

ANNUAL REPORT 2008- 2009

Contents:

- Programme Identification Details
 - List of Acronyms
 - Executive Summary
 - Programme Management
 - Working with Implementing Partners
 - Risk Assessment
 - M & E Arrangements
 - Log frame changes
 - Emerging Impact on Governance and Transparency
 - Cross cutting issues
 - Progress towards sustainability
 - Innovation
 - Learning from GTF
 - Annexes
-

1. Programme Identification Details

GTF Number	GTF-238
Short Title of Programme	Local Government Gender Budgeting Programme
Name of Lead Institution	Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network(ZWRCN)
Start date¹	September 2008
End date:	March 2013
Amount of DFID Funding:	£1,157,707
Brief Summary of Programme:	The programme seeks to contribute towards equity and full equality between women, men, boys and girls as well as their improved livelihoods, through the formulation and implementation of gender sensitive budgets that are responsive to the priorities and different needs of women, men, youth, the disabled and the elderly. ZWRCN's strategic approach to achieve the programme goals includes human capacity building, research and publications, advocacy, networking and coalition building. The programme is being piloted in six districts, targeting decision making structures within local authorities, as well as community based organisations, civil society groups, researchers, media and citizens. The pilot districts, where partner organisations have worked on institutionalising participatory budgeting, are Mutoko, Masvingo, Bulawayo, Gweru, Kwekwe and

¹ Date your grant agreement was signed.

	Kadoma. ZWRCN is adding value through introducing a gender dimension to the participatory budgeting process.
List all countries where activities have taken or will take place	Zimbabwe
List all implementing partners in each country	Zimbabwe Local Government Association/Urban Council Association of Zimbabwe (ZILGA/UCAZ) Municipal Development Partnership – East and Southern Africa (MDP-ESA) Women in Politics Support Unit (WIPSU) Ministry of Women’s Affairs, Gender and Community Development (MWAGCD)
Target groups- wider beneficiaries	Target Group: Councillors, Council Management Staff, Gender Focal Persons, Women in Local Government Forum (WILGF), Residents Associations, Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Media, Development Partners and the wider community.
Lead Contact	Pamela Mhlanga, 288 Herbert Chitepo Ave/7 th Street, P.O.Box 2192, Harare, Zimbabwe. Tel: 002634 792450/252 389 Fax: 002634 720 331 Email: pamela@zwrkn.org.zw , zwrkn@zwrkn.org.zw

List of Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organisations
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GBI	Gender Budgeting Initiative
GPA	Global Political Agreement
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDP-ESA	Municipal Development Partnership Eastern and Southern Africa
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOLGRUD	Ministry of Local Government Rural and Urban Development
MWAGCD	Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPC	Office of the President and Cabinet
STERP	Short Term Emergency Recovery Programme
UCAZ	Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe
WILGF	Women in Local Government Forum
WIPSU	Women in Politics and Support Unit
ZILGA	Zimbabwe Local Government Association
ZGBN	Zimbabwe Gender Budgeting Network
ZWRCN	Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network

3. Executive Summary

The first year of implementation of the local government gender budgeting programme experienced a slow start. The DFID grant was approved and signed on 30 September 2008 and the funds for programme implementation were received in December 2008, paving the way for some ground work before the end of the financial year. During the reporting period Zimbabwe experienced events and processes that made the operating environment extremely challenging for development, human rights and humanitarian organisations to conduct meaningful fieldwork. The country faced macroeconomic challenges that included unprecedented levels of hyperinflation, declining growth, high levels of unemployment, food shortages, loss in value of the local currency, massive de-industrialisation, corruption, deteriorating public service delivery particularly education, health, sanitation as well as public utilities and infrastructure.

The violence post the harmonized elections which took place on March 29, 2008 and the June 27, 2008 runoff made it difficult to navigate at local and other levels, where direct engagement with relevant stakeholders was required. The ensuing heightened political tensions and the suspicions surrounding nongovernmental organisations' (NGO) activities would prove a deterrent in terms of open and constructive dialogue, as well as building of relationships and buy-in from the targeted communities. This coincided with a humanitarian crisis arising from the massive cholera outbreak that occurred in August 2008 resulting from the complete breakdown in water and sanitation services throughout the country. Effective mass organising and mobilizing continues to be constrained by restrictive legislation, such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA).

The latter half of 2008 saw the beginning of a shift in the political landscape with the signing of a power sharing agreement by all three parties on September 15, 2008. However, by the end of 2008 the unity government remained ineffective and only became operational in February 2009, signalling an emerging conducive operating environment for NGOs in terms of up scaling activist work including taking advantage of structures and processes of change. There are some critical and difficult issues on the national agenda that have a direct bearing on ZWRCN work, including transitional justice, national healing, economic turnaround, as well as redefinition of democracy and human rights through the constitution making process. ZWRCN, through its networks such as the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, is playing a role in responding to these issues to advance the women's change agenda.

