

Capacity Needs Assessment Report

STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

FOR WOMEN IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

AND

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (SeLECT)

2018



THE WOMEN'S COALITION OF ZIMBABWE (WCoZ)

WCoZ is a network of women rights activists and women's organisations providing a central forum where women meet to engage in collective activism on issues affecting women and girls in Zimbabwe. The organisation brings together women of diverse political, social and economic backgrounds to collectively advocate and support the attainment and enjoyment of their rights. WCoZ's members work in diverse fields such as health, legal aid, access to education, gender-based violence, torture, skills training, poverty reduction, research, property rights and governance issues. The Coalition is governed by an elected Board, and is represented at provincial levels through its chapters in Bulawayo, Masvingo, Hwange, Harare, Chinhoyi, Kariba, Gweru, Gwanda, Bindura, Marondera and Mutare.

Goal

To achieve gender equity and equality through the creation of space for women and girls to collectively initiate and participate in strategies and actions that lead to their empowerment.

Vision

A Zimbabwean society where woman and girls fully enjoy their rights.

Mission

To co-ordinate women and girls for collective action through lobbying and advocacy.



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ACRONYMS

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CEDAW	Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSOs	Civic Society Organisations
FPTP	First Past The Post
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC T	Movement for Democratic Change (Tsvangirai)
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
WEL	Women Empowerment for Leadership
SADC	Southern African Development Community
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Capacity Needs Assessment report on Strengthening Leadership Capacity for Women in Public Administration and Civil Society Organisations (SeLeCT) sought to identify gaps, challenges and weaknesses that hinder women's uptake of leadership positions so as to come up with recommendations to increase women's effective participation in Public Administration and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). This was necessitated by the need for the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) to continue promoting and fostering the meaningful participation of women in governance, democracy and uptake of leadership roles in civil society organisations and public administration. A new strategic focus, while ensuring that the organisation's founding vision and objectives are realised, is imperative in addressing the needs of women in a dynamic society such as Zimbabwe. The capacity needs assessment is therefore built on the need to continuously improve on WCoZ's levels of internal efficiency in undertaking its mandate of strengthening women's capacities in leadership.

Through desk research and interviews of a number of selected stakeholders, and women aspiring to, or in leadership positions in CSOs and the public administration, the assessment noted a number of issues, some of which are pervasive, such as misogyny, lack of capacity, non-implementation of policies, patriarchal society, lack of exposure and fear. Furthermore, emerging threats that also hinder the rise of women to leadership positions such as social media, harassment and a declining trend in women vying for political offices were noted.

Recommendations are proffered with interventions that seek to address the deterrents to women's aspirations of rising to the top. They include:

- Conduct women's capacity building programmes that are tailor-made to suit their existing needs and context. The trainings should be all-encompassing and include unconventional aspects such as grooming and etiquette, public speaking and networking skills. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) skills, report writing skills, and resource mobilisation skills are other areas that could be added to the training curricula.
- Engaging societal structures, particularly those dominated by men, to minimise the perpetuation of patriarchy; facilitate exchange programmes for women at local, regional and international level.
- Build solidarity to support victims of social media abuse and collectively denounce abusers online as well as create awareness about proper online conduct.
- Engage journalists and media houses to showcase and cover women more positively.
- Establish networking platforms for women in leadership to share information.

If these recommendations are implemented, they may address some of the gaps that have been noted, and increase the visibility and rise of women leaders in the public administration and CSO sectors.

2. Introduction

Zimbabwe is a signatory to a number of protocols, international and regional documents that encourage the participation of women in leadership positions. Article 3 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) supports the full participation, development and advancement of women. The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development support the notion of women having 50 per cent of decision making positions in the public and private sectors.

A fundamental argument for increased representation of women in public service is that when the composition of

the public sector reflects the composition of the society it serves, government will be more responsive and effective. Thus, closing gender gaps in public administration is important in ensuring truly inclusive development and democratic governance and helps to restore trust and confidence in public institutions and enhance the sustainability and responsiveness of public policies.¹

The adoption of the National Gender Policy in Zimbabwe was a progressive development. Among other things, it ensures that women are encouraged to participate in the uptake of leadership positions as it seeks to develop and strengthen legal provisions and programmes to ensure the attainment of a 50/50 representation of women in politics and key decision making positions. Section 17 of the Zimbabwean Constitution states the need for gender balance in leadership and decision making. The female quota system ensures that both in the national assembly and senate women have seats allocated to them. This shows that Zimbabwe has taken key factors from international conventions and regional documents to make them part of solutions and policy developments. However, the challenge is in the consistent implementation of what the documents entail and embody to be a living reality of progress made by engaging women into leadership positions.

