all subsidiary legislation to the new constitution. A draft Local Government Bill had been drafted and circulated and being analyzed. Feedback from stakeholders actively involved in the review process was that the bill harmonized urban and rural local government legislation but did not align fully to the new Constitution. The Ministry of Local Government was working on a second draft of the bill that incorporates inputs and submissions made by stakeholders.

According to Mr. Matumbike, the new Constitution was seen as providing a broad scope for citizen participation in decision-making processes in local government. If translated into legislation, this provides significant scope for enhanced impact in political and socio-economic de-

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1 Constitution of Zimbabwe, Amendment No. 20
velopment. Civil society organizations (CSOs) will be able to contribute significantly to this development more freely. The current prevailing situation in respect of government and CSOs is one of suspicion and lack of cooperation with negative impacts on governance and development.

**Civilians, civil society, and their role in governance**

A civilian is a citizen who is neither part of government or represents private corporations. Civil society is made up both of individual citizens and corporate groups or organizations that are neither government nor private sector organizations. They exist as interest groups, pressure groups, churches, and NGOs to support citizens or groups of citizens and strengthen their voice against political, economic, and social injustice. Thus civil society attends to issues of a civil nature pertaining to the matters and vocations that are done through a civilian mandate.

Civil society organizations derive their mandate from their membership and the beneficiaries whom they represent. This mandate is legitimized by the laws providing for the legal registration or incorporation of the organizations.

In Zimbabwe most CSOs are legally registered as either private or voluntary organizations (PVOs) through the Private and Voluntary Organization’s Act administered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare or as Trusts under the Justice and Judicial Services’ Act administered by the Ministry of Justice Legal and Parliamentary affairs. The arrangement between civil society and citizens is not therefore part of the state or governmental political system but one that is premised on voluntarism with no binding obligation placed on citizens except those who volunteer to be part of the group or actively participate as beneficiaries.

The roles of CSOs include (1) to complement government efforts particularly in areas where the objectives agree (i.e., in lessening the suffering of the people by intervening in aspects of the life and welfare of citizens which is ordinarily the responsibility and obligation of government but with limited resources and other constraints, government may be unable to fulfill); (2) act as a watchdog for the rights of the people; (3) ensure the realisation of participatory democracy; and (4) mobilization for political, economic, and social development and public policy.

The voice of civil society is usually strongest in the strength of numbers supporting their cause and the strength of the arguments by which they seek redress of disparities in their groups’ interests and the general public interest versus the state or private interest. While their purpose for existence and motivation for formation are various, their legitimacy and their impact should not be doubted.

In Zimbabwe, there are many registered CSOs. Most of them get their funding to carry out work that enhances the development of civilian life predominantly from the donor community. Under the enjoyment of all rights the voice of civil society is often referred to as the conscience of government articulated mainly by the interest and pressure group segments of civil society. Humanitarian aid and development interventions are normally associated with NGO interventions. The ideal relationship between government and CSOs is one of cooperation, complementarity, and mutual respect.

**Challenges and opportunities for strengthening collaboration between CSOs and local government**

The environment is constrained by restrictive legislation especially the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and political interference which have created suspicion between government and CSOs in general.

POSA and AIPPA are perceived as denying freedoms of association and expression with far-reaching impacts on CSO delivery of their mandate. For example under POSA any public gathering of people meeting, or grouping other than family meetings and church meetings exceeding 10 people, are required to notify the police which can deny the group the right to meet for security reasons. The police is alleged to have abused the two legislations resulting in some CSOs failing or delaying in accessing communities as well as media personnel being denied freedom of the press or incriminated for publishing stories that cause discomfort to some politicians.

Specific examples of challenges underlining the relationship between CSOs and local government include:

- General political polarization and politicization of development work has closed up space for CSOs especially those working on advance human rights, governance, and democracy.
- One of the key challenges confronting Zimbabwe civil society is autonomous existence as CSOs are highly dependent on donor funding.
- Some CSOs have tainted their reputations by indulging in preferential political practices and associations with
political parties. This behavior has reinforced government's suspicions and accusations that CSOs are pursuing a regime change agenda.

- The operational environment, rife with mistrust, accusations, and counter-accusations, is largely unproductive and has the potential to entrench polarization as the relationship between governments and civil society is further complicated by funding which civil society receives from governments which have sour relations with Zimbabwe.

- These tensions between government and CSOs have generally frightened local authorities from engaging with NGOs for fear of being accused of collaborating with the regime change agenda. Some local authorities have allegedly received directives from the ministry of local government barring them from participating in some activities organized by NGOs or CSOs. This has impacted negatively on citizen participation in their local affairs and general service delivery. Some local authorities have advised CSOs to approach the ministry of local government seeking approval to carry out their projects in their local authority areas. It has worked in some instances and not so in other instances.

- In the dispensation of the new Constitution provision has been made for local authorities, although semi-autonomous, to govern their own affairs. Thus central government, according to the Constitution, should facilitate and support rather than frustrate citizen participation in their governance.

- In order to ensure maximum citizen participation and to enable effective and efficient service delivery, the relationship between the central government and local authorities should be revised in new legislation in order to demarcate the roles of the two levels of government and the extent of their authority. Government should therefore enable access to local authorities by CSOs to complement its political, social, economic, and cultural development objectives.

**Processes that can enhance CSO collaboration with local government**

CSOs that are likely to succeed in collaborating with local government structures are usually those which have a good understanding of the local government structures, the legal and policy environment, make an effort to engage the structures formally, remain apolitical in their nature and operations and persistently seek genuine areas and scope of collaboration. The following are some of the steps that need to be observed:

- CSOs intending to conduct activities at the community level in local authority areas should first approach local authorities through the office of the Town Clerk, in the case of urban local authorities, or the Chief Executive Officer, in the case of Rural District Councils, to propose and explain their programs and projects. They are expected to present copies of their certificates of registration or Deeds of Trust together with a brief profile of the organization and concept note on the proposed project or program, explain the collaborative framework it hopes to achieve with council. The Town Clerk or Chief Executive Officer may advise whether or not the engagement needs a Memorandum of Understanding. Where time allows, the organization should then seek for guidance or the requisite template for the production of a draft Memorandum of Understanding.

- The Chief Executive Officer or Town Clerk is then expected to table the proposal to full council which will either adopt the proposal for collaboration and trigger the production of the relevant documentation or reject the proposal. In some cases council may proceed to collaborate with CSOs in the absence of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), but in many instances require such documentation before participating in the projects and programs. When the local authority is unclear about the project or program, it will invariably seek clearance from the Ministry of Local Government through provincial structures in the case of rural areas. In such instances the CSOs must make an effort to engage the Ministry starting with the District Administrator right up to the permanent secretary to explain the project or the program and how it complements government’s efforts and or benefits the targeted communities. It is critical for the CSOs to support its concept and briefing notes with relevant evidence such as research reports and also demonstrate the relationship with the existing government policies such as the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) and other relevant government documents.

- Once the local authorities are cleared to participate, the CSO and the local authority may concretise their activity schedules and proceed to notify the local stations of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) of intended gatherings, their dates and venues through a formal letter to which must be attached is the CSO’s Certificate of Registration or Trust Deed. The ZRP will issue a clear-
ance certificate on which basis the meeting may take place. Other than meetings attended by more than 10 members of the public all other activities may proceed as planned between the CSO and the local authority without third party involvement.

- Another practical approach that CSOs can use to access communities in local authorities is to partner with locally based CSOs and or community-based organizations conducting similar work in order to leverage on their understanding of the local context, acceptability and community mobilization capacities. CSOs can collaborate more with each other in order to leverage resources and increase effectiveness (NANGO Secretariat, 2013).

Conclusion

Mr. Matumbike concluded his presentations noting the following:

- MLGPWNH with the assistance of the UNDP is working on a comprehensive Local Government Capacity Building Program which recognises the role of CSOs in delivering on its citizen participation outcomes. The program has already demonstrated capacity and government’s intention to cooperate more with CSOs by inviting CSOs together with other local government sector stakeholders to make comments and input into the drafting of the new legislation aligned to the new constitution.

- The new Constitution and alignment of local government legislation to the Constitution is an opportunity for government to become more accommodating to CSOs by creating an enabling and supportive environment for the organizations to play their role freely in the democratic, political and socio-economic development of the country. This should extend to the removal or amendment of other restrictive legislation such as POSA and AIPPA. Government should also put in place measures to curb political interference in developmental work of CSOs particularly at local level.

- Government must take stock of the benefits of constructive engagement with civil society and foster better relations with civil society by engaging in conversation with CSOs to that effect. This must be done in a spirit of partnership, cooperation, and complementarity for development. Government should avoid criminalising CSOs but must act in accordance with the law in the event of any breach of the law by CSOs in the course of their work.

- CSOs should be independent and apolitical in their values and operations and demand that their donors avoid subjecting them to political conditions.

- In order to pursue their mandates without being perceived and accused by government of pursuing regime change especially in the areas of human rights, democratisation and accountable governance, CSOs need to be more innovative, foster dialogue while avoiding adversarial approaches and destructive criticism of government if they are working in areas where their mission is more likely to share similar values with opposition political parties. They should be able to stand their values in case of being confronted by government.

Plenary discussion

Issues raised in response to Mr. Matumbike’s presentations related to space for citizen participation in governance issues and the issue of being apolitical and capacities of CSOs.

Space for citizen participation in governance

Where is the space for citizen participation? Communities have not been mobilising around service provision. For example, there is unavailability of water in urban areas. It was noted that during the consultation, the parent ministry harmonized the two local government acts into one bill but the bill was not speaking to alignment issues. The presenter responded that the new Constitution provides space for citizen participation. The major issue is translating the Constitution into legislation and practice. CSOs need to strategically engage at the alignment and policy formulation level.

On the issue of being apolitical it was noted that it has been impossible to achieve social and economic rights without struggling against structural injustices. Political rights are inalienable rights that help people to develop their own social construct of apolitical. CSOs were encouraged to avoid affiliation with political parties so that they can declare their independence.