A positive development in the first quarter of 2009 was the revision of the national budget in March 2009, previously announced in January 2009. The revised budget

established a cash budgeting process for fiscal discipline. In addition the budget statement emphasised the provision of adequate and quality basic social services, acknowledging that the liberalization of foreign exchange has disadvantaged certain groups of people due to challenges in accessing foreign currency to exchange for goods and services. The ministries of education and health were allocated the highest and second highest shares of the 2009 budget respectively, which was a strong reflection of increasing commitment to social justice issues.

The inclusive Government adopted the Short term Economic Recovery Programme-STERP March to December, 2009 that is meant to address all the structural development challenges inherent in the economy. Importantly gender equality and women's empowerment is recognised as central to these processes (Articles 34-45). The operations of the Local Authorities are still affected, however, in that the introduction of the United States Dollar and South African Rand have resulted in all financial assets denominated in Zimbabwe dollars becoming valueless, thereby wiping out a large portion of national savings. Most people are not able to pay for services offered by local authorities. In addition, local government derives finances from its own revenue and borrowing. The Constitution of Zimbabwe is silent on the supportive role of central government in terms of capacity of municipalities to exercise their powers and perform the function assigned to them. Therefore, the Districts are finding it difficult to pay their staff and also to offer proper service delivery.

It is against the backdrop of this context that the following activities were undertaken during the reporting period:-

- Through working meetings, ZWRCN strengthened its partnership profile for effective delivery of the programme. The meetings with the Zimbabwe Local Government Association (ZILGA) and Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe (UCAZ), Municipal Development Partnership – Eastern and Southern Africa (MDP-ESA) and Women in Politics Support Unit (WIPSU) focused on sharing the programme concept and map the way forward on the programme. The logical framework and preparation of the inception report were developed and finalized with direct input from the partners. Whilst the rules of engagement with the partners have been defined, the plan is to enter into an MOU to clearly define working principles, roles and responsibilities.
- A preliminary desk review for the baseline survey was conducted to assess and understand the various policies, legal context and programmes that had been adopted by the government of Zimbabwe to address gender equality in local government, in line with national policy as well as regional, international human rights instruments. The review also looked at the laws that guide operations of both rural and urban districts councils, the institutional mechanism, the

implementation strategy and the entry point of the programme (see attached copy of review).

- Staff and external expertise was deployed to undertake some of the preliminary work, and recruitment of full time programme staff (Programme Officer and Researcher) also began during the reporting period. However, appointment of new staff delayed and was concluded after this period.
- A draft concept of the first set of advocacy materials was designed (see attached). The materials will be targeted at different groups, particularly at community level. The materials will include among others, t-shirts, head ties, cups, and posters.
- Office equipment was purchased, including software and other accessories.
- ZWRCN participated in the Organisation Convening Workshop/meeting held in London from 24 to 25 February 2009. The workshop was organized to facilitate evidence based learning from GTF. Grant holders were required by the fund to develop and submit inception reports by March, 31 2009, which was an important step in building evidence based knowledge on what works, and what does not and why as regards governance and transparency.

4. Programme Management

During the reporting period there were no management changes in terms of senior level oversight of the programme. External experts in organisational development and financial management were identified and contracted to undertake an institutional review in February – March 2009. The review focused on governance, management, programmatic focus, administrative issues, and ZWRCN's overall strategic position in the women's movement and civil society in Zimbabwe. The draft report was circulated to the Board and staff members for comments in March 2009. The post March 2009 action in response to the findings and recommendations shall be reported on in the next annual report.

No full time staff was appointed during the reporting period. However, the recruitment process for the Researcher and Programme Officer was initiated. There was a lapse in expediting the appointments as at March 2009. The recruitment was undertaken after this period. Some of the substantive staff within ZWRCN worked on different aspects of the programme, and a short term technical support (programmes) also provided input into the programme. The Executive Director provided the overall guidance and oversight, whilst the Finance and Administration Manager and supporting staff managed technical financial management. Some of the key outputs in the first year have been moved to the second year, including a revised M&E framework and the baseline, and other activities aimed at upscaling programme implementation.

5. Working with implementing partners

ZWRCN has maintained and strengthened positive relations and trust with its partners, some of whom have supported the programme since inception. They include UCAZ/ZILGA responsible for coordination of local government activities in the urban and peri-urban areas, MDP-ESA which is promoting participatory budgeting in Rural District Councils including Mutoko and WiPSU, whose thrust is to capacitate women councillors and Council Managers in decision making positions with requisite skills to be effective decision makers and encourage participation of women in local government.

