

RESEARCH REPORT

Social Accountability Research

**A study of the Young Women Working Groups in Bulawayo, Bindura,
Gwanda and Kadoma Districts.**

Submitted to Research Advocacy Unit

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Acronyms

BPRA	Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CYDT	Community Youth Development Trust
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
IYWD	Institute for Young Women Development
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
RDC	Rural District Council
RAU	Research Advocacy Unit
WILD	Women Institute for Leadership Development
ZANUPF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZESA	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority

1.0. Introduction

The Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) is currently implementing a programme entitled “Creating Demand for Devolution by Young Women”. It seeks to empower young women to lead advocacy efforts calling for devolution within their communities. Devolution, which is provided for in Section 264 of the Zimbabwe Constitution, enables citizens to have greater agency in effecting better, autonomous representation, which, in turn, will ensure better accountability. Under the project, six community-working groups were formed made up mainly of young women between the ages of 18 and 35 years old. Amongst the objectives of the working group is to hold duty bearers to account on the use of public resources and delivery of services to citizens.

1.1. Study objectives

The overall project goal is ***young women who actively use Section 264 of the Constitution to demand devolved development in their communities***. The specific objectives are:

- ✚ To enhance the capacity of young women to expand their network of allies to engage with duty bearers on issues of local social accountability for improved transparency and accountability by 2021.
- ✚ Facilitate policy dialogues and engagements at local level, linking communities and solution holders in the implementation of a localised devolution agenda by 2021

The programme aims to achieve the above through young women community working groups, whose objectives are:

- ✚ To raise awareness on Constitutional provision 264 and its benefits to the community.
- ✚ To develop representatives that can demand and push for the implementation of Section 264 of the Constitution.

This research study focuses on documenting the success or challenges of the campaign for social accountability through the young women community working groups and their interaction with duty bearers and other stakeholders in the districts of Kadoma, Bindura, Gwanda and Bulawayo. The research study also captures service delivery challenges faced in these communities highlighting coping mechanisms used by young women, opportunities and recommendations

1.2 Report structure

This report has six chapters. Chapter 2 explains the conceptual framework, which informed this study as well as providing key lessons from other studies conducted before on social accountability in Zimbabwe and Africa. Chapter 3 provides the research methodology, covering the research instruments and tools used during the study. Chapter 4 provides the research findings Chapter 5 covers the recommendations and chapter 6 gives the study conclusion.

2.0. Framing the Study

2.1. The Concept of Social accountability

Social accountability refers to approaches by which citizens, CSOs and other non-state actors hold government and service providers accountable for their performance. Social accountability is a prerequisite for citizens' empowerment, effective service delivery, devolved and decentralized, and sustainable development. Different stakeholders in Zimbabwe including the Young women working groups have and are experimenting with various social accountability tools. Access to information and opportunities to use it enable citizens individually and collectively to hold frontline providers and public officials accountable. Social accountability allows ordinary citizens' access to information, opportunities to express their needs and demand accountability from government. Without it, their governments can disillusion citizens. Governments can lack incentives for improved performance and cease to be legitimate. In social accountability, citizens engage government bureaucracies in an informed, systematic, and constructive way with the aim of facilitating a more democratic state.

The Constitution has progressive provisions that support social accountability (Sections 13, 119, 141, 194, 298, 299, 300 and 309 – 314)¹. Internal government accountability mechanisms that involve political checks and balances, administrative rules and procedures, auditing requirements, and law enforcement agencies like courts and the police are called “supply side”. Citizen, CSO and other non-state initiated social accountability is the “demand side”. “Demand” accountability is not entirely new. It is a form of vertical accountability, where those that govern account to the governed. Citizens have always used demonstrations, protests, advocacy campaigns, investigative journalism, and public interest lawsuits to pursue social justice and human rights.

2.2. Studying social accountability

This research is influenced by the concept of social accountability, its tools and principles. More importantly, the study sort to explore the extent to which the Young women working groups were putting social accountability to practice. In carrying out the study, the consulting team was keen to establish the form, and extent to which the young women were campaigning for social accountability. Worth noting was the tools and strategies they were employing to hold duty bearers to account. A focus on the successes they made and challenges encountered in tackling service delivery formed the basis for study discussions, lessons learnt and recommendations.

As Hickey and Mohan (2008: 239) observed social accountability is about answerability, “making power holders explain and give reasons for their actions”, and enforcement, “ensuring that poor or immoral performance is punished in some way”. As such the research sought to identify instances that duty bearers were made to explain their actions and where possible to do things differently.

2.3. Lessons from elsewhere and the Past

A number of key lessons emerge from reviewing literature and work on social accountability by other CSOs and academics.

- ✓ The political environment is a key determinant to the success or failure of social accountability programs. Many studies have examined the contestation between the ruling party (ZANU-PF), the state, and the main opposition party (MDC) and concluded that without ending the conflict it will always be difficult for civic players to push for effective social accountability and devolution Zimbabwe (Masunungure,. and Shumba, (2012)