It is legitimate to objectively pursue the interest of the public and become the voice of the voiceless. In a polarized and politicized environment, some of the things that CSOs need to do to strengthen collaboration with local government structures include scanning the environment, sensitizing the stakeholders, organising meetings with the gatekeepers...
to share what is on offer, and enter into Memorandums of Understanding.

**Key learning points**

- Clear strategies on how CSO could engage with local government and the gaps that exist in the collaboration were identified.
- Insights were obtained from those working with urban authorities.
- CSOs need to implement programs while consultation processes are on-going to avoid losing donor funding.
- CSOs do not know enough about how to work with government structures at the local level.
- Knowing the context before intervening is very important (values, norms, and culture).
- There is a need to mobilize against apathy.
- It is important for CSOs to align their programs to government policies.
- There are many areas in ZIMASSET which converge with CSOs objectives.
- CSOs need to focus more on mobilization of citizens to increase accountability.

- The “must do” and “nice to do”: engaging with local government structure is a “must.”
- There is a gap between theoretical information and practice on the ground.

**Benefits and challenges for engagement:**

- There are no right or wrong answers in local government engagement.
- Local government and CSOs need each other.
- Some CSO are progressive while others are reactionary.
- Successful collaboration requires effective engagement and understanding of the local government context.
- There is a need to improve communication and public relations skills at all levels.
- There is nothing in legislation that bars local authorities from engaging with CSOs.
- It will take a long time to do away with the old structure which deters positive engagement between CSOs and the government.
- Positive engagement is possible if CSOs plan their programs in advance.
Hatcliffe Extension is a peri-urban settlement that lies 20km on the northern side of Harare. The community suffered more than three cycles of internal displacement but has demonstrated resilience and ability to cope during trying times through livelihoods development. Livelihoods development has provided a useful way of creating an environment that fosters community cooperation, mobilizing people to work toward the same goal, survive difficult times, show respect for others, and share space and equipment. Hatcliffe livelihoods project participants have self-initiative and are mainstreaming conflict transformation into their livelihoods projects.

**Purpose and process**

The purpose of the field visit was to learn from the experiences of the Hatcliffe Extension community on how it implements and sustains the livelihoods project and how the project builds social and community cohesion. The visit was divided into five main sessions that started with a gallery walk, viewing different products, followed by a process of knowing each other, sharing of successes and challenges by of the different cluster projects, and open discussion which included questions, answers, comments, and recommendations.

**Gallery walk**

After the group arrived at Hatcliffe Factory Shell, it was received by project members who took them on a gallery walk. The group went around the complex viewing the different projects and talking to the members.

**Welcome and introductions**

Mrs. Precious Dhliwayo from the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise and Cooperative Development chaired the session. Members from Hatcliffe Extension Factory Shell opened the meeting with a song called “Zendamanemadziro” (leaning against the wall, literally meaning that people should aim to earn a living and not be beggars), which discourages laziness.

Mrs. Dhliwayo welcomed everyone and requested a moment of silence for everyone to do their own spiritual reflection. She then invited each person to introduce themselves by name and the organization they come from in the case of visitors and by cluster in the case of association members.

Association clusters represented were leather works, sewing, tie and dye, interior décor, carpentry, welding, peanut butter making, hair dressing, and plumbing.

**Sharing of successes and challenges**

Mrs. Modesta Masikati, the chairperson of the association, facilitated the session. She started by giving a brief history of the projects and how they were supported with ideas, skills through a partnership involving AFSC, MMSMECD, Zimbabwe Women’s Bureau, and Silveira House. She then gave every cluster the opportunity to share what they were doing highlighting the number of people in each cluster, the successes, and challenges. The following table summarizes the presentations made by the different clusters.
## Cluster reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leather Works</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Produces bags, sandals, and satchels which they sell within the factory and by the roadside.</td>
<td>Lack of adequate capital and equipment. The small machines they use cannot sew piping cords.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Started in 2008 and the members work from the factory shell all the time. Have two manual machines for the ten members. Produce for the local and outside community.</td>
<td>Do not have capital to inject into their business and to buy raw materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tie and dye</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>This cluster had four members and they managed to train two more members. Produce good material which they sell locally.</td>
<td>Generally tie and dye products are for high profile people. They get low profit when they sell locally. There is stiff competition from secondhand clothes which sell at $1 for two items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Décor</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Have introduced deposit and payment terms on purchases to improve their sales. Some of their members are diversifying into soap making and dishwashing liquid to make ends meet.</td>
<td>Send their products for embroidery in town because they do not have overlocking embroidery machines and there is no electricity at the factory. They realize very low profit due to high cost input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpentry</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Doing well producing doors, base beds, wardrobes, stools, and coffins. They also do piece work in the community. Their vision of some of the members is to employ others in the future.</td>
<td>Lack of electricity and poor equipment. Failing to meet orders due to lack of capital. Use of manual machines greatly affects their production. Often they fail to meet some orders because they lack modern and original machines and tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welding</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>It is a group of four females and four males. Produce mainly door and window frames. They produce mainly for the local market as many people are still building their houses.</td>
<td>Operate from other places as there is no electricity at the factory shell. The donated generator cannot handle the bulk of the work they do because it’s not for industrial use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut Butter</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Their project is very viable; they have markets both locally and outside their community. Used to sell about 20 litres per day. They market by the roadside.</td>
<td>Inputs and packaging are expensive and they are no longer able to buy large quantities. One of the machines they were given broke down and the other never worked from the start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdressing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Started in 2008 and now working from the factory shell.</td>
<td>Stiff competition from better saloons in the areas. Lack of equipment such as mirrors, washing sink, and a proper structure for their saloon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Have established partnership with the City Council to do their jobs</td>
<td>All the members are semi-qualified to be contracted in Harare. The only option they have is to partner with the qualified plumbers from City Council for any contract they get. Do not have adequate tools. They need further training.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Brief history of the project**

- 2008: Started the ISALS
- 2010–12: Skills training courses
- 2013: Implementation of the skills
- 2014: Started working from the factory shell (1 July 2014)

The major problem experienced was the high dropout rate due to lack of capital, lack of material, and the general economic hardship facing the country.

**Plenary Discussions**

The visiting organizations and individuals raised issues, questions, or made comments and appropriate cluster members or association committee members responded.

Issues raised and discussed were related to the following:

- Lack of capital to invest in the businesses.
- Lack of a lucrative market.
- Opening of a bank account for the association.
- Broken down machines.
- Community acceptance of the project.
- Electrification of the factory shell.
- Publicity of the center.
- Legal framework and membership.
- Adequacy of the skills acquired.
- Community contribution toward the construction of the factory shell.

Below is a summary of the discussion on some of the above issues:

**Raising of capital**

The suggestion to make customers pay deposits for products was seen as not very feasible because the main market for most of the products is the local community which is comprised mostly of people who do not have much money and often struggle to pay deposits. The other feeling was that charging deposits may slow down production and does not allow for production of variety. The association initiated a strategy of weekly contributions of $1 per individual to assist clusters with capital. ISAL is also helping the clusters with money. Currently there is an ISAL group which contributes $10 every two weeks and the money is intended to be used for projects.

On the issue of subletting to other people the rooms which are vacant in order to raise money for the association, the members said their constitution does not allow them to sublet any part of the building. The association clearly highlighted that they will never sublet their property to anyone. One of the members indicated that when they were working for this project other people were laughing and discouraging them but they worked for their children’s inheritance hence they cannot give it to anyone. It was also said that the association will not sublet rooms because the community is full of people with different motives, someone could take over the factory shell without the group knowing that so it is better to keep the rooms empty rooms rather than sublet them.

**Opening a bank account**

The association does not have a formal bank account. It regularly collects and save money for paying the salaries of the security guards.

**Startup kits and broken down machines**

Part of the machinery given to the clusters after training was second-hand and not working. Part of the machines that were working have broken down. Some of the clusters gave their opinion regarding starter kits while others were given without prior consultation.

Some members said that some equipment which they were given was not in good condition and not original hence not durable.

**Community contribution**

The community has mixed feelings regarding the factory. The ordinary people viewed the project as development, something that will change the lives of the people in Hatcliffe. However, the political leaders and other local authorities who were not even interested in the project later started to push their agenda of aiming to have their offices in the factory shell, but through the association and other highly empowered people it was clarified that the place is specifically for business entrepreneurs and not for any other uses.
Electrification of the Center

No initiatives have been taken by the association to bring electricity to the center. They are waiting to be part of the general plan of connecting electricity to the suburb. One of the members indicated that she had approached the local Member of Parliament with the issue and they were waiting for feedback. Their intention was to first meet with the MP for the area before going to Zimbabwe Electricity Company.

Publicity of the Center

A banner has been designed and waiting to be displayed at the factory as a way of making the public aware of the activities.

Legal framework and membership

The association has a constitution which outlines the membership guidelines. Members of the association are those who received training offered by AFSC and its partners. If one of the members dies she/he is replaced by their children. In addition there is a memorandum of association. The association indicated that the project is mainly for themselves, their children, the disabled, and orphans who are willing to join and also those who are in need and have the desire to join. It was also indicated that the certificate of skills training which was given to the members is the major requirement for one to be a member, though there are other people who can be trained by the members they should be from the immediate family of the member, disabled, or in need.

Recommendations

- Charging a deposit to customers who give orders is a sustainable way of guaranteeing continued operation of the businesses.
- The group needs to meet with the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority to get the requirements and costs for bringing electricity to the center. They can then use the information to lobby for support.
- The group may need to revisit its constitution in the light of the conditions they have set which are prohibitive to new members.
- The association should organize exchange visits and learn from the experiences of other groups such as Shanduko Trust groups in Mutare which were said to be running successful ISALs.
- Cluster members should create and maintain good relations with the local people who are the largest group of consumers of their products.