These policy issues were briefly interrogated in this needs assessment exercise in order to establish the reality on the ground from the experiences and perspectives of women in both leadership and non-leadership positions. In brief, women in the public sector and CSOs indicated that these policies are not adequate, because there are no enforcement mechanisms to ensure that the provisions provided in the law are implemented. Policy factors are further compounded by other issues, such as culture, financial exclusion, corruption, the ‘pull her down’ syndrome, stereotyping, family responsibilities, lack of confidence and lack of experience and exposure.

The research also noted that the work that is done by women leaders in the public sector as well as in CSOs is very often overshadowed by women in politics. Their achievements, needs and challenges are often obscured by those who have made it in contested offices, yet they play an integral role in the development of the nation. In order to support women from all sectors, WCoZ has over the years strived to strengthen and support an active, strong, distinct and diverse Zimbabwean women’s movement through various leadership programmes. Many women have benefitted from these programmes directly and indirectly. This needs assessment interrogates women leaders and aspiring leaders in CSOs, civic organisations and public administration in terms of their support needs and capacity gaps. During this assessment, women leaders, and those aspiring to be leaders, narrated the hurdles they faced, which range from cultural and political to socio-economic factors. In spite of the presence of a plethora of policies, capacity building trainings and programmes targeting women, gaps still exist and these need to be addressed to position women to occupy leadership roles.

It is against this brief backdrop that the WCoZ commissioned this capacity needs assessment to inform its future interventions with women.. It is hoped that the report will be useful not only to WCoZ and its members but also to the broader women’s movement, women in leadership and aspiring women leaders in particular.

3. Organisational Background and Objectives

This Capacity Assessment exercise is part of WCoZ’s ongoing gap identification process that seeks to assist in determining the future strategic direction of the organisation. Over the years the organisation has undertaken a number of interventions to elevate women in different levels. These include programmes that were tailor-made to provide leadership and mobilising skills, to provide technical support and create platforms for networking, capacity development for sustainable collective actions in lobbying and advocacy, and to ensure equal representation of women in key positions of power in public administration, independent commissions and within CSOs.

In partnership with HIVOS, WCoZ implemented a project entitled “Women Empowered for Leadership in Zimbabwe”

¹ Source: UNDP Gender Equality & Public Administration Report <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Women-s%20Empowerment/GEPA%20Global%20Report%20May%202014.pdf>

Strengthening Leadership Capacity for Women in Public Administration and Civil Society Organisations

(WE4L). The project aimed to increase and support women's effective participation in leadership positions in CSOs, civic organisations and public administration. Notable successes of the project include the ability to collect, collate and document accurate statistics about the status of women in leadership positions. Furthermore, the Coalition has managed to increase the knowledge and skills necessary to enable women leaders to participate effectively in public administration and within civil society, and there is a record of leadership development trainings conducted in 2017² that benefitted close to 380 women leaders from different sectors, namely CSOs: 289, Public Administration: 54, Media: 7, Politics: 8, Private Sector: 3 and Religion: 25.

In 2016, the Public Sector statistics were as follows:

Role	Women	Men	Percentage of Women
Permanent Secretaries	6	14	30%
Commissioners in the Public Service	4	3	57%
Senior Principal Directors	1	4	20%
Principal Directors	13	39	25%
Directors	79	188	30%
Deputy Directors	179	429	29%
Ambassadors	10	29	26%
Vice Chancellors of State Universities	0	11	0%
Principals of State-Owned Teachers' Colleges	8	6	57%
Principals of State-Owned Agricultural Colleges	2	6	25%
Principals of State-Owned Polytechnical Colleges	2	6	25%
Heads of Government Primary Schools	776	2168	26%
Heads of Government Secondary Schools	416	1940	18%
Supreme Court Judges	7	7	50%
High Court Judges	11	19	36%
Registrars	5	8	38%
Magistrates	94	156	38%

Source: Women and Men Report 2016 (ZIMSTATS) obtained from the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small & Medium Enterprise Development.

