

Service Delivery Barometer



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Editor's Note

Dear reader

I present to you our 1st edition of the *Social Accountability Barometer*, a quarterly newsletter that covers social service delivery issues in Matabeleland South.

This edition covers a number of issues that are affecting young people including young women and girls in rural Matabeleland. Social accountability is very important if any community is to develop hence our approach as an organisation to empower young people with skills and knowledge on this.

The empowerment process is already bearing fruits as young people are now actively engaging in community activities that address social service issues. In Sitezi, young people were involved in digging a trench for laying pipes that supplied a local clinic with piped water.

The clinic had been experiencing water challenges for a decade. The active youth participation was attributed to the Social Accountability trainings as they revealed that the trainings were an eye - opener especially on the need to lobby and advocate for provision of social service delivery by concerned service providers.

Young people have also expressed the need for their leaders to understand the importance of social accountability and play an active role in demanding better services.

Water challenges persist in Gwanda North'S Ward 1 as the local borehole which also supplies Nkashe Secondary school is dysfunctional. The community members are demanding that the Rural District Council service it as they have been paying the council and it is the council's mandate to address such problems.

It is important therefore that every community member is actively involved in demanding provision of social services and moreover young people as this is not only their right but also an important aspect of their development.

The development of any nation, society or community hinges on an active youth. It is our hope that through empowering these young people with these skills, knowledge and tools, they will actively drive development in their communities.

I hope you will enjoy the compilation of these stories and be inspired to take action in your community for a better society.

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'I was really in the dark on social accountability issues'

• Youths heap praise on accountability trainings



Youths have expressed their extensive gratitude and endorsement towards the enlightening Community Youth Development Trust (CYDT) social accountability training tools exercise in Gwanda North ward one and two, and in Insiza South ward one and two.

The project that took place between December 2019 and January 2020 aimed at training communities on social accountability tools that will help community members track, monitor and evaluate services they are provided for by their local authority. The training empowered youths to be able to hold service providers accountable instead of being continuously left out in community development processes especially in rural communities where there is less civic activism, which then provides a room for unfairly representation of their issues.

The youths expressed their satisfaction on the role of the training exercise in contributing to better public services.

"I am happy that today I have gained a lot of information with regards to accountability, transparency and service delivery. I really never knew that it is my duty to keep track of these services and demand for them when they are not provided. I was really in the dark," said Yourwill Moyo a youth from MaHole in ward 2, Insiza South.

Belinda Ncube from Magedleni in ward 1, Gwanda North concurred that the information and knowledge gained shall go a long way in revitalizing service delivery issues in the ward, because leaders have been relaxed because no one was following up and keeping them on their toes.

"Service delivery in our ward had gone down, roads are in shambles, there is no health system to talk about and we have water challenges. Now that I know it is also my duty to remind the councillor on these services I am sure our councillor will in turn be pestering the RDC office in Gwanda so as to make sure that they provide these services," Ncube said.

Insiza ward two youths who attended the training exercise that took place under a tree despite the visible clouds that had gathered showing an imminent rainfall expressed their concerns on the community hall's roof that is almost falling down. The terraces are now too old and no one in the community is bothered to question or speak about the importance of that hall regards to service delivery.

"It is sad that we are holding such an important activity under a tree, next to a building which is supposed to house us. This is an embarrassment especially if the rain starts to fall, we shall all be drenched by the rainfall. If we had gained this knowledge earlier,

I don't think the community would have been reckless in leaving the community hall to fall like this. The obligation is now on us to organize ourselves so that we fix this community hall," said a youth who only preferred to be called Khumalo.

Gwanda North Ward One water woes

Despite being in the rain season, water challenges continue to extensively affect Gwanda North Ward One residents. Residents walk hours to get water as the sole nearby borehole is currently dysfunctional.

During a Community Youth Development Trust (CYDT) youth training programme on service delivery in Nkashe area, the youths cited the extreme challenges they are facing on daily basis.

They noted that when the borehole is dysfunctional they are required to service it themselves despite residents allegedly paying the Rural District Council (RDC) that is supposed to be servicing the boreholes. Shockingly, the RDC is allegedly not acting on these urgent matters.

This has sparked conflicts between the public and the Nkashe Secondary School in which the school is proposing that if it services the borehole, the public must not use borehole.

The CYDT team also discovered that water crisis is not the sole problem affecting residents as electricity is also a humongous problem in Gwanda North Ward One.

The youth lamented on the failure of ZESA to address the issue of a transformer which is said to have stopped functioning three years ago as attempts to engage the councillor have been fruitless.



This borehole used to be the source of water for the community. However, due to lack of resources poor maintenance has led to it breaking down forcing the community to travel long distances to fetch water.

The youth also showed great concern about not being able to have a platform to engage their member of parliament whom they claim to have only seen during his campaign days.