Key learning points

- Sustainability of the project may be threatened by high level of drop outs. Without much capital, most of the groups are unlikely to be able to grow their businesses into viable enterprises.
- The group is too dependent on the development partners and yet some have already pulled out of the community. The Ministry of MSMECD is the only one still looking at the outstanding issues.
- The association has overly restrictive conditions for new members to join and participate in the project.
- All the association members were given basic skills in the areas of their interest.
- The association is not using skills within the community to enhance its capacity.
- Wider membership is important for resource mobilization.
- The commitment of members can only be seen in the way they work toward their own independence from the partnership.
Why are people unconcerned when service providers fail to get services such as sewer reticulation, water provision, street lighting, traffic lights, domestic power, and health-care from those who have been publicly given the responsibility to do so?

Apathy is not a natural condition for human beings. It is natural to expect people to raise their voices, participate, organize, and hold duty bearers accountable when they fail to access water, health, sanitation, education, electricity, jobs, and a clean environment. However, it has been observed that citizens have generally become apathetic on these issues.

The objective of the discussion was to explore causes of citizen apathy on poor service delivery and make suggestions on what could be done to break the paralysis. The process was divided into four main sessions.

**Session 1: Group discussions**

Participants discussed in groups of five people each. The three guiding questions for discussion were:

1. To what extent have citizens engaged with issues of service delivery?
2. If the levels have been low, what are the major reasons?
3. What needs to be done to break through apathy?

**Session 2: Plenary sharing**

The session started with welcome remarks followed by introductions. A brief background on the origins of the Learning Group Meetings and how they have advance to date was given. Everyone was encouraged to freely express their ideas and to learn from others.

**Session 3: Input by resource persons**

Eric Manyonda from ZimRights made an interactive presentation based on ZimRights’ experiences of working on issues of service delivery. After his presentation, participants raised questions and made comments on issues raised in the presentation.

**Session 4: Reflecting on key learning points**

Participants shared what they had learned and shared their opinions about the discussions.

**Discussion Summary**

**Levels of citizen engagement with issues of service delivery and major reasons**

The level at which Zimbabwean citizens engaged with issues of service delivery was perceived as having gone very low as compared to what used to happen in the 1990s. In urban areas the evidence was said to be all around and very visible in dilapidated infrastructure and long lines of people wanting to get birth certificates.

The majority of the citizens were perceived as not engaging due to an intimidating political environment, limited knowledge of civil rights, loss of confidence in the service delivery, and limited public policies that promote civic engagement.

Only few courageous individuals, politicians, and civic groups such as residence associations were said to be engaging local authorities but very little seems to change after meetings, writing letters, or visits to offices.

Politicians were seen as engaging citizens mainly for the purpose of elections and budget consultations but not service delivery.

The political environment was perceived as very hostile and intimidating. It was said to instill fear and a sense of insecurity among the citizens.

Capacity to organize collective action was seen as very limited due to social disintegration. Most of the people who stay in high density suburbs are said to have no time for civic engagement because they are preoccupied with bread and butter issues. When they engage, it is more on pushing more for their rights to survival (economic rights). Those who live in low-density areas were seen as not very concerned with collective action because they can afford to put their own water sources, construct feeder roads, connect generators or solar panels to their houses, go to private clin-
ics, or bribe public official to get passports or other public documents.

The majority of citizens were perceived as not aware that service delivery is a right to which they are entitled. Those who know have lost confidence in the systems.

One of the ironies that this discussion grappled with was: How can we be so educated but disengaged with issues central to our lives?

**Are institutional mechanisms and structures facilitating or hindering citizens from taking an active part in service delivery issues?**

Institutions in terms of formal laws, rules, regulations, and implementation processes were described as critical in providing an environment within which citizens take action to improve their wellbeing. However, the reality is that some of the laws are outdated or are no longer in line with the new Constitution. Others were undermined by party politics, nepotism, corruption, bribery, etc.

The continued existence of laws such as Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (IPAA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) was perceived as denying people the right to information on performance of government, private sector, and civil society organizations which citizens would otherwise use to hold duty holders accountable. The laws also deny citizens the freedom of association and limit their participation in civic issues.

Elected representatives such as councillors were seen as very exclusive and systematically excluding or discriminating those not aligned to their ideology and manipulating the systems for their advantage (e.g., granting jobs, opportunities, and access to information only to their political supporters). They were seen as failing to be proactive (i.e., moving from being representatives of political parties to be civic leaders).

The councillors were said to engage citizens only when it’s in their best interest (e.g. budget consultations). There is now a huge disconnect between residents and the councils because the channels of communication are no longer clearly defined. The practice was seen as creating a culture of inequalities and exclusion, limiting citizen voice in public policy and undermining the ability of most citizens to demand services and public accountability.

Citizen mobilization by resident associations was seen as not sustainable and ineffective as it was based on the availability of donor support and not citizens exercising their social conscience. Their agendas were seen as not community driven and their mandates not very different from those of political parties. They were seen as quasi-political parties, serving as extensions of political parties hence everything is now being politicized. Implementation of laws of country, policies, rules, and regulations is seen as no longer guided by professionalism or ethical values.

Political appointment of public officials was seen as compromising professionalism. Some senior officials were seen as literally undermining service delivery by diverting the resources to areas that are not directly related to service delivery as well as underplaying their responsibility as service providers and duty bearers. Those who are demotivated by the systems now see themselves more as part of the rights holders and not service providers.

Lack of a clear separation of party politics from administration issues is making it very difficult for people to know and demand their rights thereby exacerbating citizen apathy. Excessive control of local authorities by central government is also seen as constraining their capacity for service delivery. An example cited was how central government dictated the cancellation of debts owed to local authorities by residents in 2013. This resulted in the erosion of council resource base and disabled their capacity to deliver services.

**ACTIONS NEEDED TO BREAK THROUGH APATHY**

The group identified actions that could be taken to break apathy and transform service delivery systems. These included constitutional literacy to empower citizens, realignment of current laws to the Constitution, devolution of power, and strengthening of local civic organizations.

**Constitutional literacy campaigns**

Education on constitutional rights, other laws, operating rules and regulations, and client service charters of both public and private institutions is a critical aspect of citizen empowerment and this education should start at the school level.

**Realignment of current laws**

Review of laws such as POSA and AIPPA and many others and realigning them to the new constitution was seen as necessary in creating a legal environment in which citizens can enjoy their rights and freedoms.
Devolution of power

There needs to be a devolution of power from central government to local authorities to enable effective decision-making processes, implementation, and promotion of social accountability.

Strengthening of civic organizations

Local civic associations such as residents’ associations should be strengthened, and the spirit of volunteering should be revived.

Input by the resource person Mr. Eric Manyonda

Mr Manyonda started by noting that ZimRights perceives service delivery from a rights-based approach to civil and political rights. These rights are covered under the Bill of Rights in the new Constitution of Zimbabwe. He highlighted that the new Zimbabwean Constitution has put civil and political rights on a par with social and economic rights (first generation rights). He gave a definition of apathy and then went on to share his experiences on the extent to which citizens engage with issues of service delivery as well as institutional mechanisms that facilitate or hinder civic engagement and what could be done to break citizen apathy. His presentation was made livelier by the pictures which highlighted issues of uncollected garbage, potholes on roads, burst water pipes, etc. Mr. Manyonda’s presentation is outlined below.

Definition of apathy

It’s a feeling of powerlessness and voiceless, lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern over something. It’s white noise or dead air. You feel like a chunk of flavourless tofu. Not happy, not sad, not angry, and certainly not passionate. Apathy is often the precursor to a full-blown depression.

Contemporary definition of apathy is hameno, a Shona word that literally means “although we know and we are concerned, we do not have the power to do anything and as such we don’t really know how things will pan out”.

Extent to which citizens engage with issues of service delivery

Issues of service delivery have been a one-way street marked by citizens complaining and the council not responding. Several engagement meetings have been organized by civic bodies such as the Combined Harare Residents Association, Chitungwiza Residents Trust, and ZimRights among other...
• Joint planning and review meetings; civic education on the functions of council.

• Residents to participate in full council meetings.

• Councils must invest in mobile technology to keep their residents informed at all times.

• Council should make available at each residence a schedule for water, refuse collection providing citizens with a mechanism to report back on whether the schedule has been adhered to.

• Provision of audit reports prior to consultative budget meetings.

• Greater transparency in the allocation of housing units and stands.

• Creation of service delivery platforms between citizens and the councils.

• Adoption of a human rights based approach to service delivery.

Some of the questions asked and comments made during the presentation were:

• To what extent do we expect council to collect garbage in our backyard when they have garbage next to their offices?

• How to change a culture in which some children were born and have grown seeing things like this? It is difficult to convince them that things can really change for the better.

• We are surrounded by hopelessness of systems around us.

• Voting is a social contract entered into by citizens and elected officials. However, the duty bearers are not able to fulfill their side of the social contract.

• Many citizens have sunk into apathy because their efforts to engage in civic matters have not received positive responses from the rights holders.

• There is a section in the Constitution that makes it illegal for local authority to disconnect water without a court order.

• Because citizens have lost trust in the system, their participation and engagement has declined sharply in the last decade.

**Key learning points**

• There is a very close link between apathy, institutional processes, and the political environment.

• The Bill of Rights in the new Constitution provides an institutional basis for citizen engagement on issues of service delivery.

• The process of aligning laws to the Constitution which is currently underway can provide an impetus for enjoyment of rights by citizens.

• Citizen apathy as characterized by low engagement and participation in service delivery issues is a result of a loss of confidence in institutional processes.
Gender justice and social vulnerability

Good legal and policy framework frameworks vs. safety and security of girls and young women at the household and community level.

The UN observes International Women’s Day on the 8th of March every year and it’s an event marked by taking stock of progress that has been achieved toward gender equality and women’s empowerment. For Zimbabwe, is there anything to celebrate in terms of gender justice and social vulnerability focusing on violence against women and girls? What have CSOs and the government done to eliminate violence against women and girls?

The objective of this Learning Group Meeting was to explore the vulnerability of girls and young women in the context of age, culture and religions.

Session 1: Group discussions

Participants engaged in discussions in groups of about five people each. The three guiding questions for discussion were:

- How does violence affect young women and girls at the family and community levels?
- What are the consequences of violence on young women and girls and how does this affect sustainable peace in Zimbabwe?
- How can we make our work for peace contribute more to preventing violence against young women and girls at the household and community levels?

