

DECEMBER 2021

COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

Advocacy in all its forms seeks to ensure that people, particularly those who are vulnerable in society, are able to:

1. Have their voice heard on issues that are important to them.
2. Defend and safeguard their rights.

Strengthening Youth
Engagement in Local
Governance to Further
Grassroots Development
YOUTH FOR



SERVICE Barometer

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This newsletter highlights the importance of community advocacy, detailing on how different communities have used advocacy to their advantage. Topping the list of stories, is how Gwanda residents have been lobbying their local authorities for improved water security, especially noting that it is high time ZINWA hands over the water treatment plant to the local authority as they believe it is the only way that will end water woes in the small mining town. The newsletter also shares youth's perspectives and insights on the state of service delivery in their communities seeing that they have been monitoring service delivery issues after having been capacitated on that skill by the organisation. Furthermore, the Newsletter shows how the youth, empowered with accountability and lobbying skills have been compelling duty bearers from both local and national levels to fulfill their commitment on providing good service delivery. It has also been documented in this bulletin on how youths have become change agents in their communities as they have led different community processes. Youths in Ward 3 Mangwe initiated for the development of a five-year plan after gaining knowledge on how communities need to identify key development issues as well as the required interventions for communities to fare well in terms of service delivery. The organisation thrives to capture and document these successes, challenges, perspectives of the youths as we implement activities in different communities of different project areas.

Happy reading

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GWANDA RESIDENTS LOBBY LOCAL AUTHORITIES FOR IMPROVED WATER SECURITY

Residents have implored local authorities to enforce measures and strategies for effective water security amidst perennially water disconnections in Gwanda town.

In an Urban resilience workshop that was conducted in November 2021 in which the council was mapping its Urban Resilience Strategy Policy Document, stakeholders implored council to facilitate an effective water security strategy.



Stakeholders suggested it was crucial for the local authority to facilitate the taking over of the water treatment plant to ensure effective management of water systems in Gwanda town.

“It has become increasingly clear that people with the least access to essential services like water, will feel the most dramatic effects of the pandemic, how can people follow health and hand-washing advice when we are faced with water shortages?” one stakeholder said.

The acute water shortages and abrupt disconnections experienced in Gwanda Town are a result of the existing relationship between Municipality of Gwanda (MOG) and ZINWA. ZINWA draws and treats water for the town before storing it, and then the local authority is billed for the bulk of the supply and it distributes and bills to its residents. As a result of this relationship, MOG and ZINWA have been at logger heads with each other over debts which MOG is failing to settle with ZINWA.

Following advocacy and lobbying by youth for ZINWA to hand over the water treatment plant to MOG, ZINWA reported to the parliament that the debt being owed by the local authority accumulated from ZW\$16 million in January 2020 to ZW\$ 181 million in July 2021 hence this had forced ZINWA to disconnect water for residents to force MOG to settle its debt.

Relationship between residents and the council has weakened over the years due to prolonged water challenges. The situation was further exacerbated by the recent hiking of water tariffs by the council, an action which residents alleged was a way of the municipality trying to clear the debt it owes to ZINWA.

“It is sad that residents are the ones who are made to suffer whenever ZINWA and MOG are fighting each other. There is no water security in town as a result of the dual administration of the water management

system in Gwanda town, by the two institutions”, said Wellington Nare.

“To make matters worse, 70% of the debt is being owed by government institutions,” further complained Nare.

The National Water Policy launched in 2013, gave powers to local authorities to run their water affairs to ensure that efficient, affordable and sustainable water services are provided in the towns.

“The dual administration of water management systems in Gwanda, has proven

to be detrimental in ensuring equitable access of water in the communities, of Gwanda town,” said one stakeholder, during the Urban Resiliency workshop.

The advent of COVID-19 further created financial challenges for the local authority on revenue collection, as most rate payers, who mostly survive in the informal sector were grounded by the pandemic and lockdown restrictions which saw their economic activities closed down, hence resulting in them failing to pay their rates on time.