It is evident from the above statistics that women are still poorly represented in positions of influence. The Capacity Needs Assessment proffers a number of recommendations with a view of informing effective interventions and even a new multi-year strategic plan for the organisation. As highlighted earlier, the report reflects on the previous successes by the organisation in empowering women to participate and take up leadership positions. The report gives recommendations on how the organisation can build on these previous successes whilst designing new programmatic interventions that are informed by a strategy that is relevant to the specific needs of women as they interact and work in the current socio-economic and political context.

Premised on the above, the specific objectives of this Capacity Needs Assessment were as follows:

² Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe – Strengthening Women's Leadership in Social Service Ministries at Local Level, Independent Commissions and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) project report 2017/.

Needs Assessment Objectives

- a. To investigate and map women's leadership development needs within CSOs, civic organisations and the public administration sector;
- b. To assess the gaps within the relevant sectors' leadership capacity development frameworks vis-à-vis women's substantive and aspiring leadership needs;
- c. To identify a development strategy and/or strategies and action plan most effective for increasing, supporting and strengthening women's effective participation in leadership and other decision making positions within the sectors under study.

4. Methodology

Approach

The approach of the of the Needs Assessment was drawn from and reflected on the issues raised in the Terms of Reference (ToRs). The consultant's understanding of the scope of work was to conduct a leadership development needs assessment for women in leadership positions and aspiring leaders within CSOs and public administration at national and local levels with a view to enabling WCoZ to design an effective leadership development programme suitable for increasing women's effective participation in decision making positions at various levels.

Key questions

The assessment was done using qualitative measures. The issues interrogated included existing policies, previous achievements, strengths, and the challenges that women encounter when aspiring to be in leadership positions. This included the capacity needs of these women, their visions and individual roadmaps, and their experiences in previous leadership programmes undertaken by WCoZ or other organisations. Women were also asked to suggest how the issues that they were raising could be addressed by programmatic interventions and innovations that WCoZ might undertake in the future.

Data gathering techniques

In order to systematically collect information, a tool was developed which was the key informant interview guide. The information was collected from selected respondents who were aspiring women leaders and women leaders in both the public sector and CSOs. The assessment framework utilised an interactive approach during interview and in-depth analysis of core issues. Additional information was gathered from a few women who were randomly identified from the WCoZ Consultative Chapter meetings registers. The consultative meetings reports were also availed, and these provided the broad understanding of women's issues with regard to leadership; all the reports reviewed had a number of recommendations that the consultative meetings proposed. The issues raised from these meetings were consolidated, analysed and some of the recommendations are included in this report.

Therefore the primary data was elicited through the tool and from the Chapters Consultative meetings reports. This was done to ensure more internal validity of the assessment. Secondary data was obtained through the review of existing documentation such as strategic plan documents, the WCoZ leadership training manual, WCoZ narrative reports, policy documents and other literature to widen the analytical understanding and scope. The use of these varying methods of data collection assisted in the triangulation of the data and increased the reliability of the information and data that was gathered.

Methodology Limitations

- Even though some of the data was gathered through in-depth interviews, in instances where the respondents were unavailable for interview, questionnaires were distributed to the targeted women leaders. A multi-stage and stratified sampling, using the different levels of women in leadership for each sector would have been prudent but because of time and resources constraints this was not possible. This could have been cascaded even to region or province; however, the convenient sampling methodology was then employed.
- Due to tight deadlines some of the targeted respondents had other commitments and were not easily available for the interviews.
- The bureaucracy, particularly in the public sector, made it extremely difficult to secure interviews. In three incidents the consultant was asked to write formal requests to the superiors of the targeted person. However, the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development played a key role in distributing some of the questionnaires to women in various ministries and government departments.³
- When requesting additional information from the sampled respondents from the consultative chapter meetings, some of their mobile phones were not reachable; and some could not remember much from the workshops and needed time to refer to their notes, which required more time.