Session 2: Plenary sharing

The session started with welcoming remarks made by Definate Mudzingwa and introductions where each person introduced themselves by name and the organization they represented. Ms. Ronah Mugadza gave a brief background on the origins of the Learning Group Meetings and how they have advanced to date. She encouraged everyone to freely express their ideas and learn from others. She then requested group representatives to give summaries of their responses to the three questions.

Session 3: Input by resource persons

Ms. Tinotenda Hondo (Gender Advisor from Plan International) made an interactive presentation based on her experiences of working on issues of the rights of children. After her presentation, participants raised questions and made comments on issues raised in the presentation.

Session 4: Reflecting on key learning points

Ms. Mugadza asked individuals to share what they had learned and how they felt about the discussions.

Summary of the discussion

Definition, forms, and acts of violence

The group defined violence as an unlawful and unwanted act, abuse, denial, and deprivation perpetrated against girls and young women. Forms of violence noted were gender-based violence (GBV), politically motivated violence, economic, social, sexual, and psychological violence (torture). Acts of violence include perceiving women as a commodity that can be sold at any price, inducing fear, use of degrading language, name calling, use of girls to appease avenging spirits, and giving away young girls as a bonus wife to a man who takes good care of the in-laws.

1. Effects of violence against girls and young women

The responses focused more on the impact of violence on the individual girls and young women. Psychological violence can result in low self-esteem and confidence, being withdrawn, isolation, discrimination, failure to relate to others in an effective way due to a high sense of insecurity and exclusion from decision making in the family and community.

Physical violence can harm or cause death, disabilities and trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (living traumatic lives); it also increases vulnerability.

Early marriages result in girls losing their freedom and limits their opportunities for education as they have to drop out of school. It robs them of their youth as they quickly
take up the roles of being mothers when they are still very young. They often do not enjoy their citizenship.

Suicidal tendencies tend to increase in young women who blame themselves for being raped.

Culture and religion often limit the rights and freedoms of girls and young women. Some of them become wives and mothers when they are still children.

2. Consequences of violence and sustainable peace

The term consequence was used to refer to the social cost of violence against girls and women. The costs identified include:

- Development of a culture of violence: Violence that takes place in home creates a culture of violence in society as victims may later turn into perpetrators. Violence in the home creates a culture of violence in society. Often young women may look peaceful at home when they are not at peace within themselves, they are “bottling up” some issues. This attitude can become intergenerational, passed from one generation to another, and a culture of violence can be developed. Abused women can commit suicide, abortion, or become violent to their children. It becomes intergenerational thereby creating a cycle of violence. Violence cannot create a peaceful community.
- Divorce is often an outcome of violence in families.
- Violence hinders development as resources are channeled toward addressing issues of GBV.
- More women can withdraw from civic process resulting in increased poverty among them.
- People become desensitized to violence while parents become over protective of young women and girls.

3. Prevention measures

- Sensitization workshops to ensure equal representation of women and men.
- Use the media to spread messages of peace; include women in peace-building processes.
- Instill values of equality within the household.
- Use a holistic approach (involve everyone) and find innovative ways to initiate social change.
- Start naming and shaming to end child marriage.
- All law enforcement agencies should be victim friendly and policing bad habits in the family.
- Create platforms for dialogue (e.g. “peace villages”).
- Involve young women and girls in programs that concern them.
- Incorporate human rights in the education system (i.e., school curriculum).
- Better understanding of culture is needed so that we can work from within.
- Work with state actors and develop programs for men.
- Perpetrators and victims need to be taught about the ugly side of violence.

Capacity building for empowerment of girls and young women

- There is a need to invest more in building the competences of girls and young women at tender ages.
- Girls need to learn that they are not inferior and boys are not superior.
- Create platforms for dialogues.
- Meaningful involvement of young women and girls at all stages of project management cycles.

4. Presentation by Tinotenda Hondo – Gender Advisor, Plan International

In her introduction Ms. Hondo started by pointing out that gender justice is a process, outcome, and human rights matter.

- As a process it raises issues of state responsibility, accountability, and commitment to promoting gender equality.
- As an outcome it points to ideal way of fairness in the treatment of sexes—equal opportunities, equal value, equal representation, no gender discrimination or violation of rights on the basis of gender.
- As a human rights matter, it raises issues of gender and child rights violations: girls are subjected to child rape, early marriages, virginity testing, etc., while boys experience physical violence like being bullied into testing their “boyhood.”
She then alluded to international laws that Zimbabwe signed and ratified and some of them have been translated into very well-worded laws and policies. The realignment of existing laws with the Constitution is still work in progress. However, there is still a huge gap between the laws and their translation into safety and protection of girls and young women at and family and community levels. Gender equality is also talked about but not respected at all levels and in all sectors even in development work.

She then talked about gender-based child rights violations. She gave the example of how no one has been prosecuted for facilitating or brokering arrangements for early marriages or taking a bride prize for child bride.

She noted that the first point of violence against girls is the law which states that law enforcement cannot act where there is no complainant. So the enforcement agencies stand and watch.

As the saying goes, if no one complains, it means you are enjoying it.

Despite the prevalence of visible evidence of many cases of forced and early marriages taking place:

- The law “splits hairs” when it comes to sexual harassment of girls. It gives many shades of rape sex with minor, statutory rape, sex with a child, aggravated assault, child prostitution, etc., and one can even present a defense that they did not know the child’s age. The burden is not on the accused to establish age for a fact.

- Administration of customary justice in family courts when dealing with rape often demands compensation in the form of payment for damages or force the rapist if known to marry the girl.

- Religion also plays a big role in causing gender-based child rights violations. It is no secret that some churches promote child marriage, condone domestic violence, and discourage access to basic services. But if the “Man of God” says that’s what God said, who is anybody to question that? So the world watches as horror stories unfold, unable to act because apparently God said it’s OK. Often, even the law is powerless in the face of religion.

Ms. Hondo concluded by noting that when it comes to gender justice being served for Zimbabwe’s girls and young women, there is no Uhuru (freedom) as yet. There are still many obstacles to the process of gender justice which go beyond lack of money, capacity, political will, etc. There are sacred cows, “gender inequality” is seen as untouchable and unchangeable and much protected by many men and women alike. So we tip-toe around the issues and speak apologetically of what needs to change.

The truth, according to Ms. Hondo is that gender justice comes from a social transformation in our values, our attitudes and practices. We need to value the lives of girls and young women and envision the people they could be if they remained in school and are encouraged and supported to pursue their aspirations. (Note: The full text of Mrs. Hondo's presentation can be found in the Appendix.)

In some areas in Zimbabwe if a man impresses his in-laws in paying lobola (bride price) and is able to materially provide for them, he can be given a bonus wife, or a second wife, to replace a barren wife. In some cases, a girl can be given as a way of cleaning the avenging spirits for was an act committed by the father or the brother, or early marriages as church practices especially for white garment churches (apostolic sect). Some of these cases are attached to biblical verses to make them appear legitimate and when the bible is attached to a practice, people do not usually question it.

In African society a girl’s virginity is more valued than career development. If a young girl loses her virginity for whatever reason, she faces discrimination, stigma, and even further psychological violence, which can result in the girl dropping out of school, lacking confidence, low self-esteem, etc. These are ingredients to the disempowerment of women. If a man sexually abuses a girl, in most families they force that child into a marriage with a “rapist” who is again a perpetrator of violence and forget about the future of that girl. Most marriages in Zimbabwe started in that way and women in those marriages are facing violence on daily basis but no one is taking any action. Where are our good laws that protect women against such abuse?

Plenary questions and answers

How can we challenge our cultural beliefs about life? How do we really change the mind-set?

Response: Many changes need to work at the same time on the task. The state has institutions, non-state actors, groups, families all can contribute to positive change.
Comments and discussion

- It is sad that a lot of marriages start from rights violation (rape).
- Gender inequality is at the roots of the violence against girls and young women.
- Society sets different standards and moral values for female and male members of society and this is a foundation disaster. A girl’s value diminishes when she is not a virgin.
- Culture and religion still tolerate and promote domestic violence and child marriages (e.g., Use of girls to appease avenging spirits, giving a son in law bonus wives because of the barrenness of sister or aunt or because of taking care of the in laws).
- People take moral high ground with stereotypes such as making sexist comments when there is violence against young women and girls.
- Zimbabwe has many laws and policies that protect women and girls, but the gap is on implementation. The government claims that they do not have resources while NGOs claim that the environment is not friendly to implement projects of women empowerment, gender and peace. Many actors shy away from facing the real problem of violence against young women and girls in Zimbabwe.
- In African society, the issue of gender equality was viewed as a zero sum game by men. The issue of having equal opportunities with women to them is like their powers are being taken away from them and in that way they resist.
- Men control women and view them as their assets.
- Maintaining their position, men use names which women feel obliged to behave according to such names as “mother.”
- Language is used as a tool to undress, undermine, and control women.
- If everyone does their part – there will be change. The family is a critical starting point.
- The law is not framed in a way that address a network of socially institutionalised oppression in cultural and religious which makes it difficult to have a complainant.
- The formal institutions are subverted by technicalities, customs and the so-called “Man of God”

Recommendations

- More education on laws and policies so that they can even be used at household level, in churches and at community level.
- Advocate for incorporation of human rights and gender component into the education curriculum.
- Advocate implementation of the policy, and involvement of all stakeholders in the implementation of such programs.
- Tabling gender equality issues to women and interrogate how they are going to discuss it and raise questions such as do they have the confidence, do they believe it, are they willing to do something to change the situation.

Key lessons learned

- Gender equality is everyone’s responsibility.
- Women should value themselves.
- It is the responsibility of government, NGOs, and FBOs to bring social transformation and stop violence.
- The concept of gender has been understood but more should be done at implementation stage for social transformation.
- Each and every one can be a catalyst of change. Stand up and be counted.
- Family needs to transform from playing the perpetrator role to preventing violence against young women and girls.
- The topic appealed to people at a personal level.
Mapping donor priority areas for community-based peace building in Zimbabwe

In the context of shifting national and international donor priorities, raising financial support for peacebuilding and conflict transformation work in Zimbabwe is becoming a real and imposing challenge for many small and upcom ing peace and development organizations. Many of these organizations have trouble navigating and diversifying in the complex field of international assistance and funding. It is critical for the organizations to try to diversify their funding sources.