ZWRCN also works with other strategic partners in the Ministry of finance (MOF), Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC), MWAGCD and the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (MLGRUD) to influence policy formulation and implementation. The Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development is responsible for the approval of the local authorities budgets. The MWAGCD is charged with the responsibility of spearheading and coordinating gender responsive development, in particular ensuring the improvement of women's status. The MOF coordinates the participation of government ministries in the national development process and also ensures mobilisation and equitable allocations. MOF plays a vital role in safeguarding the institutionalization of the Gender Policy through the budgeting process by engendering of the Call Circular which mandates all ministries to mainstream gender.

Through the national gender budgeting programme, as at March 2009 preparations were underway for launching a regional (southern Africa) network on gender budgeting. The network of government and civil society activists proposes to create a platform for sharing experiences in gender capacity building . ZWRCN is also the economic justice focal point for the southern African Gender Protocol Alliance (a 40+ network), which is coordinated by Gender Links, a regional gender organisation. The plan is to develop a closer relationship with Gender Links, which has been undertaking research and action in SADC countries focusing on gender and governance in local government.

6. Risk Assessment

As pointed out earlier in the Executive Summary, the programme was implemented against the backdrop of macro-economic instability which led to deterioration of service delivery in the areas of education, health and sanitation as well as public utilities and infrastructure. The impact of all the above has had a serious effect on operations of all local authorities and welfare of the general populace. The focus of government was largely directed towards addressing the humanitarian crisis, especially cholera that hit most districts (both rural and urban). The situation was worsened by the dollarisation of the economy and attendant challenges.

The politically polarised situation in the country, and the impact on civil society activism, including a largely 'survivalist' paradigm that pervaded every aspect of life meant that the takeoff of the programme was inevitably slow. The fall out of this environment for some of ZWR CN's partners and networks included the downsizing of operations and, at worst, shutting down offices. ZWR CN was however able to undertake some activities, and continue some activities on the national programme with the support of the MWAGCD and other partners such as the Poverty Reduction Forum.

The other risk factor remains the 'death' of the Zimbabwean dollar and the dollarization of the economy whose implications meant, amongst other factors, economic transactions being determined by the amount of the foreign money available. The local authorities were hard hit considering that they don't receive any funding from central government except from own revenue collection and borrowing, and yet the authorities require huge capital to rehabilitate its infrastructure. Worse still, most people lost their jobs and financial assets denominated in Zimbabwean dollars were wiped out thus affecting savings for both individuals for both individuals and local municipalities. Municipalities have backlogs in payment of salaries as communities are failing to pay the newly prescribed fees in US dollars. The quality of service delivery is highly compromised. This requires that ZWR CN engage more closely with local authorities and partners on creative and effective ways of increasing their accountability from a gender perspective, whilst delivering services in the face of these constraints, and how communities can play a central role in this regard.

Zimbabwe is in the process of writing a new constitution and there is a call by some interest groups for several local government reforms that include, among others,

- Total repeal of the current Urban Councils' Act (Ch 29:15) and the Rural Districts Councils Act (Ch 29:13) and enactment of a democratic legislative framework.
- Provision for mandatory citizen participation in local government matters; including a people driven processes in terms of Budgeting and the powers to recall non-performing and corrupt elected officials.
- gender parity and effective participation in decision making at all levels in local government.

Some of ZWR CN's implementing partners are experiencing challenges with their funding base, whilst other have to manage tensions with government, and this will affect programme delivery. However, ZWR CN plans to creatively engage with partners and find ways of sustaining the good will and partnership through innovative programme delivery (for example sharing leadership roles in terms of delivery of some activities) so that the profile of all partners and their comparative strengths are sustained.

7. M&E Arrangements

During the reporting period the final design and plans for the Baseline Study had not been concluded. This would inform the review and restructuring of the M & E plan. The revised M & E plan will be resubmitted together with the revised baseline details table by 31 July 2009.

8. Log frame Changes

The log frame will be reviewed and changes submitted to KPMG for approval after the Baseline Study has been conducted. With the recent appointment (June 2009) of the full time staff, plans to conduct the baseline study have been refined and upscaled. The baseline will be conducted between July and October 2009. This will inform the log frame changes, and the revised log frame will be submitted by 30 November 2009.