5. Context

This section provides a summary overview of the Zimbabwe context in relation to strengthening women in leadership in public administration, civil society and other spheres of life. It highlights the legislative and policy framework, issues around power dynamics (men and women), access to resources, the patriarchal society and its challenges, the participation of women in electoral processes, politics at the intra-party level, party dynamics, and the quota system.

5.1 Legislative and Policy Framework

Regional and international instruments and protocols

“Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women’s perspectives at all levels of decision making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.” (UN WomenWatch, 1995).

The above statement reinforces the notion that women have the right to public life, which in turn opens doors for true sustainable peace, development and prosperity in Zimbabwe. There are many instruments which deplore discrimination of women, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which states that every person has a right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Moreover, there are other instruments which encourage participation such as the the Women’s Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights,

³ Ministry of Mines and Mining Development,
Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development
Ministry of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage
Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare
Ministry of Justice Legal and Parliamentary Affairs
Ministry of Environment, Tourism and Hospitality Industry
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement
Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing
Ministry of Higher, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development
Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture

the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender and Development Protocol. In addition, Zimbabwe has ratified the COMESA Gender Policy which fosters gender equality and equity at all levels of regional integration and cooperation.

5.2 Domestic policies

Zimbabwe has made significant strides in amending and enacting legislation to advance the gender equality and equity objective. These include the Labour Act (Chapter 28:01), which provides for equality for males and females in employment, the Domestic Violence Act (2007) and the Zimbabwean Constitution adopted in 2013 which is also widely acknowledged for its firm commitment to gender equality. These policies, the legislative framework, and the prevailing social, economic and political developments provide a firm basis from which to pursue gender equality and equity defined in the National Gender Policy which aims at 50/50 gender parity.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe promotes the participation of women through the following provisions:

Section 17 which calls on the state to promote **full gender balance**;

Section 56 which calls for **equality and non-discrimination** in terms of the right to equal treatment, and the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres;

Section 80 on the **rights of women in all spheres**;

Section 194 provides for employment, training and advancement practices based on merit, ability, objectivity, fairness, the equality of men and women and the inclusion of persons with disability;

Section 124 (1b) provides for the women's quota, although this was only for 10 years.

Against this demonstrated commitment, statistics in most countries around the world have shown that women are the least represented in parliament, local governance structures and in other leadership or decision making positions.

7. Capacity Needs Assessment Findings

This section provides the findings from the needs assessment. The findings confirm some of the evident and patent issues that affect women's participation in leadership, particularly in public administration and civil society. In spite of the commendable efforts by women's groups, organisations, and policy makers at local, regional and international level to uplift women into leadership positions, the needs assessment identifies a number of challenges that still hinder aspiring women and those already in leadership positions. The recommendations proffered in this report are informed by these challenges and contributions from women who participated in this study.

Perspectives from women in leadership and aspiring leaders

In general, most women in leadership in public administration and CSOs noted factors influencing the participation of women as: gaps in the legislative and policy frameworks, lack of resources, fear of victimisation, harassment and violence, overwhelming responsibilities, financial constraints, disability discrimination, lack of confidence and exposure to sexual abuse in search for promotions or favours at work, not being taken seriously by men, and navigating the political space without being labelled. Corruption was also cited as a huge hindrance to women's career advancement. Nepotism is rife, with management and influential people considering their relatives for the position regardless of merit or experience.

These factors were also noted in the women's reflections during the consultative meetings conducted by WCoZ in early 2018. The common issues that the consultative meetings in the provinces revealed were political, cultural, economic and social dynamics.

The gaps identified included inadequate education, lack of financial resources, cultural discrimination, low self-esteem,

the continuing existence of patriarchal attitudes, cultural barriers, and a lack of management, leadership and effective communication skills. In spite of these challenges, most of these women hold other leadership positions in their social spheres such as churches, schools or social clubs.

Gaps in legislation and policy frameworks

Some of the women interviewed acknowledged the presence of progressive policies and legislative provisions, but noted that these are inadequate, and that enforceable measures are needed to promote the participation of women. For instance, there is a need for legislation and policies to ensure that political parties, the public administration sector and civil society adhere to the 50/50 principle found in the constitution.