The March 2015 Learning Group Meeting focused on “Mapping donor priority areas for community-based peace building in Zimbabwe.” The aim was to support community-based organizations with information that could assist them in positively engaging with the fast changing priorities of the donor community. The topic was selected against the backdrop of challenges being experienced by small and upcoming organizations in raising financial support for development in the context of diminishing national and international financial coffers.

Representatives from the Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation (CCMT) and National Association of Youth Organisations (NAYO) shared lessons drawn from their experiences with individual specific donors during the past five years. Their presentations sought to answer the following guiding questions:

- Who has been funding your organization for the past 3–5 years? What particular area of peace building was the funder interested in?
- What have been the major positive and negative shifts in the donor’s funding process or mode of operation?
- What does your organization see as the future priorities of your funding partners?

Individuals also used the analysis guideline to explore lessons from their own experiences with funders. Shared information was then used to map what is seen as donor priority areas for community-based peace building in Zimbabwe. Below is a summary of the outcomes of the meeting.

Some of the donors that have been funding peace and development work in Zimbabwe in the past 3–5 years included:
- World Fund for Development (WFD)
- European Union (EU)
- Germany Development Services (GIZ and DED)
- KNH
- OXFAM – NOVIB
- British Embassy
- Action Aid
- Diakonia
- Finnish Embassy
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Areas of peace building supported by the above donors in the last 3 to 5 years

The donors mentioned above supported peace building work in areas of governance, conflict transformation training, youth rehabilitation, research, documentation and publication, human rights, and legal representation.

Governance: The funders were particularly interested in issues of citizen participation, service delivery and formation of community-based associations. They worked more with partners that implemented localized activities.

Donors are also interested in projects that promote dialogue between citizens and policy makers.

Conflict transformation: Because of the increased violence against women and girls in Zimbabwe over the past three years, there is huge donor interest in interventions that address the protection of women and their participation in peace building as stated in UNSCR1325 on women and peace building.

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2 UNSCR 1325 stands for United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
Youth rehabilitation: Funds are available for organizations and groups that focus on rehabilitation of young people because of the high rates of unemployment amongst youth. The youth are seen as constituting a bigger percentage of people who are actively involved in violent activities. The project goal is to help the youth to move from being perpetrators of violence to advocates of peace through harnessing, transforming and channeling their energy into activities that promote peace, enhance entrepreneurship skills, and create employment opportunities.

Research, documentation, and publication: Most donors support baseline surveys, mapping exercises, and research studies that provide information on what they perceive to be the true picture on the ground. This information is critical for fundraising and lobbying for policy change or implementation.

Human rights and legal representation issues: In the context of perceived human rights violations, some donors are interested in projects that use rights-based approaches toward peace building. They fund projects that promote legal representation, awareness, and dissemination of information on government laws, policies, and human security.

National healing and reconciliation: Most funds for national healing and reconciliation are channeled through the Organ for National Healing Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI).

Legal representation toward peace building: There is a significant demand for organizations that work toward legal awareness in peace building and enhance partnerships with legal institutions which provide legal programming.

Enhancing local capacity: Some donors provide international personnel to local implementing organizations as part of program technical support. This is seen as a positive move since local organizations get the opportunity to tap into the international expertise in the field of peace building. The donors offer a flexible financial reporting system.

Major shifts in their funding process or mode of operation

The observations of the group were that shifts in the funding process and mode of operation took place after the 2013 elections. Key issues highlighted include:

- The agenda shifted from peace building to economic development.
- More donors shifted their support from civil society to engagement with the government where they identify with government policies such as the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social and Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET). They now prefer to work with organizations whose work is aligned to the government priorities. They support projects that are aligned to government’s areas of priorities such as constitution governance, Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social and Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) and institutional capacity building, public engagement, service delivery, and public dialogues.
- More donors shifted from coalitions to community-based organizations. They are now interested in community development where they support activities that focus on building the capacity of key people particularly local leaders who have direct influence in the transformation of policies and practices (key people approach). They want to support community-based organizations such as associations and church structures.
- Other donors shifted to a climate change agenda.
- There is now a shift from political advocacy to economic and social advocacy for national reconstruction and development.
- Donors now require clear financial accountability with more focus on the actual project impact against the expenditure. This includes clear financial accountability systems and transparency on finance policies and procedures for partners.

Impact of the shift on CBOs

The changes negatively impacted on community based organizations that previously focused on political violence, women and girl’s violence, sexual abuse, and trauma as they found themselves without funding and irrelevant within the context of new donor priorities. Currently some donors no longer opt for proposal writing expertise but they now head hunt for implementing partners depending on the work being done on the ground.

Indications of future priorities of funding partners

Observations of the group were that donors are now more careful on who they fund. Indications are that in the future
they are likely to be interested in supporting the following areas of work:

- Community development, livelihoods and activity-based events such as mobilizing communities for development and reconstruction.

- Community-based capacity building to enable local people to work together toward development at local levels instead of waiting for ideas that are externally formulated.

- Integration and mainstreaming of peace building into human rights, development, and climate change.

- Engagement and working in collaboration with government and public institutions on issues around service delivery, post-2015 development agenda, peace, gender, and youth.

- Integration of economic development with human rights and constitutional engagement.

- Women and youth work.

- Pulling resources together in one project or to support once off activities on peace building.

**Recommendations**

- Since resourcing and funding is becoming limited, organizations would benefit more if they use collaborative approaches. However, it was noted that collaboration is negatively affected by unequal power relations among partners.

- Facilitate the formation of community-based structures such as movements and co-operations which take the lead in lobby and advocacy initiatives so as to ensure the implementation of policies which promote peace and social justice, as well as sustainability.

- Widen areas of focus to match donor priorities: peace building includes almost all aspects of life. Also include new areas that have an impact on peace building (e.g., science and technology, food security, livelihoods, etc).

- Reduce donor dependency and increase project sustainability by partnering with private companies who are willing to support community development work as part of their corporate social responsibility rather than depending only on external donor funding. Some organizations have already started to engage private companies like Irvin's, Capri, Econet, and Delta Cooperative in supporting their community-based activities.

**Key lessons learned**

- Their funds come with attached conditions and interests that may not suit the operating environment.

- They dictate what is implemented, such as what tools should be used in the field, the implementation procedures, etc.

- They are not sensitive to the local context (especially the political environment).

- Most of the projects they support are not sustainable because the funding is either too small or the funding period is too short.
Development and peace nexus

Development causes conflicts when it benefits some while hurting others and promotes sustainable peace when it addresses issues of justice and equality. Some people believe that there is a very close link between peace and development while others see the two as distinct stages of a phased process, undertaken separately and under different conditions.

The focus of the April 2015 Learning Group Meeting was on sharing perceptions on the link between peace and development. The discussion was guided by the following questions:

1. From your experiences, how has development caused or worsened conflict or promoted peace and justice in Zimbabwe?
2. What is the link between the two processes?
3. In what ways can our development effort promote a just and stable peace in Zimbabwe?

The presenter, who asked not to be identified for this report, introduced the discussion by highlighting development and peace as two major issues in politics and economics. She also noted considerable disagreement as to the nature of the relationship between them. She then presented three schools of thought that have emerged:

1. Development encourages peace. People in better economic condition are less likely to initiate violent conflict both because they are more content and because they have more to lose from the physical danger and economic disruption that violent conflict brings.
2. Development discourages peace, either because the continued development of some depends on their forceful suppression or control of others or because development increases the capacity to build and mobilize military power.
3. Development and peace have no significant connection to each other.

The presenter pointed out that she subscribes to the notion that peace and development are linked. She then went on to define the terms and gave examples on how development caused or worsened conflict or promoted peace and justice in Zimbabwe, the link between the two concepts, and what needs to be done to ensure that development promotes a just and stable peace in Zimbabwe. (Note: The full text of the presentation is available in the Appendix.)

The interactive presentation was followed by discussions which were characterized by sharing perceptions and experiences, raising critical questions, comments, and suggestions on some of the ways in which development could promote just and stable peace in Zimbabwe. Points 1 – 4 below summarize the ideas that came from the discussion.

1. How development promoted peace and justice in Zimbabwe
   - Reference was made to the development that took place the period 1980 - 1995 in Zimbabwe. Major social and economic improvements were recorded in health, education, rural development, economic growth, and acknowledgement of equal rights for women and children. Development policies adopted during these years were driven by values of peace and justice.
   - The land resettlement policy implemented under “willing buyer and willing seller” resulted in calm and peaceful processes.

2. How development caused or worsened conflicts in Zimbabwe
   The way development has been implemented and managed resulted in strained relations, and reversed social, economic, and political stability gained at independence. The group cited many development initiatives that have been seen as sound economically and politically but disrupting people’s lives and livelihoods, failing to benefit ordinary people and marginalizing the interests of women and youth. Some of the examples cited during the discussions were:
   - Difference between two major political parties ZANU PF and ZAPU in the early 1980s worsened tribal dif-
ferences between people in the northern and southern regions of the country resulting in use of military force.

- Implementation of big construction projects such as Chiyadzwa diamond mining field, Tokwe Mukosi dams, and Chisumbanje Green Fuel often resulted in forced relocation of people who had lived in the area for decades, disruption of socio-cultural lives of the community, disintegration of family ties, and destruction of shrines, graves, and cultural values of the local people. Women become very vulnerable to poverty as they lose their main sources of livelihood such as gardens which sustain them.

- Economic empowerment policies such as the "fast track" land reform program of 2000 and the Indigenous Economic Empowerment program, though perceived as necessary in the context of unequal resource ownership patterns and poverty, caused huge decline in food production in the country thereby threatening political and economic stability and discouraged potential economic investors.

- The cleanup campaign dubbed Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Restore Order), aimed at addressing health and safety concerns in urban areas, resulted in the destruction of livelihoods and thousands of people were left homeless.