STATE OF SERVICE DELIVERY: YOUTH



For improved service delivery, CYDT has been conducting forums in which local authorities, stakeholders and youth participated. These fruitful meetings provided an opportunity for youth to bring into awareness the different service delivery challenges that must be prioritised by duty bearers. Youth also highlighted the interventions made by CYDT to capacitate young women and men with service delivery and accountability skills. The following section provides comments made by youths on the state of service delivery in their respective communities of Matabeleland South. They also share their views on the significant strides made by CYDT to help improve service delivery.

Ntando Sibanda



The council has been failing to collect refuse on time in Gwanda District. As a result, people now throw litter everywhere which is bad for the environment. The situation

is even worse during the rain season. However, the Council did inform the public that they will not be able to collect refuse as they are facing a challenge with the refuse tractor breakdown. On a positive note, water has been there for a while. CYDT has played a pivotal role in trying to address service delivery. This is seen by the change in attitude by the Council that has been listening to the concerns raised by the public.

Reason Dube



Service delivery in Gwanda town remains poor, with some wards often short of tape running water and inconsistent garbage collection through out the town. CYDT, however, plays a vital role in mobilising accountability forums where young people advocate for improved service delivery.

Nobuhle Moyo



Water, electricity, garbage collection have always been major difficulties faced by the people of Gwanda. However, garbage collection in high density suburbs like Jahunda and Garikai has improved. Access to water has also improved due to the interventions of organisations like CYDT who communicated with the local authorities through conducting workshops. CYDT has also capacitated youth with service delivery and accountability skills which they are using to lobby duty bearers for improved service provision.

Leader Zaba



The state of service delivery is not good. Its not at the level which we want it to be. In the recent budget consultations, the council has been putting a fence in the caravan park that is meant to benefit the youths which is the only visible thing they have done. Refuse

collection is not being done, and we also recently had a fire which the council failed to put out yet people are paying for fire and ambulance. It has been a challenge for CYDT to try and engage council as the council is really not keen on working with the organisation maybe due to political reasons, but right now we have seen a shift in terms of communication. Council is now communicating effectively on pipe bursts. They now share memos. The way they communicate now shows impact of CYDT meetings. Youths are also being engaged as major stakeholders and also in sub consultations. There is now a youth fraternity that has been made a standalone which shows an improvement in youth involvement

Nokuthaba Ncube



The state of service delivery in Ward 8, Gwanda has slightly improved but there is need for improvement in refuse collection and servicing of the Hlalani Kuhle stands. Dumpsites are recurring if refuse collection is not done. This is worrying us as residents of ward 8 since the rainy season has arrived. CYDT has done an excellent job in addressing service delivery gaps by organizing engagement meetings with duty bearers to address issues that are affecting residents. Questions about the compactor truck have been asked several times, residents say that as the Gwanda community at large, the one refuse truck cannot sustain us all. Engagements have been made and council has promised to purchase another refuse truck. We are still caught in between the council and ZINWA wrangle that has been going on for years. It is our wish for council to take over the treatment plant.

CYDT with other stakeholders reached the Minister's office in Harare about this issue

and we hope for a better outcome that will rescue Gwanda residents from this challenge.



LOCAL LEADERS DEMAND THEIR CONSULTATION ON THE DRILLING OF BOREHOLES BY CHINESE FIRM

While the drilling of boreholes by China Jiangxi Corporation (CJC) could help ease water woes in Gwanda town, the initiative has received a backlash from local leaders who alleged they were never consulted about the initiative.

Local leaders claimed the failure by the Chinese company to locate exact rich water sites was due to lack of their engagement and consultation by the Chinese firm. They alleged that community elders and local authorities have the knowledge about water points in their districts, hence it was imperative that they are consulted on these procedures.

They said instead of being consulted, the CJC has mistreated and threatened community leaders and residents whenever they come to drill boreholes in their areas. They alleged that there are now

open pits in their communities that posed a risk to their livestock.