1

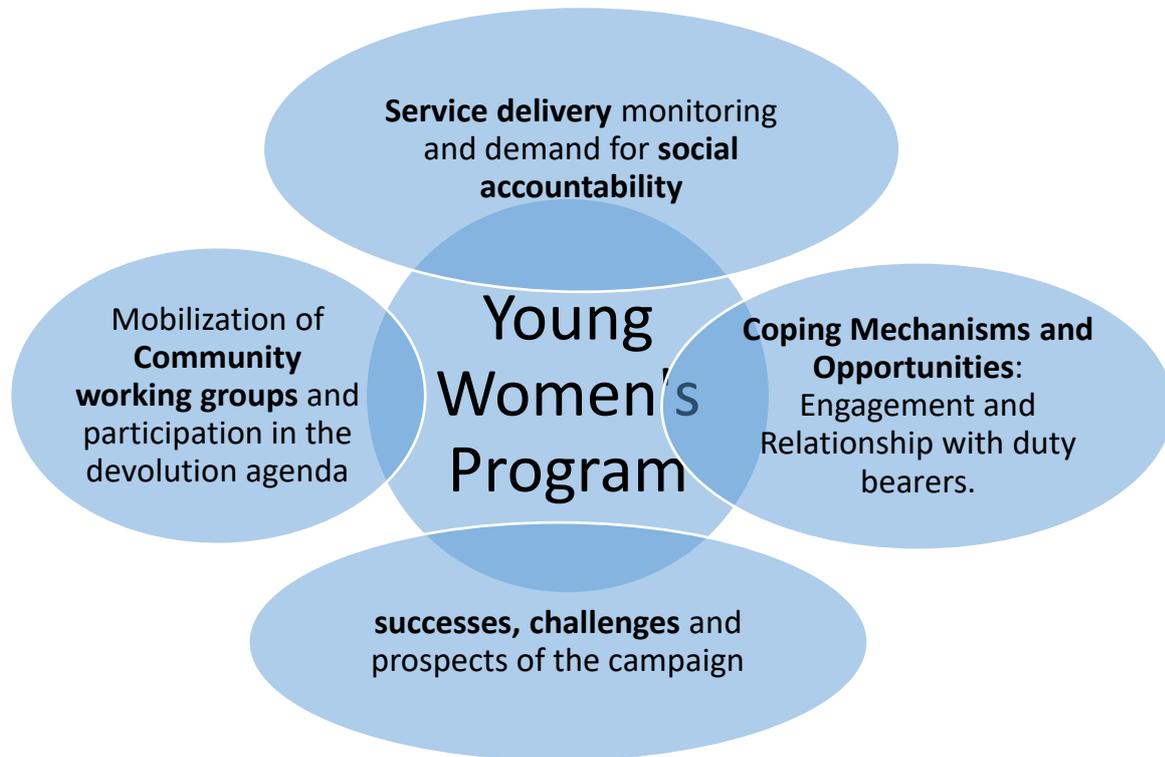
Polarization of political parties have curtailed the development of inclusive and non-partisan social accountability systems.

- ✓ The relationship between duty bearers and citizens is key to the success of social accountability programs. Some of the key challenges raised in other studies relate to the unwillingness of MPs, councillors and government ministers to work with civil society actors. The process is not apolitical as many think. (See Newell and Wheeler, 2006: 2).
- ✓ Citizens need to be proactive and innovative in their approach to social accountability. There is need for increased lobby and advocacy for favourable legislation and policies to support community action for social accountability and devolution.
- ✓ Most duty bearers get convinced when there is adequate research and documentation backing the suggestions coming from civil society actors.
- ✓ Social accountability campaigns are a process and not an event. It takes time to build confidence, establish relations and nurture them.
- ✓ Patriarchy tendencies often down play the role of women actors.
- ✓ Social accountability has however not always paid off in Zimbabwe. Citizen voices are not guaranteed a hearing, reception and adequate responsiveness due to the restricted political space in form of government's unwillingness to adhere to laid out constitutional provisions for such engagements. The harassment and intimidation of civic actors has also spoiled prospects for engagement. Since the birth of the MDC and its takeover of some local authorities, the autonomy and functioning of local government institutions became more contested in comparison to previous decades (Muchadenyika and Williams 2015)

3.0. Research Design and Methodology

This chapter covers the research design and methods used for generating information for this study- the research approach, the sampling techniques, the research tools and methods, and study limitations. The focus of the study guided the sampling and research methods used. Below are the key focus areas as presented through the terms of reference for the study:

Fig 1: study focus



3.1. Sampling Approach

The study adopted a largely qualitative approach. The research was participatory and applied a purposive sampling method coupled with a snowball approach to inform the targeting of the women groups, duty bearers and institutions that are familiar with the programme. The operating area for each of the RAU supported young women's groups was used as a criterion to draw samples in the research. Fieldwork was carried out in the districts where the young Women working groups are implementing their social accountability and devolution skills. The consulting team visited Kadoma, Bindura, Gwanda and Bulawayo as part of generating data for the study. Table 1 below presents a summary of tools and participants:

Table 1: Summary of tools and participants

Study Area	Participants	Tools used
Bindura	Devolution Champions, Young Women Working Group members, councillor, and headman	FGDs, KIIs and Documents analysis
Bulawayo	Devolution Champions, Young Women Working Group members, councillor, and WILD Representative.	FGDs, KIIs and Documents analysis
Kadoma	Devolution Champions, Young Women Working Group members, Residents Association Representative, councillor, and headman.	FGDs, KIIs, Participant observation, and Documents analysis
Gwanda	Devolution Champions, Young Women Working Group members and councillor.	FGDs, KIIs, Participant observation, and Documents analysis

Source: Fieldwork 7-22 November 2020

3.2. Research Process

The research was carried out over a period of three weeks (7th November to 21st November 2020) in the sampled areas using two teams from the consulting team. During the fieldwork, the consulting team visited Kadoma, Bindura, Gwanda and Bulawayo. Fieldwork in Bindura took place in the first week (12th of November); in Bulawayo, Gwanda and Kadoma in the second week (17-22 November 2020). The fieldwork entailed intensive consultations with programme participants, duty bearers and other key stakeholders in the program areas.

3.3. Research Methods

The following research methods were used: desk review of relevant documents, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation.

3.3.1. Desk Review

A thorough review of programme documents, proposals, publications, research reports, meeting minutes and workshop/training reports related to the programme was done. Key programme documents reviewed included (a) Project Document: Section 264 and Active Citizenship: Creating Demand for Devolution (b) Citizen Views of Local Council Performance under the COVID 19 Crisis (c) Art of Hosting Report. Document analysis helped to inform the consulting team of the aims and objectives of the young women programme and the major activities that were planned. Analysis of the documents allowed the consulting team to understand how the project began with RAU's capacity building trainings in Harare. A data extraction sheet was used to extract information on the successes and challenges faced in programme implementation. The information formed the basis of analysis and recommendations.

3.3.2 Key Informant Interviews

A key informant guide that focused on social accountability and service delivery in the selected study areas facilitated the key informant interviews. Specifically, the guide focused on the young women's

intervention in dealing with social service delivery, mobilizing other young women and fellow citizens to demand social accountability from duty bearers, as well as the successes and challenges encountered. Questions asked revolved around the young women's monitoring and evaluation of service delivery, participation in local authority budget consultations, expenditure tracking, and participation in public policy making. A combination of both face-to-face and virtual interviews via phone were used depending on the most appropriate means of communication (i.e. effective and accessible) between the consultant and the informants, given the COVID 19 precautions in place. Most key informants that were available during site visits had face-to-face interviews, and those unavailable due to busy schedules were interviewed via the phone.