In conclusion, the youths proposed to have more enlightening and engaging programmes that seek to educate them on service delivery.

Secondary school in dilapidated state

Stanmore Secondary School in Matabeleland South is in dire situation which poses a threat towards academic performance. Many classrooms are in a state of disrepair characterised by holes similar to the size of road potholes.

The crackly floors and shabby classrooms require instantaneous attention from the ministry of education to help alleviate and eradicate the gradually developing crisis. A research conducted by Christine Jepleting Sang in 2013 on classroom environment influence on children performance, acknowledged that the performance of school children is either negatively influenced by the classroom environment status at the school.

The environment in which the youths attend their lessons has an impact to their confidence, emotions and performance in their educational activities. Old dilapidated buildings, ramshackle classrooms, shabby classrooms, badly maintained classrooms or not closely monitored classrooms affect the teachers motivation to give their best to students.

Teachers who teach in well maintained schools are motivated to give their best especially in urban areas which might be one of the reasons many schools in Zimbabwe have excellent pass rates while rural schools for instance in Matabeleland region need improvement.

On the side of students learning in poor conditions, their confidence to see themselves do well and scoring good grades is negatively affected. Students automatically grade themselves according to the environment they are learning in.

It is therefore recommended that the government priorities classroom maintenance in a bid to improve performance of learners especially in rural areas. If classrooms are well maintained and are in good shape the confidence of students is boosted and can see themselves competing with students from urban schools, thus improving education standards to benefit every child in Zimbabwe

Young Women's health needs critical to their development

Young people's health and well-being is not only closely related to youth development; it is also a cornerstone of sustainable development.

While many countries are making progress toward achieving universal health coverage by 2030, young women in the Sub Saharan countries continue to face challenges in accessing appropriate health services.

Inequalities persist among the countries in the provision of youth-appropriate services such as those focused on sexual and reproductive health of young women.

Despite having the right to access to basic health-care services, including reproductive health care as enshrined under section 76 and section 80 of the constitution, young women in Zimbabwe, especially in the Matabeleland South, are yet to attain development, because of low optimum service provision in regards to fulfilment of such rights.

Young women in Plumtree lament lack of youth friendly approaches to education and delivery on SHR services.

"We face high levels of discrimination and stigma whenever we want to access such services at the local clinic, there is no privacy for us whenever we seek counselling services, as such we feel stigmatised as our issues are very sensitive, especially pertaining to HIV/Aids, pregnancy and abortion issues", said one young women during a Young Women Accountability Forum conducted by CYDT in Bulilima.

The local authority has an obligation to ensure that they deliver sexual reproductive health services for women as they are one of the most vulnerable group in the community when it comes to health issues.

Speaking during the Forum, the council chair of Plumtree, Fanisani Dube, shared to the young women that, as the local authority, they had partnered with Gender Links in mainstreaming issues to do with young women. Gender links is a non-governmental organisation that deals with



the welfare of women in their communities.

In spite of the efforts that have been made by non-governmental organisations in ensuring that women in the communities still have access to basic service that speak to their sexual reproductive health needs.

It is of sad note that, the government of Zimbabwe is investing little to ensure that these women are empowered and develop themselves through access to such services.

In the rural parts of the Matabeleland region, young women face the hardest challenge, as there are poor facilities i.e Mother's Shelter, lack of water and adequate medicines in the health facilities.

In such areas, NGOs have played crucial role in mainstreaming SRHR education and services in rural areas, to rescue young and elderly women from the predicament that they face.

'We talked about menstruation and puberty, and building our capacities around these issues, because talking about these issues in our society is a taboo', said one youth in Gwanda North during one of the programs implemented by CYDT, of enhancing women participation.

'Ever since I started coming here, I have learned many new things, about male and females, about violence and about how much power men and women have' - Tahana Dube during the Young Women Accountability Forum in Bulilima.

It is imperative for the government of Zimbabwe to promote partnerships of youth organisations, schools and community leaders to empower young women to make informed healthy decisions.

This should include ensuring that when young people seek out services, they are met by highly qualified, non-judgemental providers offering services that are affordable to the many young people living at or below the poverty line.

Sitezi local clinic heaves great water relief



ABOVE: Young people help dig a trench that provided piped water to a local clinic

Access to water is imperative in the day to day lives of every citizen.

The United Nations characterise access to uninterrupted clean water as a basic need and a key pillar towards sustainable development and health.

Without access to clean and safe water one is prone to illness and hazardous health conditions.

The community of Sitezi heaved great relief to finally have access to water having suffered lack of access for 10 years.

A CYDT initiated intervention has helped solve the water crisis that had affected the health facility through mobilising young people to partake in solving the problem.

There was no access to water at the local community clinic and this posed as a health hazard especially to the expectant mothers.