9. Emerging impact on governance and transparency

Whilst no direct impact of the programme has yet been recorded since the first year focused on preparatory work, the few activities undertaken point to the potential impact of the programme as follows:-

- *Broadening programmatic focus in ZWRCN* - the programme approach has already influenced ZWRCN's advocacy strategy in the governance and transparency spheres, firstly through opening up new opportunities for ZWRCN to take other gender issues to the local level where it matters the most (health rights, sexual and reproductive health rights) and engage with communities to demand accountability from their leaders. It is also an opportunity to take the women movement's broader women's rights agenda to a much wider audience in a concrete way.
- *Institutionalising gender mainstreaming in local government* – the preliminary work undertaken had pointed to a gap in terms of conceptualizing gender equality and grounding it in the structures, processes and services of local government. ZWRCN will be working in a structured way to place this on the local government agenda through sensitizing and providing tools that work, including introducing gender sensitive policy frameworks and plans with clear indicators for transformation of gender relations and service delivery.
- *Broadening partnerships* – the programme is creating a conduit for some of our partners to engage directly and influence government structures that they would not otherwise have a relationship with. For example, ZWRCN has an MOU with the MWGCD, and has a good relationship with the MOF thus partners can

leverage this relationship to enhance their work. Likewise ZWRCN has new avenues for engaging communities at local level and gaining greater legitimacy through the partners' constituencies and networks.

10. Cross-cutting issues (please see 8 above).

11. Progress towards sustainability (year 2 onwards)

The programme has been implemented for one year.

12. Innovation

ZWRCN has 'tried and tested' experience of working on gender budgeting issues at national level, and engaging directly with central government structures through a structured partnership (MOU) with the MWAGCD. This experience will provide a good model for adaptation at local government level. The local government programme allows ZWRCN and partners to bring the national agenda to the local level, including formal and informal lobby strategies that have worked well at the national level. Local government provides a new context to integrate gender equality in a way that can deliver results and also advances the ZWRCN and the Zimbabwe women movement agenda, for example strategies for increasing women's representation in decision making in local government, linking gender equality to results based and participatory budgeting to make local government work for women.

Local government remains at the front line of service delivery, and working towards making gender equality 'real' in the context of increased citizen participation and state accountability, whilst supporting partners to strengthen their gender strategies has potential to transform the lives of the poor in the six pilot districts. The programme has the potential to create a more positive and vibrant discourse on the demand for full equality of rights by women and men, and disadvantaged groups who are constantly struggling to have a voice in a highly polarised environment.

Gender budgeting at local level will be implemented in an environment that is still tension filled where other civil society groups continue to struggle to penetrate. The strong engagement by ZWRCN and other partners of relevant 'spheres of influence' that include the MWGCD, Finance and Local Government, Rural and Urban Development, as well traditional authorities and other power structures will open up new spaces for engagement. Navigating the delicate balance between the state and non state spheres of power remains an important approach that can secure significant results.

13. Learning from GTF

During the relatively short implementation period, a number of lessons have been learnt.

- **Overall project or programme design**

- Wholesale adaptation of a gender budgeting model that has scored successes at central government level will not work at the local level, hence conducting the baseline and using the findings to make the case for cascading the gender budgeting model to the local government level is key.
 - A flexible programme design is critical because of the Zimbabwe context and the nature of local government in the country; creating structured spaces for periodic reflection whilst undertaking activities should be an integral part of programme design and implementation.
 - A programme design that takes cognisance of multi level engagement, so that there is a seamless and synergistic connection between processes is key; for example, whilst it is important to focus on capacitating councillors in local government, it is equally important to support a stronger relationship between councillors and management, so that they are coordinating response to gender equality concerns, which may not always be the case.
- **Adapting methods and approaches**
 - Process is as important as outputs and outcomes, sometimes more so. For example, a lot of time and energy must be invested in building relationships and trust at every level within local government (communities, council authorities, councillors), due to the polarised nature of communities, political tensions and general suspicion of NGOs.
 - Working through established structures and relationship has added the most value to engaging with local government. This includes respecting existing relationships by our partners and letting them take the lead in introducing the programme and defining activity orientation, as well as advising on the politics of implementing activities in a challenging environment.
 - **Working with partner organisations**
 - Partners will only enter into relationships that add value and are negotiated openly and from points of mutual strength. The strong partnerships emerging with ZiLGA/UCAZ, MDP-ESA, WIPSU have been negotiated on this ethical stance. Jointly developing an MOU and defining roles and responsibilities will cement the partnership. This is essential for effective performance of a long term programme such as the local government one, where the aim is to create and strengthen roots as well as to outlive the implementers.
 - **Risk assessment and management**

Since the political economic and social situation still remains fluid and challenging, there is need for ZWRCN and the programme partners to be alert. Skills in assessing risks and managing change, including gathering the right data and intelligence on prevailing conditions and situations are necessary, so that ZWRCN and partners retain a more proactive rather than reactive stance in responding to change. Programme development will thus be informed by a periodic trend analysis.