Interviews helped generate information about the interviewees' attitudes, opinions, and points of views. A semi-structured interview approach was used to allow a variety of follow up questions and answers and an in-depth set of raw data. The use of categories and themes allowed the consulting team to decide what to include and exclude in the interviews. The researchers had In-depth interviews with both institutional representatives of duty bearers and some key beneficiaries of the program. Fourteen key informant interviews were held. Key informants were drawn from duty bearers (Members of Parliament, councillors, other CSOs or CBO strategic allies such as residents' association leaders, youth leaders, young women team leaders and convenors [See Annex. 1 below]. The interviewees were given a brief description of the programme and were asked for their consent in participating in the interview. The interviews provided deep insights into both the duty bearers and young women's perception of the programme.

3.3.3 Focus Group Discussions

Five FGDs were used as one of the major data collection methods for the study. The focus was on establishing how the group was structured and operating since the training of the Devolution champions by RAU. This was through assessing what the RAU trained Devolution champions have done, the strategies used to mobilize others and the current number of women champions apart from the 15 originally trained by RAU as well as number of other women reached by the programme. The FGDs included: the young women's responses to current social service delivery challenges, their engagement and relationship with duty bearers, their partnership with other stakeholders, what they perceived as their successes and challenges, especially their demand for social accountability and a citizens-led devolution agenda. The FGDs enabled the young women groups in different locations to share freely many issues about the research. An FGD was convened in each of the programme locations to gather the different views from the women participating in the programme. Two focus groups were held in Bindura, separately covering the rural and urban young women, in Kadoma the FGD combined both urban and rural young women participants, one was held with the Bulawayo Young Women participants and one was also held with the Gwanda young women participants to solicit their views of the programme [See Annex.2 below].

3.3.4. Participant Observation

Participant observation was used as an additional data collection method. Observing some of the places that the young women program intervened was key to concluding whether they were into real or cosmetic business. Seeing how they are structured, housed and how they relate informed the consulting team's sense of the program sustainability.

3.4. Data Analysis

Content analysis was instrumental for purposes of data classification and summarisation, as data was coded and classified, thematically, in order to make sense of collected data and to highlight critical similarities and differences in subjective understandings and practices pertinent to social

accountability. The themes eventually established were constantly refined as we moved back and forth between the different qualitative data collected.

Several processes within the data analysis processes were carried out including a reduction of data prior to analysing it. The document analysis provided the base for the interviews and key informant interview processes. A comparison of the interviews and FGDs findings with analysed documents were made at different stages of the research. The data analysis revealed some issues that were repeated throughout the research by beneficiaries, duty bearers and programme managers/conveners. To check validity of findings, the mixed method approach was used to compare results from different datasets.

4.0. Key Research Findings

Table 2 summarizes each Program site versus the activities that young women were able to engage the authorities.

Local authority	Status of Young Women Program (1=still setting up, 2=Taken off, 3= Moving)	Young Women Working Group's involvement
Bulawayo	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Engaged on service delivery discussions ✚ Attend budget consultations ✚ Communication with duty bearers through WhatsApp group [COVID 19 scenario].
Bindura (Urban and Rural)	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Required at all council consultations ✚ Engaged on service delivery discussions ✚ Attend Budget consultations and make contributions ✚ Deciding on Devolution Funds
Kadoma Urban	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Budget consultations but no prior information shared ✚ Require Clearance letters to convene public meetings ✚ District Administrator not comfortable with Devolution discussions. ✚ Communication with duty bearers through WhatsApp group [COVID 19 scenario].
Kadoma Rural/Sanyati	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Community meetings with councillor support ✚ Still to engage on service delivery discussions
Gwanda	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Getting budget proposals before budget consultation ✚ Councillors sharing critical information on Devolution ✚ Regular ward consultative meetings ✚ Communication with duty bearers through WhatsApp group [COVID 19 scenario].

4.1. Status of Partner work on Social accountability

Most of young women's working groups are still in the initial stage of setting up their mode of operation and community infrastructure. As such, the practice of Social accountability is a new phenomenon that needs time to be embedded in their membership and duty bearers. Most of the young women working groups are yet to formally engage and collaborate with the local authorities. No young women-working group reported using community scorecards as a way of feedback to local authorities. Although the groups have done sensitization meetings with other local women and talked of rolling out some evidence gathering on social accountability, these are still wish lists. No group reported usage of any of the following social accountability tools: service delivery satisfaction surveys, use of service charters to hold duty bearers to account, stakeholder surveys, leadership performance scorecards, petitions among others. Only the Bindura young women-working group reported having staged a demonstration at council offices carrying empty buckets and sitting in council premises demanding their right to water. In Bulawayo, the residents including the young women have written a position paper to council protesting the way budget consultations where done.

For starters, most of the young women working groups, as a kick off to their social accountability work resorted to the identification of service delivery problems in their areas of operation, joining hands with other stakeholders and monitoring local authority responses to these problems. Table 2 below summarizes the tools that each working group is using with ✓ denoting usage of the Social accountability tool, while X denotes no usage and # denoting a somewhat gravitation towards the usage of the tool but not fully and formally embraced. The # denotes use confined to small-scale initiation by the young women themselves, for instance in Bindura, public expenditure tracking is done by means of the Young women convening a ward meeting and inviting the local councillor to give feedback on specific proposed expenditure items and explain how the taxes are being used. The residents have no access to local authority records neither is there a release of expenditure statements to the group.

Table 3: Use of Social Accountability tools and performance per Working Group Summary

Working Group	Using Tools for Social Accountability				
	Service Delivery Monitoring	Evaluation of Public Services	Participatory Budgeting	Participatory Policymaking	Public Expenditure Tracking
Bulawayo	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Bindura (Urban and Rural)	✓	✓	✓	X	#
Kadoma Urban	✓	✓	X	X	X
Kadoma Rural/Sanyati	✓	X	X	X	X
Gwanda	✓	✓	X	X	X

Source: Fieldwork 7-22 November 2020.