They had to walk quite a distance to fetch water, and carry buckets even when their delivery dates were close.

This water crisis also contributed to the short staffing of nurses as most nurses rejected the offer to work at a clinic that had no access to water.

CYDT conducted social accountability training workshops that equipped and empowered young women to advocate and lobby the local authority, councillors.

The intervention urged the youth of Sitezi to work together in digging the trench, to lay the pipes that would facil-

itate the delivery of water at the clinic from the nearby river.

The workshops also created sustainable engagement between the service providers and the youth of Sitezi community.

This was a result of these forums created by CYDT and the relationship established between local authorities and the youth.

The project was realised as the youth worked arm and hand with their local authority with the youths offering their man power in digging the trenches for the pipes.

Today, Sitezi local clinic stands as a safe space for health, admitted patients and pregnant women as they now have access to water in the facility.

“...our leaders are clueless,” youths demand leaders to be well-informed on service delivery



Irrespective of a prevalence of several democratic participatory frameworks, and the legal and policy frameworks for citizen participation in Zimbabwe, exercising of democratic rights and obligations of citizens is far from reality and the services rendered to the citizens are still poor; communities are still prone to hand-outs and are easily manipulated into participation. Youths have now come forward demanding that community leaders are taught about service delivery.

Ernest Phili, a youth based in Insiza, also a member of the social accountability Champions lamented on service delivery provision in the constituency. He said there is no service delivery to talk about and elected leaders seem to be in a slumber as they are not doing anything to make life easy for community members. “As far as service delivery is concerned, our leaders are clueless as to what is supposed to happen. I think there is need for an extensive training and induction for our elected leaders so that when they assume office they know what they are doing. We have people who were elected yet they know nothing about service delivery,” he said.

“One thing these leaders have to realize is that, social services are the basis or let me say foundation of all basic human rights. Once communities fail to access or get these services then it means there are no human rights to talk about.

This then means that our leaders are the greatest abusers of our human rights. It is also sad that we are also contributing to this abuse by not making them to account,” added Clayton Ncube from Magedleni.

The general awareness level on citizens’ rights and responsibilities has swung out of balance for instance, the right to participate in decision-making and, subsequently, the right to demand for accountability on the quality of services delivered are not commonly known among most citizens in Zimbabwe especially young people. Any organisation that tries to raise awareness on social accountability is viewed with a lot of suspicion.

As such, the majority of the citizens are not aware of the government initiatives in place supporting citizen participation that is if they are there; ignorance on the part of the citizens has become an advantage to the government who are not being taken to task to provide services they are meant to provide. Likewise, nepotism and corruption is still increasingly staining politics and government institutions that are supposed to form the basis for participation and service provision.

Zimbabwe as part of the United Member States adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs, directly or indirectly need an effective public service for successful implementation.

This is because all of the goals require the provision of public goods or the implementation of a public sector policy and, therefore, depend on public service to coordinate, mediate or directly provide. Therefore, an effective interface between communities, politicians and public officials is needed in Zimbabwe to turn the vision for SDG implementation into a reality.

'I was really in the dark on social accountability issues'

• Youths heap praise on accountability trainings

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Councilor Lobukhosi Malila from ward 4 Gwanda North welcomed the initiative brought by CYDT and said it will go a long way in creating relationships between the youths and the leader.

"Most times, when such initiatives come to the community, leaders such as me tend to stifle the progress of such initiatives; however I would like to say I am a progressive leader who wants to see change and development in the ward.

This training will surely keep me on my toes because from what I get these youths shall be monitoring service delivery issues. This will make me innovative and I am happy to say these youths shall help me rebuild the ward," Malila said.

The most important feature of democracy is the accountability that elected public officials owe to the citizens. When public officials are elected into offices it is because they would have promised the citizens good service delivery.

However, in Zimbabwe it has always been a norm that once public officers are elected into these offices, they forget about the promises leading to the masses suffering hence the need for social accountability.

Social accountability initiatives are a product of a combination of motivating factors, the three main being increased development effectiveness, improved governance and empowerment.

Accountability of public officials is the cornerstone of a good government and a

prerequisite for effective democracy. It leads to improved development outcomes through improved public service delivery and through a more responsive, sensitive and informed policy design.

Increased accountability, eventually resulting in improved governance and development effectiveness, has implications for empowerment of the people, especially the poor and marginalised sections of society.

The main aim of the CYDT trainings is to also promote community evidence based advocacy, using score card analysis. The trained youths who total 80 from all the four project areas; going forward will conduct community feedback meetings on the state of service delivery as per information gathered through score cards.

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- Public information- can directly lead to change
- State action-could be disclosure of information

- Information can catalyse citizen action
- Citizen action can catalyse action



- Citizen action can trigger a state response
- State response can shape citizen action