- Discrepancy in acquisition of wealth. Imbalance in access, control, and ownership of resources are sources of conflict.

- Development is a process of societal change and is therefore potentially conflictual by nature. In situations of fragility in which there is a limited capacity for managing change and resolving differences peacefully, development is a particularly challenging process that can actually contribute to violent conflict.

- Development involves a process of change which is often difficult to accept and manage. Example of a conflict in Mberengwa over a dam construction (to provide water for the growth point and irrigation) was cited where CCMT facilitated a dialogue and negotiation process and community involvement led to peaceful resolution.

- Neoliberal globalization continues to increase economic crisis and the widening global and local inequalities. There is mass dissatisfaction by the poor and sporadic episodes of unrest and incidences of vandalism by angry residents complaining about inaccessible and poor service delivery at the local government level as a result of privatization of such services – the case of South Africa and Nigeria.

3. The links between the two processes

- Much of what is traditionally seen as “development work” is also peace-building work (e.g., improvements in social and economic wellbeing and the need to strengthen resilience, reduce vulnerability of people, and build capacities of communities to manage change and resolve differences).

- The connection between development and peace are well explained in "Development is the new name for peace" extracts from Pope Paul's encyclical “Populorum Progression” on the development of people. The focus is on social, economic, and political development that unlock human capabilities and reducing vulnerability.

- Development cannot take place without peace and peace cannot be sustained if there is no development. Conflicts usually start when development is not people centered.

- The group described peace as the first process and condition for successful development. Investors do not like to come into a country that is threatened by conflict. Sustainable peace thrives where there is development. People need some form of livelihood before they start to think of bigger things.

- The three-legged approach to development used by missionaries focused on agriculture, health, and education (social services) and this created peace in communities.

- Violence and unresolved conflicts often disrupt and set back development initiatives.

4. Ways in which development efforts can promote just and stable peace in Zimbabwe

The discussion centered on re-thinking how to make development an instrument of peace. The group discussed and came out with a lot or practical ways to make development an instrument of peace. Below are some of the points noted from the discussions:

1. Re-thinking of development as both a value and a goal.

- Some of the questions raised were in relation to values (e.g., Does development mean to be westernized or modernized? In what ways does development (e.g., Chinese intervention) enhance or destroy local culture?
Politicians and development workers are commonly known to impose programs to communities. This shows that there is a huge conflict between what is done in the name of development and what people really want. There is no contextualization of development in communities.

- Questions were also raised on the extent to which development policies are sensitive to issues of conflict and peace. The group suggested that there is a need to facilitate a direct link between policies, peace, and development.
- Development is a value because we all agree it is a good thing. It is a goal because we need to work toward it through trial and error.

ii. Make development an instrument for peace

- Promote conflict sensitive development policies strategies and practices that take into account the link between development and peace. There is need for organizations to work closely with the Human Rights and the Peace and Reconciliation Commissions in establishing criteria for assessing the extent to which development policies can disturb or promote peace. From constitutional consultation, the issues of commissions was proposed and the commissions need a lot of strengthening for them to be effective. The commissions need support and space to operate and make peace as one of the preconditions for development by promoting both intra-state and interstate dialogue. Relevant decision makers need to be brought together to agree on common and coherent objectives for the country.
- Implement activities that address issues of sustainability – There is need to leave a legacy for the future, engage in development activities that sustain today and create peace for the next generation, promote good management of resources and involve people in decision making, and change perceptions and attitudes. Leaders should not be feared but respected. We must work on increasing accountability; the focus needs to be on unlocking the potential of people in the community and home grown strategies.

Include issues of social justice into development policies

- Broaden the traditional development agenda to take account of issues such as inclusion, security, justice, and peace.
- Substantive freedom and peace means that all stakeholders (the community, civil society, government departments, and markets (private sector) should co-operate.
- Organize regular dialogues on peace building and development to exchange best practices, and discuss the challenges and opportunities related to linking the two.
- Fairness and inclusion are critical to both development and peace building processes and outcomes. Once some people feel they have been sidelined, they can put negative energies that seek to destroy the peace building or development initiatives.
- It is important to understand both the context and how the development interacts with other prevailing societal dynamics.
- Development of interventions needs to go beyond simply respecting the basic principle of “do no harm” and make a positive contribution to sustainable peace.
- Work at multiple levels, using participatory, consultative methods and for both peace and development to be all-inclusive.
- Be holistic and focus on practical human development, addressing the needs of communities in addition to the interests. If development hurts people, they are likely to develop mistrust on any other intervention.
- There is a need to talk about development in practical terms and meeting people at their point of need before we talk of the complicated indexes like GDP and national fiscus contribution.

Recommendation

The model of Learning Groups need to be taken down to the communities. An example was given of Catholics community leaders’ forums where community leaders meet regularly to dialogue on issues affecting local communities.

Key learning points

Participants were asked to say in a few words what they had learned from the discussion and the following was noted:

Development has different dimensions; there is need for development to meet fundamental human needs; unlocking people’s potential makes people stand on their own needs and capacities; when it comes to development, it is good to go back to the grassroots; communities need to be key play-
ers in development; resource equilibrium reduces conflict; conflict-sensitive development creates peace; development is not a privilege, it's a right; inclusion is needed in development; conflict sensitive initiative – relate to what is happening; development –viz-a-vis issue of national interest – who defines them; taking the learning groups to the community is very important; development is very complicated, one can get a migraine headache from thinking about it; accountability issues are critical in development; the need to engage Human Rights Commission at a practical level is important; development is instrumental in bringing sustainable peace.
The Constitution of Zimbabwe provides for the establishment of an independent National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) responsible for addressing post-conflict justice, healing, and reconciliation and ensuring that lasting peace is achieved in Zimbabwe (Chapter 12, Section 152 of the Zimbabwean Constitution). Parliament is in the process of selecting nine suitable candidates for the job and putting in place an operational framework that clarifies the mandate of the commission.

The discussion focused on exploring:

1. The extent to which civil society organizations working in the field of peace building are aware of the selection processes underway and the mandate of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission, and how they have engaged with the process so far.

2. The issues that civil society see as critical in establishing an independent and neutral commission.

3. What they view as the role of civil society organizations in the work of the NPRC.

Summary of the discussion and presentations

1. Level of civil society organization awareness and engagement with the process for the establishment of a National Peace and Reconciliation Commission.
   - A number of civil society organizations were said to be aware of and engaged with the process. Some were involved in the nomination of the candidates while others observed the interviews as they were conducted by Parliament. Most of those among the 16 listed candidates are from civil society.
   - Although civil society have organized consultations and multi-actor dialogue meetings to disseminate information on the NPRC and to engage government and the community, the ideas of the NPRC are still at the national level and not yet filtered to the community because, due to limited resources, the engagement often did not go deep.

2. Issues perceived as critical in establishing an independent and neutral peace and reconciliation commission.
   - There is a need for clarity on the composition, time of establishment, and who will fund the work of the commission.
   - Funding not to be solely by government or donor agencies. There is a need for minimum benchmarks so as to ensure objectivity and accountability of the commission.
   - Representation of interest groups such as political parties would increase acceptability of the commission.
   - There is a need to select commissioners who are apolitical.
   - Functional government institutions are needed with depoliticized state security, rule of law, independent judiciary, etc.
   - Alignment of all laws to the Constitution is crucial.
   - Devolution of government – currently we have a government that does not seem to want to relinquish power to lower levels.
   - Clear operational modalities are needed to guide the work of the commission to independence and neutrality.

The role of civil society in the work of the NPRC

Civil society has conducted a lot of research on peace and reconciliation and has provided information drawn from their field experiences.
Presentation by Gift Mwonzora (a Third-Year Ph.D. candidate at Rhodes University in South Africa)

Mr. Mwonzora started his presentation by welcoming what he termed “the positive step” of having a constitutionally guaranteed National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC). He was however skeptical as to whether this was going to bring sustainable peace in the country. He then outlined what he saw as challenges in building a functional and effective NPRC (i.e., an institution that can live up the expectations of the Zimbabwean people).

Key points noted by Mr. Mwonzora were that the success of an effective NPRC is dependent on both endogenous (internal) and exogenous (outside) factors. These include political will and commitment from the politicians who will wield political power. The success, or lack thereof, of the Commission is also dependent on the critical role that the CSOs and NGOs will play.

Furthermore, the role of INGOs, human rights, and multi-lateral institutions and donor agencies will also determine the success or lack thereof of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission.

He then highlighted the issues that he perceived as critical in establishing an independent and neutral NPRC and the role the civil society should play in the process. Key points highlighted under the two areas are summarised below.

Issues that are seen as critical in establishing an independent and neutral commission

- Breaking the continuation of the language of violence, hate, and intolerance in Zimbabwe’s political discourse.
- Address the polarization that characterizes the environment and widen the scope and mandate of NPRC.

The role of civil society organizations in the work of the NPRC

- Finding each other between the state, civil society, and political parties. A serious dialogue and conversation around the issue of National Reconciliation was needed to promote collaboration rather than competition.
- Broadening of state–civil society engagement so that it would articulate flaws of the reconciliation process and also act as resources that can give policy directions and interventions.
- Stimulate debates at the micro and macro level on the issues around transitional justice and reconciliation (especially issues of historical dialogue and sequencing). How far back should we go in addressing historical hurts? Should we freeze some moments in history? Communities need to be mobilized to exercise their right to justice, redress, and the right to speak over their past human rights abuses.
- Coming up with evidence-based research on what works, how, why, and what does not work (as opposed to seeing the NPRC as a magic bullet) to Zimbabwe’s transitional justice challenges.
- Have unified voice rather than fighting to protect particular turfs as was the scenario during the COPAC era.
- Mobilize and engage with parliamentarians and push for the government to provide adequate funding to the NPRC processes.
- The success of CSOs’ efforts are also dependent on how the civil society organizations mobilize the spaces of participation. This also depends on how the state will push for judicial reforms or institutional reforms (functional judiciary system) and engage in counselling and rehabilitation of victims.