Concisely, all the young women working groups are into service delivery monitoring and evaluation of public services, but varying in terms of the degree to which this is done within a specific geographical setup and context. Only the Bindura working group indicated that they are into participatory budgeting as they receive budget information within a space of 2 to 3 weeks before the consultations with council officials. The other working groups never receive information before the day of the budget consultations. In Gwanda and Bulawayo, the young women reported that they and other residents received the information, at least 30 minutes or less before commencement of the consultations which means instead of responding to the proposal they will be flipping through the papers to understand the budget. Local authorities are using budget consultations as a way to get citizens to rubberstamp their budgets. Some are reported to dislike those who raise many questions than simple concurring with the presentations. From the focus group discussions, the young women groups confirmed that council officials come to defend their budget plans than consult the residents.

4.2 Service Delivery Monitoring

As part of their social accountability work, all the young women working groups are currently engaging residents and local authorities in addressing poor service delivery issues in their areas of operation. Fig 2 provides a summary of the service delivery challenges that the young women working groups are helping resolve in their districts. Service delivery issues was forwarded to local authorities through one-on-one meetings with ward councillors and council bureaucrats, at council meetings, through letters and interface platforms between duty bearers and residents.

In Kadoma Urban, the biggest challenge has been that of water supplies in some high-density areas; especially ward 17, Waverly and Westview. The young women working group in Kadoma is collaborating with the residents' associations to press Kadoma municipality for better service delivery.

As part of their social accountability work of monitoring service delivery, the young women have confronted council over its failure to consult residents when drilling boreholes to end water woes in the urban areas. Due to lack of consultations with residents, the municipality was criticised for drilling boreholes in places that they are not required such as wards 11, while leaving places with great need such as Westview unattended. Some of the successes of the social accountability campaign in service delivery monitoring was the push for the purchase of an incinerator at Rimuka Family Care Health centre, the repair of sewage pipes in ward 2 and replacement of burst pipes in ward 10. The young women have also taken it upon themselves demonstrate that they do not just criticise but are also available to offer their services when required through taking a front role in promoting the city clean-up program.

The young women’s working group in Gwanda is busy with getting council to address problems of water and sanitation in ward 4. Advocacy efforts to get refuse collected is marred by the council’s failure to secure a better refuse collecting tractor since the one they are using has constant breakdowns. Funding of service delivery continues to be a problem with council only able to raise ZW \$200 000 when ZW\$1.5million is needed for the repair of streetlights. The Gwanda councillor , Thulani Moyo noted that an emerging trend within the local authority is that once council denies people service delivery, they hold on to their money and will not pay for services.

Fig 2: A summary of service delivery challenges young women are grappling with in the districts

Kadoma	Gwanda	Bulawayo	Bindura
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal health services • water and sanitation issues • Refuse collection • Access to Family planning services • shoartgae of drugs, especially non-availability of ARVs. • Immunization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ward 4 blocks poor draingage system and have no toilets • water problems punctuated by frequent pipe bursts. • No street lights • Poor refuse colection • Accomodation shortages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connection of sewer pipes in section B • Electrification of phase 1 • ZIMTA section has o water • About 60 government houses without sewer system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water problems (Borehole repairs) • bad road infrastructure • Poor maternal health services • Absence of family planning services

Source: Fieldwork 7-22 November 2020.

In Bulawayo, the young women chose to work at Cowdry Park since it is a developing location facing several problems. One of the success stories by the young women has been the ability to restore residents trust in their municipality easily in terms of addressing the main reticulation system problems, road construction and maintenance, and electrification of new places among others. Three letters were written to Bulawayo municipality with the aim of getting the sewer issues rectified. Juliet, on of the Devolution champions has been to the city engineers’ office and has also helped link the residents with the municipality bureaucrats and encouraged them to pay rates to get good service delivery in turn.

4.3. Evaluation of Public Service Delivery

In rural Bindura, the young women (also known as, “the sisters”) have been instrumental in restoring local clinic quality services by engaging the local authorities regarding the attitude of the clinic staff resulting in some transfers being initiated. The sisters in Chiveso area have also influenced and participated in council’s construction of mothers’ shelters at the local clinic, the drilling of three boreholes, the construction of Dongorembada primary school and an irrigation dam project.

As part of enhancing public service delivery in their areas, the sisters have a deliberate strategy of attending all council and community meetings and getting their voice and preferences heard. The sisters now boast of having sponsored the election into leadership of young women into various community positions, which included School Development Committee chairs, secretaries, traditional court secretaries, youth leaders and secretaries/treasurers to political parties. In these local positions, they ensure that the women’s voices and representation is recognized as well as determination of the quality of service delivery they wanted to see. In rural Kadoma, the young women have as part of conscientizing rural communities, are working with the local councillor in ensuring that they put an end to women maternal health challenges, including the problem of contraceptives and access to sanitary wear. A local project to sew sanitary wear for women was proposed.

Young women in Urban Kadoma has called upon the local authority to address the problem of high and exorbitant maternity fees, which are now offered on a limited scale and causing women to queue for service in the early hours of the morning. The young women-working group together with residents association have demanded an explanation from the city leaders in erecting some traffic lights in the central business district at time when most suburbs were struggling to get access to clean and potable water. The duty bearers managed to justify the move by explaining that there was an adequate budget elsewhere for the drilling of boreholes. The young women have also scrutinized the problems associated with immunization, which is causing many urban residents to overcrowd a rural Patchway clinic, which is ran by private mining companies and shunning the unequipped local authority institutions.

4.4. Participatory Budgeting and Expenditure Tracking

Most young women working groups have not been able to participate in participatory budgeting and expenditure tracking. Their participation has turned out to be cosmetic than meaningful, as local authorities do not freely share budget details in time for them to scrutinize before the consultations. In Bulawayo, Gwanda, and Kadoma both focus groups and key informants confirmed that bureaucrats do these exercises, and they use residents to rubberstamp their budget preferences.

Respondents knew Bindura alone when it comes to adverting budget consultations and sharing relevant information at least two weeks prior to the budget consultations. In Bindura, public meeting notices are posted at the shops, while announcement are made at community gatherings. In addition, messengers deliver official invitation letters to known regular attendees’ addresses. This ensures that duty bearers remain accountable and residents are given adequate time to prepare for the consultations. In Kadoma Urban, council officials are notorious of promising participants that they will act on their contributions, yet in reality, they ignore them.