“These Chinese have no respect for us as community leaders whenever they come to drill boreholes. They do not consult local leaders and traditional leaders who are custodians of the land. When we inquire of their activities, they threaten us and say they have no business with us and that we should not interfere with their activities,” said Councilor Mary from ward 23.

In the full Council meeting of Gwanda Rural District Council that was held on the 5th of November 2021, a concern was raised by councilors on the activities of the Chinese in their wards. The councilors bemoaned that, the top down approach that was used by the Chinese in

drilling boreholes had caused conflict between community leaders and their residents.

“We are being asked by the community on the activities of the Chinese, when they are doing drillings, and we fail to answer the questions asked by residents because we don’t know anything. What we are only told is that that they would be searching for the water table,” said Councilor of ward 2 in Gwanda North, Zwelibanzi Mpofu.

“As councilors, people expect answers from us, and they assume that we already know about these activities. It now seems as if we could be hiding something, when in fact we would be in the dark. At some point, people were saying the Chines were mining for gold, as our areas are known to be rich in gold deposit,” said the councilor.

China Jiangxi Corporation has been quietly drilling boreholes in dry, remote rural parts of Zimbabwe since 2012 as part of Chinese government support to Zimbabwe. In Mat South, the company has been successful in bringing relief in some drought-weary communities, but they have also left a trail of environmental hazards and caused conflict.

An official from the District Development Fund (DDF), who were attached to the contract that was awarded to the Chinese company shared that, Mat South was affected by the advent that the water table was very low hence they were forced drill in numerous areas in a community.

“Sometimes we fail to get water. The machines drill 75 meters down but still we fail to reach the water table. So we quickly look for a new site where we can easily get water because people are in need of water,” said the official from DDF.



WITH NEW FIVE YEAR ROADMAP, DEVELOPMENT IS INEVITABLE IN WARD 3, MANGWE

Youth in partnership with CYDT and community leaders have developed a five year Ward Development Plan of Ward 3 in Mangwe District that has the potential to transform the Ward into an attractive and well developed local destination of Matabeleland South.

The plan is a Community Based Planning (CBP) that was designed to promote community action and make Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of Mangwe RDC.

Youth and community leaders in Madabe, Ward 3, engaged CYDT to facilitate the crafting of their 5 Year Ward Development Plan. CYDT heeded their call by engaging Mangwe RDC who facilitated the drafting of the five year roadmap.

A total of 30 youths and 20 community leaders from the three villages of ward 3 were identified to participate in the development of this plan that demonstrates the importance of youth involvement in the development of interventions that are appropriate to the needs and preferences of the intended populations.



CYDT deliberately involved youth (both women and men), community leaders and RDC to ensure that the process was more inclusive and equitable to bring a lot of diverse and complex information and expertise based on evidence from the ground.

The vision of the plan that runs from 2021 to 2025 is, “WARD 3 will be healthy and serviced with clean water that sustains all, with improved health services, road networks and telecommunication services for greater development of youth.”

After the development plan was complete, CYDT engaged community leaders and youths to gather their views and comment on their ward plan. A youth social accountability champion, revealed on how youths had taken ownership to lead in all processes of the ward development plan.

“Looking back when we were formulating the plan, I am very inspired and motivated in the way the youths were leading the process, from informing the situational/SWOT analysis, doing the Transect Walk, identifying key development issues and required interventions, creating an Asset Based Action Plan and informing the vision of the ward for the next five years,” said Recent Maphosa,

One community member from the village of Madabe, commented that, in the past, youth participation was often seen as a “sideshow” and it was a constant battle for young people’s issues to be heard and for them to be actively involved in planning and execution of improved service provision in the ward. She appreciated the program brought by CYDT, in that it shifted the perspective and

positioned young people to be on the leading front in community development.

“We always thought youths were lazy and had no interest in community development because they did not participate, Things have changed now, youths are leading in the forefront, thanks to the non-governmental organizations like CYDT who have enlightened our youths be active in community development,” said the community member.

Thy added that promoting youth participation in policy making and planning is fundamental

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for democracy and ensuring the delivery of quality outcomes in communities they live in.