Presentation by ONHRI Director Mrs. Tinarwo

Mrs. Tinarwo started by explaining the origins of ONHRI in comparison to that of JOMIC, the work that it has been doing, and then moved to the establishment of the National Peace and Reconciliation (NPRC).
Establishment of ONHRI and JOMIC

Both were established under the GPA after the 2008 elections which resulted in no outright winner. After negotiating and signing of the GPA in 2009, the three major political parties agreed to establish an institutional framework for managing the violence that was taking place and another one for looking into issues of sustainable peace.

- The Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) was established and implemented by the three parties themselves as a short-term measure to deal with issues of political violence that was rampant among members of their parties. JOMIC was dissolved in October 2013 after the harmonized elections which ZANU-PF won with majority vote.

The three parties to the GPA then tasked the government to establish the Organ for National Healing Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) to look into modalities of establishing a peace infrastructure to look into issues of pre and post-independence violence. ONHRI was then established as a government department within the President’s office. It was headed by three ministers representing the three political parties to the Global Political Agreement (GPA). It was not given the mandate to create peace and this was the major reason why most of the officers appointed to work in the department are administrators and not peace practitioners. ONHRI has not yet been dissolved. Perhaps it will be dissolved when the commission appoints its own secretariat.

The work that ONHRI has done since its establishment in 2009

Mrs. Tinarwo noted some of the notable activities that ONHRI has been implementing, including:

- Holding consultation meetings with key stakeholders (religious and traditional leaders, faith- based organizations, and civil society organizations, women and youth movements) on the best ways of establishing a peace infrastructure in Zimbabwe (i.e., The National Policy Framework on Peace and Reconciliation).

- Conducting peace and reconciliation meetings to educate the public on ONHRI’s role and mandate and sensitize media houses on the need for conflict-sensitive reporting.

- Conflict capacity building workshops were organized by peace practitioners from state and non-state to train communities on conflict prevention, management, resolution and transformation (CPMRT)

- Supporting civil society organizations to run educational programs for state and non-state actors. A vibrant community of peace-building practitioners has been established and is implementing different peace programs with different target groups and communities.

- Working with artists in the production of a peace video called “Two Villages Apart.”

- Drawing from the pool of trained trainers to build capacities of government ministries such as Education, Youth, Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development, Labour, Small to Medium Enterprises, etc.

- Production of a National Peace and Reconciliation framework which, after the adoption of a new Constitution, was then used to draft a bill for the establishment of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission.

- Have lobbied for a gender equality clause in Article 12 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe which outlines the composition of the NPRC.

- Establishment of a strong relationship with civil society organization. In the context of polarization, civil society organizations realized that there is more mileage in working with a government department than trying to go it alone. Civil society organizations have found ONHRI to be a platform they can use for communicating and influencing government policy on issues of peace because the department is headed by a Vice President who sits on the Cabinet.

- Commission a research project taking place at Midlands State University (MSU) led by Professor Bhebhe. Its work is to document the history of conflict in Zimbabwe and identify traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

- Worked on Election Code of Conduct for political parties in Zimbabwe.

- Coordinated annual commemorations of the International Day of Peace.
Setting up of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC)

ONHRI’s roles has been laying the groundwork for the establishment of a peace infrastructure which is now known as the NPRC.

• Provisions for establishment of a NPRC are clearly outlined in Chapter 12 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, Amendment (No 20), Act 2013.

• The NPRC has a life span of 10 years “after effective date” which was interpreted as its establishment. It will be composed of nine people (four women and four men) plus a chair who is supposed to be a legal person appointed on recommendations from the Judiciary Service Commission and the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders.

• All members of the NPRC must be chosen for their integrity, and their knowledge, understanding of, and experience in mediation, conciliation, conflict prevention and management, post-conflict reconciliation or peace building (Section 4 of Article 251 of the Constitution).

• An advert for nominations of candidate to serve in the NPRC as commissions was made in May 2014. The initial list of nominations that came out had 33 candidates who were interviewed and 16 short listed for selection by the President.

• The Draft Bill on Peace is now moving between the drafters, Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs relevant Parliament Portfolio committees.

• ONHRI would prefer a situation where the Act on peace is in place before the appointment of commissioners. The time it will take before it goes for first, second, and third reading in both upper and lower houses of Parliament is dependent on government processes and priorities.

• Once the NPRC is established, it will appoint its own secretariat and put structures right up to the village level. This is influenced by the belief that conflict has to be resolved in the environment where it happened.

• NPRC’s mandate is to look into softer part of both pre and post-independence issues of violence and ensure post conflict justice, healing and reconciliation.

“Justice delayed is justice denied.”

Discussion after the two presentations

Issues of concern raised by the group after the presentations by resource persons related to timing (time is running out in relation to the 10 years prescribed for the existence of NPRC), why the chairperson should be a legal person, overlapping or roles with other commissions, funding and judiciary powers of the NPRC.

Following is a summary of the responses:

• ONHRI consulted the government legal department on the 10 year period of existence for NPRC, and the understanding was that the country has not lost any year, since the Constitution says “10 years after and not on effect.” This automatically means that the NPRC’s term will commence on the day when it is commissioned by the President.

• The hope is that government will raise the needed funds to enable the NPRC to effectively implement its mandate.

• There are bound to be areas of overlap with other institutions of democracy and these will be dealt with as the work starts.

• Lawyers who dominated the composition of COPAC influenced the issue of having a legal person as chair of NPRC. ONHRI preferred a people-managed process which focuses on restoring relations.

• The need to sensitize state security on NPRC and envisaged process and structures.

The general consensus by the group was that the session should be repeated to a bigger group of people from different backgrounds and ONHRI be invited again to share more information. The information is important in increasing public confidence in NPRC processes.

Key learning points

• Right now, the process is at a stage where CSOs may not be able to influence change. They can try to work on influencing upcoming activities.

• Given the level of polarization in the country, it is difficult to get independent, neutral, and apolitical people.
• The background of commissioners is a very critical matter to consider. They need to be women and men of integrity.

• The issue of perceptions vs. reality is also important. Where do we start to address issues of healing, reconciliation, and justice? Currently the ruling party is seen as more important than government and this brings into question whether healing, reconciliation will ever be achieved.

• The NPRC will not have judiciary powers.

• NPRC’s life span will start on the day when it is commissioned by the President.
Gender justice and social vulnerability

An exploration of vulnerability of girls and young women in the context of age culture and religions

PAPER PRESENTED BY TINOTENDA HONDO (GENDER ADVISOR, PLAN INTERNATIONAL)

Gender justice is to me both a process and an outcome. As a process it’s the accountability of states to their responsibility and commitments made to promote gender equality. As an outcome gender justice is Utopia, it’s the promised land of fairness in society’s treatment of the sexes. Equal opportunities, equal value, equal representation, no gender discrimination or violation of rights on the basis of gender.

Gender equality is a human rights issue. I want to introduce the concept of “gender-based child rights violations” and ask you to hold on to it for a while. At its simplest the definition is that gender-based child rights violations are when children’s rights are violated because of their gender. The trends are clear to see. The majority of the victims of sexual crimes are girls: rape, child marriage, virginity testing, etc. The majority of the victims of physical violence are boys often as a result of them being bullied into doing “boyhood” as prescribed by society. It’s clear girls are sexually violated because they are girls and boys are beaten because they are boys and meant to be tough, etc.

Zimbabwe like many other states the world over has signed, ratified, and domesticated many conventions, protocols, and charters. We have many laws intended to protect citizens. We have in place systems for the implementation of these laws. Very good initiatives if I may say. The question is: are the numerous beautifully worded laws and policies preventing violence against girls and young women?

In my talk I will make reference to laws as they currently are – bearing in mind that realignment of these laws with the Constitution is still a work in progress and we cannot talk about what we do not know.

. Zimbabweans are familiar with talk of the high prevalence of child marriage, rape, harmful traditional practices, street harassment, and child prostitution. These are just some of the gender-based rights violations facing girls and young women in our country today. More importantly the question to ask is; “Are laws and policies translating into safety and protection of girls and young women at the household and family level”?

If an unmarried girl falls pregnant for whatever reason common practice is to quickly ask her who the father is and send her there. Said perpetrator is strongly encouraged, or let me call it forced, to marry her and they live “happily” ever after. It rarely matters how old the girl is, families just will not stay with a pregnant and therefore non-virgin daughter. The man responsible literally has to pay – bride price and damages.

Even where a girl comes home “late,” however “late” is defined in that household, she is told to “go back where you were.” Once your parents say that you know what they mean and you comply even if you hadn’t been intimately involved with said man.

This is one of the biggest drivers of child marriage in Zimbabwe, an ancient value system that insists on a girl or woman being a virgin upon marriage and “sexually pure.” Extra bride price is paid for her virginity, in the form of a cow given to her mother for instructing her well. Damages are paid for loss of the hymen before marriage – and the impregnated girl is forced into marriage to avoid the embarrassment of a fatherless child in the community. Apparently a girl’s value diminishes when she is no longer a virgin and no man will want to marry her.

All that I speak of here is widely accepted and goes unquestioned, although the Domestic Violence Act has for years now stated that child marriage is illegal. No parent has been prosecuted for facilitating such a marriage, no Munyai (go between) for brokering such an arrangement, no men for taking a child bride. Understandably law enforcement cannot act where there is no complainant. As the saying goes, if you do not complain it’s assumed you are enjoying it.

Let’s take a look at how the law splits hairs when it comes to rape. Fifty shades of rape, someone calls it defilement, having sex with a minor, statutory rape, to name a few. All these refer to instances where people have sex with children.

The basic principle should be that children do not have the capacity to consent to sex and whenever sexual intercourse happens which involves a child, that’s rape. Last year 1,500
women and children were raped around the country in just
the first three months, by the end of the year 780 children
had been raped. An overwhelming majority of those were
girls. Fifteen women and girls are raped per day they say.
The law as it stands splits these cases neatly into defilement,
aggravated assault, statutory rape, having sex with a minor
and one can even present a defence that they did not know
the child’s age. The burden is not on the accused to estab-
lish age for a fact. Administration of customary justice in
family courts when dealing with rape often demands comp-
ensation – damages – or force the rapist if known to marry
the girl.