In Bulawayo, respondents indicated that a recent consultation of budget consultations via WhatsApp

Young Women just like other residents only suggest and not fully decide. Council makes the decision; they are only active in budget consultations. Thulani Moyo, Gwanda Councillor

during the lockdown did not end well for one councillor. The councillor when probed to give more details about some budget preferences decided to quit the WhatsApp group and still went on to ensure that council implemented what the young women and residents associations were opposing. The civic groups, including the young women, through the Bulawayo United Residents Associations (BUPRA) and WILD went onto write a position paper to the city council and protested the behaviour of the councillor. In Kadoma Urban, local authority bureaucrats are famous for coming to notify residents of what is in the budget and refuse to entertain queries and questions, which might reverse their aspirations.

4.4. Participatory Public Policy Making

Participatory public policy making is part of social accountability as it facilitates the inclusion of individuals or groups in the design of policies, bylaws and development initiatives via consultative or participatory means to achieve accountability, transparency and active involvement. In the case of young women, the choices made over the use of public funds or running of public projects at district level points to participatory public policy making. This covers issues of devolution funds as to who decides on their utilization at district or ward level.

In Gwanda, young women and residents were not involved in deciding on the use of devolution funds. The local leadership decided for the people and only later sought verification of whether their decision making was right. Coincidentally, young women and resident associations noted that they were not opposed to the local authorities' idea to construct a primary school as children were walking long distances to reach the neighbouring school. This was also the same with water storage tanks supplied to Gwanda's wards 5 and 6. As a prelude to future involvement in decision-making and their demand for social accountability, the young women engaged the Member of Parliament, Lindiwe Maphosa with the aim of ensuring that they and the residents are not by-passed. In principle, councillors agreed that in future they will share information on devolution to community members, but only time would tell if they really mean what they committed to. In Kadoma, young women's applications to conduct awareness raising meetings and discuss devolution with residents were unsuccessful as the District Administrator felt that it is too political for the young women to handle. The Minister would rather have them speak to issues of women empowerment and not devolution per se.

In Bulawayo just like in Gwanda, the young women-working group did follow up on devolution funds, only to note that the Minister and council had allocated it to the construction of a school in Cowdry Park. The decision was arrived at without consulting the residents, but it seems residents did not oppose it as the need for a clinic was visible to all since the place is still developing. It seems the trend has been for the duty bearers to decide and make choices and be able to pacify or adequately justify their decisions to the community later. It is worth noting that despite the slow pace to accommodate residents in making decisions around public funds the duty bearers through the young women working groups and other citizens groups are giving them the necessary pressure to involve communities. In Bindura, the working group raised a tangible constituency awareness on devolution, but the limitation

is that the young women are in some and not all the wards. In line with the foregoing, the monitoring of devolution funds at district level is still evolving with ward councillors restricting themselves to account for their ward level work and decisions.

4.5. Young Women -Duty Bearer Relations

One of the key determinants for the young women working groups to making progress in social accountability and devolution issues is their relationship with duty bearers. During FGDs and interviews, the significant repercussions of relations on social accountability were discussed. This includes how the local authorities perceive the young women, which ultimately determine whether they afford them meaningful and conducive engagements or deny them.

Table 4: Young Women Duty Bearers Engagement

Working Group	Young Women Engagement Processes and Mechanisms
Bulawayo (Cowdry Park)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Relationship mixed but tilting in their favour. Ensures councillors in focus areas attend all ward meetings ✓ 3 letters written to council and position paper protesting lack of sincere local budget consultations ✓ New links were recently established with the State Minister, the MP councillor and council bureaucrats
Bindura (Urban and Rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Have good working relations with their councillors, council bureaucrats and headman ✓ Full participation in council meetings, local gatherings and have community rapport ✓ Staged a sit-in at council offices protesting water problems with empty water budgets
Kadoma Urban	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Relations with local duty bearers still unfolding with pockets of suspicion, much emphasis on sticking to mandates and limits. ✓ Council and police clearance still strict with need for more than 7days clearance for young women public meetings ✓ District administrator not convinced that young women should pioneer devolution awareness ahead of political leadership.
Kadoma Rural/Sanyati	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Currently have good working relations with their councillor, council bureaucrats and corporates operating in the area. ✓ Councillor has contributed and sponsored some of the young women events ✓ Much is still to be done and determine when relations are permanently positive
Gwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Moderately good relations still unfolding. Young Women called for a well-attended meeting with all Councillors, Mayor and Member of Parliament. ✓ ZRP asked to beef up ward 9 security through more patrols and complied ✓ ZRP not strict with public meetings clearance letter required 5 working days prior to event. A simple notification suffices. ✓ Ward 9 Councillor sharing information on devolution with community members.

Source: Fieldwork 7-22 November 2020.

It must, however, be pointed out that the young women, no matter how sour their relations with local authorities seemed, they had some sympathizers within the system. In cases, where they were perceived to be troublemakers, the relationship is marred by suspicion, the use of frustrating, long and cumbersome processes of engagement. In areas where the relationship was good, the young

women found it easy to call upon the duty bearers, inquire what they want and ask for favours where necessary.

Relations between some duty bearers and young women is not cordial and sustainable. In Kadoma Urban, the FGD participants indicated that they rarely get to engage the Member of Parliament who is now residing in Norton. Efforts to get him to attend their meetings have been fruitless. The District Administrator feels that the Young Women are overstepping their role when they talk of devolution instead of ending with women empowerment. As rightly put by Thembile Phute, "*Politically polarized environments [like Zimbabwe] makes the engagement between the supply-side and civil society /citizens very difficult.*"² In Bindura, the young women noted that though their working relationship with duty bearers is cordial they still tread carefully when it comes issues involving the politics between the ruling party and opposition parties. There is high probability that cooperation with duty bearers is compromised if duty bearers feel the young women are into opposition politics. In Kadoma Urban, it seems the duty bearers are not yet clear with the young women's agenda. The young women must exercise a lot of patience and perseverance to navigate the system.

In Bulawayo, the young women are still working on building and maintaining their relations with the various duty bearers. What was clear from the conversations during the study is that council bureaucrats and ZESA officials have accommodated them. The local councillors in Cowdry Park are available, attending all ward meetings and ready to engage. The challenge comes when they meet the full council with councillors coming from other wards where they do not operate and may think otherwise. In Gwanda, the councillors are receptive though they take time to implement suggestions from the residents. One of the councillors recommended that the young women should do more than they are currently doing. They need to go to others wards they are not present and capitalize on youths. It is also important to note that in Gwanda there is one ward that does not have a councillor hence that has implications on the ward which does not know who to approach to air out the challenges they are facing within the ward.