The councilor of the ward who was also interviewed said that, the development plan was the first but very encouraging strategy in pushing Councilors in the Mangwe district to become aware that, they need to have documented Development Plans, crafted by the people for the people. “We appreciate the program brought by CYDT in ward 3, as we have become the first in Mangwe District to have a 5 Year Ward Development Plan. It’s a huge success for the ward, and I am hoping other Councilors will do the same for the greater development of Mangwe District,” said Councilor Kahlu.

HANDOVER-TAKEOVER OF GWANDA WATER TREATMENT PLANT LONG OVERDUE: WHAT'S THE HOLD UP?



While the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) has previously showed signs of handing over the water treatment plant and management to Gwanda local authority, the plant remains under the control of the state owned ZINWA.

The delay of the handover-takeover process between ZINWA and Gwanda Municipality has outraged residents who are always at the receiving end whenever ZINWA disconnects water without notice.

When taps ran dry due to ZINWA's sudden water disconnections a few months ago, residents raised their voices and attracted the attention of Minister of Water to tour

Gwanda town, engage the local authority as well as assess if the local authority was fully prepared to take over the plant. Few months down the line, with change yet to be seen, Gwanda residents believe the time to act is now, otherwise, it will take more years for the handover process to be completed.

Residents are not convinced that

ZINWA is willing to handover the plant. They alleged that ZINWA is throwing spanners to thwart Council efforts to realize their take-over objectives. They alleged that ZINWA has been inflating water bills which has made it almost impossible for council to be up to date with the ZINWA water account.

“It is so sad that, up to now, ZINWA is still withholding handing over the water treatment plant. It seems the issue is now being used as a political strategy to frustrate council and paint it as failures to its residents,” said one official from council management, who chose to remain anonymous.

“Why is ZINWA still refusing to Handover the water plant, it's been over years now since



we have been lobbying ZINWA, and it is now clear that, they are not here to save the people but to systematically marginalize the town, by depriving it of its water plant,” bemoaned a resident from ward 2.

“Why are they even here, what purpose do they serve in disconnecting water, this is just a political ploy to frustrate citizens,” fumed another resident from ward 4.

In 1996, in line with the Government’s policy of decentralization, council commissioned a study pertaining to the take-over of the water treatment plant. In the 61st Meeting held on 31 July 1996, council resolved that the water treatment plant be taken over by council and the application to take over was forwarded to Ministry of Lands and Water Development. Continual correspondence, yielded nothing pertaining to the issue. In 2013, The National Water Policy was launched and it gave powers to local authorities to run their water affairs and the Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe (UCAZ) in their report of Technical Assessment on Water and Sewer Management Capacity, proved that Gwanda Municipality were ready to take charge, both technically and financially, to assume total control of water to the residents.

In 2016, an order was again directed to the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement and the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) to hand back the Gwanda Municipality water treatment plant to the local authority, to avert the continuous water disconnection and water challenges faced by the local authority. The order was not followed no honored by ZINWA.

In 2017, the Community Youth Development Trust petitioned the Parliament to facilitate the handing over of the water treatment plant from ZINWA to the local authority to address the challenge of water woes resulting from the dual administration of water services, since the local authority had been preparing for the running of the water plant. The local authority had met all the requirements recommended by two commissions, one led by Hon Sipepa and another by Hon Muchinguri who both approved in their assessment that Gwanda could handle its water issues, in particular, the treatment plant. In December 2019, a delegation from Gwanda Local Authority engaged the now late Hon. P Shiri, who also gave a directive that by August 2019, the water plant should have been given back to the Municipality of Gwanda. The Minister of Local Government and Public Works also wrote a letter to the Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement specifying that Gwanda was ready to run its water plant.

MPs that met in the National Assembly on the 4th of August 2021 to discuss on the disconnections of water supplies in the towns, also supported the need for ZINWA to handover the water plant to avoid disruption in Gwanda town. Despite all these calls, ZINWA are still yet to handover the plant, and their refusal, has resulted that, ZINWA is on a drive to systematically marginalize the town, and deprive residents to their right to water.



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