Religion also plays a big role in causing gender-based child
rights violations. We are all familiar with the story of Adam
and Eve. “And he shall rule over you” – perhaps one of the
most known and quoted verses by both men and women
in defense of gender relations between them, even where
rights and dignity are violated.

It’s no secret that some churches promote child marriage,
condone domestic violence, discourage access to basic ser-
vices but if the Man of God says that’s what God said, who
is anybody to question that? So the world watches as horror
stories unfold, unable to act because apparently God said
it’s OK. Even the law is powerless in the face of religion
often times.

Looking at harmful cultural practices, we know for a fact
that they are not dead to our people. Culture in itself is not
bad. Some practices, however, are harmful and need to be
changed or stopped. For instance the giving of replacement
wives when a woman dies, the giving of bonus wives to a
son-in-law who look after us well, the giving of a girl to bear
children for a barren sister, the giving of a girl to appease
avenging spirits, etc.

The giving of replacement and bonus wives derives from the
idea that when a man has paid for a wife there are expect-
ed services and benefits that accrue to him which if unmet
make him deserving of a replacement or refund.

Take the stripping of the young woman late last year for
allegedly wearing a mini skirt. Thanks to social media
and new technology the video of this young women being
stripped of her clothes and dignity went viral and we had
tongues wagging and thumbs typing the whole of Zimba-
wae. Most took the moral high ground and unashamedly
aired the numerous gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes
which drive sexual violence against women.

In a recent independent study, over 50 percent of men inter-
viewed reported seeing nothing wrong with a man having
sex with a girl under 18 years of age. Two in every 10 men
reported having used the services of sex workers in the last
year, of those over 40 percent reported having had sex with
a girl they suspected was underage. Evidence indicates that
child prostitutes are as young as 12 years old, maybe younger.

The elephant in the room here is gender inequality. Gender
inequality is the root cause of many of the rights violations
I have spoken of. It is gender inequality that sets different
standards for men and women’s sexuality and demands vir-
ginity of one but not the other. It is gender inequality that
sets moral standards which make it OK to strip and harass
young women for what they were yet sees the harassment in
itself as justified because of the assumption that revealing
cloths say something about ones morals.

The law has never protected women on the street, police are
known to round women up for “soliciting.” Women have
long marched and spoken out about this; it’s only now that
we see men who harass women on the streets taken to task.
As we speak women and girls around the country hold their
breaths in the hope the current case of the touts will set a
precedent.

We are gathered here to explore whether gender justice
is being served for Zimbabwe’s girls and young women. I
would say it is not yet Uhuru.

We have the laws and policies, the structures, the person-
nel, but the process of gender justice is marred with many
obstacles. We could talk all day about the lack of money,
capacity, political will, you name it, but the root cause is
that the issues of gender inequality which threaten the safe-
ty and protection of our young ones are seen as untouchable
and unchangeable by many. These are sacred cows, much
protected by many men and woman alike. So we tip toe
around the issues and speak apologetically of what needs
to change.

The truth is that gender justice outcomes come from a social
transformation in how we value women and girls, a chang-
ing of the thinking that cause us to give our daughters to
criminal as wives instead of getting them arrested, the val-
ues that have us valuing a girls hymen over her very life and
the person she could become if she remained in school and
was encouraged and supported to pursue her ambitions.

We do not talk about these things much but we need to if
we are to ensure safety, security and access to rights for girls
and women in Zimbabwe.
APPENDIX

Development and peace: The nexus

Note: The presenter of this paper asked not to be identified for this report.

According to one scholar, Lloyd J. Dumas, Professor of Economics, Political Economy and Public Policy, University of Texas at Dallas, development and peace have been two of the major concerns of national and international political economy for more than fifty years. Yet there is considerable disagreement as to the nature of the relationship between these two economic and political phenomena. Some argue that development encourages peace. People in better economic condition are less likely to initiate violent conflict both because they are more content and because they have more to lose from the physical danger and economic disruption that war brings.

Others say that development discourages peace, either because the continued development of some depends on their forceful suppression or control of others (as the “dependency” theorists argue) or because development increases the capacity to build and mobilize military power (as the “neo-realists” argue). Still others (such as the old-line “realists”) argue that development and peace have no significant connection to each other.

What is peace? What is development? What is the link between the two processes?

It is critical to understand what people understand or mean by “peace.” From the perspective of this presentation, peace means the absence of violence and nonviolent measures to justly secure and maintain peace. Peace presupposes the suppression of both direct and structural violence. While peace partly implies the absence of violence, violence is seldom used and justified to maintain peace. Peace building refers to policies, strategies and actions that aim to build the capacity within society to resolve and manage conflicts non-violently.

What is development?

Development can be defined in many ways but refers broadly to social, economic, and political processes that unlock expanded human capabilities and reduce vulnerability in society. It is important to view development in macro and micro context that is personal, community, and national.

The link between peace building and development

Development and peace building are intrinsically linked, the relationship can be seen as cyclical. Peace creates the conditions for development to take place and development can be a bedrock for peaceful co-existence. For example, the prosperous years in Zimbabwe, that is from 1980 to around 1995, these were years of calmness after the war of liberation and this post-war period was characterized by major milestones in social and economic development. Milestones were recorded in health, education, water provision, and economic growth, even human rights recognition such as child and women’s rights.

Conflicts usually result in destruction of social, economic, and political relations in communities thus retarding development. (During the 2000 and 2008 violence in Zimbabwe, houses were destroyed, economic losses were recorded at individual and national level). There is a relationship between development and peace some actually view peace as the first condition of successful development, a lot of investors shunned Zimbabwe during that period and this negatively affected the socio-economic development of the country.

However, development in some instances, especially when it’s improperly implemented and managed, can be a source of conflict where an economic activity can be a source of conflict.

For example the Marange Diamonds, Tokwe Mukosi Dam projects are a source of conflict in the respective areas. In one of the local daily newspapers in April 2015, there was a story about a dam which had become a source of conflict in Mberengwa, on the Southern part of Zimbabwe where the Rural District Council and the community were not sharing the same understanding on the project. A local civil society organization involved in peace building and conflict resolution was invited to intervene and helped the conflicting parties to reach an agreement.
This situation demonstrated that development programs need to be pursued prudently in the context of peace, there is need for development activities to be holistic and focus on practical human development addressing the needs of communities in addition to the national contribution. For the mining sector in Zimbabwe, the nation has been told for over 100 years that it has the potential to transform the economy but up to now it’s still a potential yet to be realized. There is a need to talk about development in practical terms, that is, meeting people at their point of need before we talk of the GDP and national fiscus contribution.

Neoliberal globalization continues to produce economic crisis and the widening global and local inequalities where there is mass dissatisfaction by the poor and sporadic unrests and dissents, sporadic incidences of vandalism by angry residents complaining about inaccessible and poor service delivery at local government as a result of privatization of basic services.

The nexus of peace and development can be viewed from the perspective that at the heart of both development and peace building processes is the need to strengthen resilience and the capacity within society to manage change and resolve differences. Much of what is traditionally seen as “development work” (e.g., improvements in social and economic wellbeing) is also needed in peace building. The best practice in both fields is to work at multiple levels, using participatory, consultative methods and for both peace and development to be all-inclusive.

Development is a process of societal change and is therefore potentially conflictual by nature. In situations of fragility in which there is a limited capacity for managing change and resolving differences peacefully, development is a particularly challenging process that can actually contribute to violent conflict. For this and other reasons, development processes are frequently interrupted and set back by violence and unresolved conflicts. For example most CSOs have interfaced with this challenge in communities where a project is put under scrutiny to check on impartiality of the programs.

Fairness and inclusion are critical to both development and peace building processes and outcomes. Once some people feel they have been sidelined, they can put negative energies that seek to destroy the peace building or development initiatives. Countries with substantive freedom and peace means that all stakeholders, the community, civil society, government departments, and markets (private sector) should cooperate to support citizens for development and to participate in economic activities.

In what ways can our development efforts promote a just, peaceful, and stable Zimbabwean?

There is a need for all stakeholders to rethink development as a function of peace that requires both intrastate and interstate dialogue. In Zimbabwe, many efforts to foster peace and development have been rather declaratory instead of being realistic. We have seen the threats and intimidation tactics being applied at convenient times for some people to gain favors and political power base. It is time that declarations and promises are turned into practical actions.

There is a need to have conflict-sensitive development policies, strategies, and practices that take account of the above-mentioned links. They are based on a thorough understanding of both the context and how the proposed development changes will interact with other prevailing societal dynamics. If designed and implemented with this in mind, development interventions can go beyond simply respecting the basic principle of “Do no harm” and make a positive contribution to sustainable peace.

Despite the apparently evident conceptual and practical linkages between them, development and peace building are still largely seen and implemented as separate endeavors. A crucial step toward rethinking development and peace is to recognize a number of considerations. The first one is the existence and experience of peace as one of the preconditions for development.

Rethinking development also means thinking of development as both a value and a goal. It is a value because we all agree that it is a good thing. It is a goal because we need to work toward it through trial and error. Development actors should consider going further than this and adopt peace building as a core part of their mission and activities. This implies clearly articulating goals and strategies in terms of their contribution to peace, and broadening the traditional development agenda to take account of issues such as inclusion, security, justice, and peace.

Conclusion

Rather than asking “how can we incorporate peace building alongside our existing development work?” stakeholders like CSOs and government departments should ask, “How should we be organized to build peace?” Bring relevant decision-makers together to agree on common, coherent objectives for the country.
Development actors should see their role as political and societal, rather than purely technical. There is a need for regular dialogue between peace building and development actors to exchange best practices, and discuss the challenges and opportunities related to linking peace building and development.

Development funding to support peace-building programs, including those actions which address the attitudes and behaviors of people involved in conflicts and which promote the “culture of peace” and contribute to trust-building and reconciliation between opposing groups.

The planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of programs need to be based on a thorough analysis of power, the economy, justice, security and well-being, and the interactions between them, and the formal and informal capacities of societies to manage and resolve conflicts without violence.