4.6. Community Mobilization strategies and Progress

The young women working groups have used different strategies to penetrate and commence work in communities that they are operating. Table 5 summarizes the progress of each working group, and the key allies that they are working with.

From the RAU trainings in Harare, the Bulawayo working group chose Cowdry Park to be their place of operation. The rationale was that Cowdry Park is a developing area that they could work together with residents to improve service delivery, enhance social accountability and remote pro-citizen devolution approaches. They also have a strong technical back up from WILD, which specializes in empowering women through devolution trainings. WILD already had contacts in the area and it was easy for the young women to have a safe take off in terms of mobilizing for meetings, facilitating events and seeking authorization for public gatherings. Consequently, each Devolution champion was assigned to bring new members to the group and identify areas needing the group's intervention. Progressive realization of the group's objectives seems to be taking place although at a slow to medium speed.

In Kadoma, the 15-trained Devolution champions divided themselves into eight for the urban area and seven for the rural area. So far, the urban has six champions remaining after two champions left the

² Social Accountability and citizen engagement – understanding poor service delivery in the Zimbabwean context. See http://copsam.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Zimbabwe-context_SAM.pdf

group. A decision to select a nearby (Ward 2), Sanyati rural district area as for their rural working group was reached. Currently the rural group has 12 Devolution champions after training seven new ones.

Table 5: Summary of the take off and implementation of the Working Groups

Working Group	Number of Devolution Champions (increase from original 15)	Outreach to community members and areas covered.	Key Partners
Bulawayo (Cowdry Park)	35	Currently covering Cowdry Park's service delivery issues [Phase 1 area, section 15, government houses] though aiming to cover the whole of Cowdry Park.	Women Institute for Leadership Development (WILD)
Bindura	30 [Urban] 70 (Rural)	The young women are operating in wards 6, 10, 12, and 13. They have ±450 members in their network for both rural and urban.	Institute for Young Women Development (IYWD)
Kadoma Urban	6	Lead by 6 Devolution champions and held more than 10 meetings in Kadoma urban. Aim to cover all the 17 wards in Kadoma but with specific focus on high density wards	Residents Association
Kadoma Rural/Sanyati	12	Operates in ward 2 of Sanyati rural. Has reached over 200 members. Focusing on women empowerment and still to work on social accountability and devolution issues	None
Gwanda	30	Operates in Gwanda urban. Managed to do a local Training of Trainers for Devolution champions and added another 15 to those originally trained by RAU. Convened a multi-stakeholder platform bringing in the MP, Mayor and councillors	Community Youth Development Trust (CYDT), WILD.

Source: Fieldwork 7-22 November 2020.

The rural group got assistance from the local councillor to identify five women in ward 2 that had potential to work with the young women-working group. Since then, the Devolution champions with the help of the councillor and well-wishers have convened several meetings bringing together an estimated 200 young women. The group has focused on women empowerment as its first step before commissioning a study and concentrating on social accountability and devolution issues

In Bindura, a group of 15 Devolution champions from wards 6, 10, 12, and 13 in 2018 began mobilizing others through community gatherings. To date the young women program has reached more than 400 men in both rural and urban Bindura. The Bindura working group reported that they

have managed to boost women's presence and active participation at both community and local council meetings. The young women have a high demand for their monthly meetings but have for logistical reasons limited number of participants to 50 per meeting. Strategies used in mobilization include the use of local councillors and traditional leaders.

In Gwanda, the 15 Devolution champions trained by both RAU and WILD in March 2019, managed to train another 15 champions bringing the number to 30. Before the Covid-19 challenges, the group used to conduct face-to-face meetings every Tuesday, which they are now conducting through WhatsApp. The group network size is about 80 people.

4.7. Value attached to Young Women Groups and their Community Contributions

Some of the achievements ascribed to the young women working groups by communities include the building of self-confidence in women, empowering them, enabling them to stand up and claim their rights. Through the program, young women in the communities are actively participating in community and council meetings. The program has amplified women's voices in many ways. Some of them have risen to assume positions of leadership at school development committees, peace, health, youth and church committees, among many others. In Kadoma, the residents' association felt that the young women's program has helped them to get women engaged in local affairs that they have for a long time left to men's care. Apart from their focus on social accountability and devolution issues, the young women working groups have voluntarily indulged themselves in some community work. This has proved instrumental to building relations and winning the confidence of both residents and duty bearers in the areas they operate.

In Bindura, the young women have assisted the community through cooking meals at community functions. They have helped with both cooking for builders and carrying of bricks during the construction of schools, mother shelters and other infrastructure in the area. Some of the women in peace committees have been assisting the headman's courts with advice on how to handle gender based violence cases. The young women have also been participating in clean up campaigns. In Kadoma Urban, the young women-working group joined the clean-up campaign.

In Gwanda, the young women have assisted local authorities with clearing the bushes prior to the construction of Garikai Hlalanikuhle primary school. They also provided water and cooking services to the builders. In another development, young women in Gwanda came together, made contributions and purchased gum poles to help speed ZESA's connection of electricity in the area.

Despite their contributions and engagements in community work. The young women have encountered many problems. First, most of them are married and their husbands have not welcomed their involvement in the working groups. For instance, in Gwanda, one Devolution Champion withdrew from the group after the husband denied her permission to participate. While some members run self-help projects to keep them, going and participating, others are incapacitated due to lack of capital. Still in Gwanda, the working group once faced problems with residents failing to stand with them in what they wanted from duty bearers causing them to be viewed as people not standing for residents' views but their own. The women are still to penetrate political parties' structures in ways that would enable them to have members of parliament from their groups.

4.8. Challenges with Young women's campaign for social accountability

Efforts to attain social accountability through the young women working group is hindered by a number of challenges that they face.

- I. In some areas, young women programs as other civic groupings and NGOs are viewed as troublemakers wanting to challenge duty bearers' decisions. Consequently, local authorities deal with them with caution, always ready to defend their positions. Focus group discussions in Kadoma pointed out when council officials come to present their proposed budgets and other plans they come to defend and rarely tolerate those than question them. For similar reasons, in Gwanda, it has taken long for the young women program to be accepted

“It is no secret that most duty bearers view the work done by groups such as the young women as regime change interventions bent on tarnishing the image of ZANU(PF) and the local authority”-[Kadoma FGD participant]

- II. The polarized political environment in Zimbabwe and the view that the young women and NGOs are pushing a hidden political agenda against the government of the day and working for the opposition continues to frustrate opportunities for improved relations and meaningful citizen-duty bearer engagements
- III. Access to vital information remains a challenge. Most local authorities are reluctant to share critical information around service delivery monitoring and evaluation, expenditure tracking budget and formulation and. Despite undergoing through the RAU trainings, young women need access to media outlets, newspapers, and community radios so that they keep themselves well informed of developments around them, which enables them to advocate from a continuously updated point of view.
- IV. Some duty bearers and residents that the young women are engaging demand allowances for attending devolution teachings and social accountability briefings, which is anti-



The recurring challenge in all the conversations is the lack of sincerity on the part of the duty bearers. As much the young women's voices are represented, it is not just about having their voices represented. We are also talking about implementation. We want young women to be part of decision making and to hold those responsible for the deliverables accountable. – George Mambwe, Belina Residents Association, Kadoma

developmental. One key informant noted that in Kadoma urban if the duty bearers recognize that the invitation to a workshop or multi-stakeholder dialogue has no monetary gains in form of allowances they often do not attend. A Bulawayo Councillor also complained, “Communities look for handouts when called to meetings, ‘siyaphiwani?’ What are they going to give us?”

- V. Some duty bearers feel that it is wrong for the young women working groups to be leading the campaign on social accountability within the context devolution when they do not have a devolution go-ahead or debriefing from government. Duty bearers often do not implement what was discussed. They would rather have the young women and other residents have their say and not see its fruition.
- Vi The use of WhatsApp for communication and engagement with duty bearers by the women groups during the height of COVID 19 has excluded some young women from participating in both social accountability and devolution discussions. The limitations of data and airtime have become a tool of exclusion for many.

5.0. Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

5.1. Lessons Learnt

- ✓ A good working relationship between duty bearers and the young women working groups translates into pro-poor development and gender sensitive policies. The social accountability program in Bindura is viable because councillors appreciate the role young women play in terms of health, education, water and sanitation campaigns.
- ✓ The link between citizens' obligations and the demand for one's rights in service delivery and social accountability cannot be separated. The young women working groups In Bindura, Kadoma and Gwanda have reported that they are encouraging residents to pay for service delivery and demand it appropriately. This has been highly emphasized by both citizens and duty bearers
- ✓ Engaging duty bearers on the subject of social accountability requires patience and perseverance, especially when clearance letters for public meetings are stuck in bureaucracies.
- ✓ There are certain key offices that one cannot avoid when working on issues of Social accountability and devolution. The office of the district administrator, the police and the councillors are key to the success or failure of the program.
- ✓ Holding a number of and not just one multi-stakeholder awareness raising session on social accountability and devolution issues is important. It is a process rather than an event to get stakeholder to appreciate and run with the issues.

5.2. Recommendations to Young Women Working Groups

- ✚ The devolution champions need to continue reading more on social accountability and have information on their fingertips. This will help in having duty bearers treat them with more sincerity and seriousness in their engagements.
- ✚ All the young women's working groups need to enhance their internal communication and external communication strategies. This includes creation of WhatsApp groups. Internally, there is need for a robust and constant mechanism of updating each other on developments in the area of social accountability and devolution. Externally, there is need to build strong partnerships with duty bearers beyond the districts and wards they are currently operating in.
- ✚ There is need for the Young women to expand into more wards and continue building and maintaining good relations with duty bearers. This includes social marketing of their work and upping attendance at full council meetings in big numbers. Many multi-stakeholder meetings aimed at introducing the young women program is required in all the districts.
- ✚ A deliberate link and collaboration with other CSOs and development initiatives in the districts that the young women are operating is required so that they build alliances and put great pressure for reforms on duty bearers.
- ✚ There is need for both intra and inter district exchange visits among the young women's working groups in Bindura, Bulawayo, Gwanda and Kadoma. The exchange will enable them to learn from each other and enhance their tackling of challenges at local level.
- ✚ The young women program need to invest more in research and documentation of social accountability issues to enable them to be evidence-based and legitimize their campaigns.
- ✚ There is need for the Devolution champions to invest more in IEC materials on social accountability and letting communities know of their program activities. Collaborating with local authorities and establishing some information centres will be ideal. Needless to emphasize the call for them to reach out to more wards and communities.

- ✚ RAU and other CSOs need to find ways of capacitating duty bearers on social accountability and devolution issues. It is not enough to expect that young women working groups will easily do it without resistance. Getting an outsider to do it is better than having the local young women groups do it.

5.3. Recommendations for Duty Bearers

- ✚ There is need for duty bearers to have a positive attitude to young women groups and meaningfully engage them on issues of social accountability and devolution. It is important for duty bearers to avoid mixing politics and development and wrongly assume that civic actors are from opposition parties bent on tarnishing their image.
- ✚ As a process of facilitating participatory development, local authorities need to involve the young women in devolution funds decisions. Consulting the intended beneficiaries and soliciting their views than just implement decisions in a top down manner is commendable.
- ✚ Duty bearers need to do more advertising of local meetings and sharing of information prior to convening the meetings, especially budget consultations. In addition, it is important to have flexible time schedules of consultations that are gender sensitive and enable women to participate and still do their household chores. Bureaucrats must not come to community consultation meetings in a rushed manner and expecting residents to rubber-stamp council proposals.
- ✚ There is need for duty bearers to ensure that service delivery at institutions such as clinics do not discriminate against HIV patients and other terminally ill patients.
- ✚ RAU and the young women devolution champions should find ways of helping duty bearers in building their capacity to understand and appreciate social accountability and devolution issues. Now the demand side (residents) are more enlightened than the supply side (duty bearers).

6.0. Conclusion

As a way of ensuring good governance and transparency, social accountability remains a priority to improved service delivery, for effective, devolved and decentralized local government. The young women's working groups are still in their nascent stage, but they need to be developed and strengthened for the good of communities, local authorities and central government. One of the positive impacts of social accountability interventions by the young women working groups is increased women awareness and participation,

The work of the young women working groups suffered a serious drawback with COVID 19 lockdown restrictions. Most of them had just been 6 to 9 months into existence when COVID 19 struck. More time is required to see them in action and properly evaluate them. Early evaluations are likely to give a piecemeal side of the big picture. In many ways, the context constitutes an important element in the success and failure of social accountability in the service delivery campaign, and the push for devolution. Overall, the pursuit of social accountability by the young women program is curtailed by the shortage or lack of duty bearers interested in building alliances for effective development. At face value, the study's key findings are mostly in agreement with other inquiries into social accountability, mainly on the need for political will on the side of duty bearers and cooperation from both duty bearers and the citizens.

7.0. References

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8.0. Annexes

Annex 1 List of key Informants

1. **Gwanda:** Thulani Moyo (Ward 9 Councillor)
2. **Gwanda:** Bridget Ncube (Vice Chairlady – Gwanda Devolution Champions)
3. **Gwanda:** Zanele Nyathi (Chairlady – Gwanda Devolution Champions)
4. **Bulawayo:** Edward Nare (Residents Association Secretary for Cowdry Park phase 1), (Deputy Organising Secretary for Bulawayo United Residents Association)
5. **Bulawayo:** Permanent Ngoma WILD officer
6. **Bulawayo:** Sindiso N Dlamini
7. **Bindura:** Vimbai Nukau, Young Women working Group Coordinator
8. **Bindura :** Headman Chiveso
9. **Bindura:** Councillor Ngoshi
10. **Kadoma** Urban : Councillor Kokera
11. **Kadoma:** George Mabwe, Residents Association
12. **Sanyati :** Councillor Madzvanda
13. **Kadoma :**Elaine Manyere, Programme Convener
14. **Kadoma :** Pretty Madekufamba, Urban Coordinator

Annex 2 List of FGD Participants

Bulawayo

1. Siphathisiwe Sibanda
2. Juliet Samson
3. Partial Dube
4. Concillia Ndadzungira
5. Lydia Barda
6. Jennifer S Chiveyo
7. Licon M Dube

Gwanda

1. Thulani Moyo
2. Bridget Ncube
3. Zanele Nyathi
4. Ncominhlango Mbewe
5. Silibaziso Mathe
6. Sithandazile Ndlovu
7. Vanessa Mazhale
8. Karen Ndlovu

Kadoma

1. Lindah Y Mangadza
2. Bessie Thom
3. Noster Shoniwa
4. Elizabeth Thom
5. Letwin Mazuru
6. Tafadzwa Y Gondo
7. Caroline Farawadya
8. Chantel Gondo

Bindura Rural (ward 13 Chiveso)

1. Nokuthula Gombera
2. Priscilla Mufumira
3. Fungai Utati
4. Sharai Mazhindu
5. Precious Nyamutowa
6. Vainess Takavadini

Bindura Urban

1. Ronica Mutingwende
2. Gladys Chigariro
3. Stacy Mukwindidza

4. Maria Nambozo
5. Susan Chiwacha
6. Alice Mangwende
7. Barbara Charakupa
8. Lizzy Mudzimuri
9. Brenda Charakupa

Social Accountability Research report

Terms of Reference

Position: Social Accountability Consultant (SAC)

Duration: 21 days

Basis: Individual consultancy contract

About the Research and Advocacy Unit

Founded in 2006, the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) is a Zimbabwean based think tank dedicated to undertaking sound independent policy research to inform, influence and enhance policy-making processes while also strengthening active citizenship. With a team of experienced researchers, advocacy experts and communication strategists, RAU conducts research particularly issues pertaining to women, children and the youth. RAU's vision is to be a key organization fostering a democratic culture through citizen empowerment. The organization's mission is to conduct research particularly areas pertaining to women, children and the youth with a view to bringing about policy changes which promote their inclusion and participation within Zimbabwe.

Background of the project

The Research and Advocacy Unit's programme "Creating Demand for Devolution by Young Women" seeks to empower young women to lead in the devolution campaign within their communities. Devolution is provided for in Section 264 of the Zimbabwe Constitution. It enables citizens to have greater agency in better and autonomous representation to ensure better accountability in their communities. The implementation of Section 264 is a crucial in creating spaces for more active citizen engagement and oversight and this will require that citizens impress the government to seriously consider its constitutional obligations of devolving both the political power and resources to locals. It is also the case that citizens exercise their agency by demanding devolution and its advantages.

Social accountability is critical outcome of devolution. It brings the duty bearers closer to the people they serve when the resources and public goods reach out to the communities. Socially accountable leaders and community representatives benefit directly from this behaviour when they received the dividend in the form of legitimacy. It reduces the transactional costs for the communities and results in active and informed communities.

RAU has been working with young women on improving their agency in the course of devolution in Bulawayo, Gwanda, Bindura and Kadoma. Under the programme, six community-working groups of young women were formed. These groups were responding to the drive towards effective and beneficial devolution process. The theory of change for this devolution points to an accountability representation in the community. The following objectives drive the groups:

- To raise awareness on Constitutional provision 264 and its benefits to the community.
- To develop representatives that can demand and push for the implementation of Section 264 of the Constitution.

Beside social accountability advocacy in the community, the working groups held duty bearers to account for social services.

Scope of work

RAU is seeking the services of consultant to document the success or challenges of the campaign for social accountability in Kadoma, Bindura, Gwanda and Bulawayo through desk and field research. The consultant will consult the core members from the 6 community working groups during research. The research should capture service delivery challenges faced in these communities highlighting coping mechanisms used by young women, opportunities and proffering recommendations.

Deliverables

The following deliverables are expected from the consultant:

- An inception report detailing the consultants understanding of the assignment/terms of reference, proposed methodology and work plan.
- A completed research report with recommendations.

Consultancy Period

The expected duration for this consultancy is 21 days.

Qualification, Skills and Experience Required

Consultant interested in this assignment is required to have at the following qualifications:

- Minimum of postgraduate degree or equivalent in social sciences or related field.
- He / She must have experience of at least 5 years of working with and producing research reports in the field of social accountability or related fields.
- Demonstrate experience in and an in depth understanding of devolution and public participation issues.
- Good analytical, communication and writing skills.