Organisational policies

While the public administration sector is covered by the Public Service Act, the Labour Act and the National Gender Policy, CSOs have gender policies that encourage the employment of both men and women in decision making positions. One director indicated that though they strive to have 50/50 representation in decision making position, they also consider merit and competence. *“So we don’t just employ because it’s a woman, we also interview both females and males, and our considerations are based on merit and other factors like knowledge and experience; but as a woman leader I also wear my gender lenses.”*

The patriarchal mindset

The disadvantages faced by women result from the patriarchal nature of Zimbabwean society; there are still strong perceptions and beliefs that favour male domination in leadership. Women’s confidence is reduced because of the fear that is exacerbated by the belief that men are better. One respondent repeatedly spoke about issues of property such as houses and land, which in most cases are registered in the man’s name; and the nature of traditional marriage allow married women only limited access to property and security. *“So from the onset we are disempowered in our own families and homes before we step into the world. Men have the fear of losing control and authority so they make sure we have nothing,”* said one woman Commissioner.

Some of the participants highlighted that culturally, the leadership of women has been confined and more acceptable in the home but not beyond that. Thus, if a woman aspires to a leadership role outside the home, she was viewed as questioning the norm. Further, culture puts a lot of demands on women in the family, leaving them little time to be actively involved in any other leadership roles.

Additionally, the biological and physiological nature of women may cause them not to participate in leadership. Married women highlighted spousal restrictions, and patriarchal cultural systems that suppress their participation, as well as religious beliefs and doctrines that speak against women leading. Even today this affects many women in the rural communities.

Low self-esteem in women

Women pointed out that their low self-esteem is an inhibiting factor. Women suffer from an inferiority complex, especially in workplaces, and generally society believes that men are better leaders than women as they are perceived to be “born leaders”, who are also not risk averse, whereas women are viewed as timid and “too careful”. Some of the women explained that they were forced to seek male approval or refer to males even when they have completed tasks, thereby making themselves vulnerable to abuse. Some suggested that they find it difficult to delegate work to male subordinates, and some opt to select a man to lead even when they have been given the same tasks.

The study also revealed that low self-esteem is particularly common in young women who aspire to leadership positions. One respondent confirmed this by saying, *“Young women need motivation, empowerment by improving their writing and speaking skills. They also need grooming to deal with their low self-esteem.”*

Others indicated that women are innovative if given the right tools, training, support and platforms to showcase their leadership styles and capabilities.

Sexual harassment

The issue of sexual harassment was highlighted as a major issue in both the public administration and CSO sectors. Men continue to demand sexual favours from women in order to influence or elevate them into leadership positions. Some women allegedly give in to these demands willingly, for the love of a promotion and what it entails – e.g. a vehicle, company house, salary increase (mostly in the public sector) – even though they may not be competent to take up such leadership positions. Women also fear to be labelled after reporting sexual harassment. The victim is accused of leading the man on or getting herself in that vulnerable situation. Furthermore, women fear losing their jobs if they report sexual harassment, especially if men at the apex of the organisations are the perpetrators. Respondents noted that there were also cases of sexual harassment in CSOs, despite the fact that there is better knowledge and understanding of human rights within that sector.

Abuse of social media to harass and intimidate women in leadership positions

Women have unfortunately been given derogatory labels, particularly women leaders in the public sphere. Women leaders in CSOs, politics and public administration narrated their ordeal as evidenced by the trolling of women on social media. The ZEC chairperson, Justice Priscilla Chigumba, was subjected to a barrage of attacks verbally and online. Her alleged sexual relationships were used as a smear campaign to portray her as morally inadequate for the work that she was doing. She subsequently had to distance herself from the allegations on national radio,⁴ to clean up her image. She later pressed charges against the perpetrator.⁵

Women who have been abused on social media include candidates in the 2018 harmonised elections; Fadzai Mahere was repeatedly asked to reveal her marital status at the onset of her campaign as a parliamentary candidate. She is educated, possesses a solid career and clearly revealed her knowledge of political, legal and socio-economic issues that needed to be addressed in parliament. Misogynists, intimidated by her confidence, attacked her to discourage her. Another example is of a CSO director and senior management who were insulted as “*Mahure e ZANU PF*” after the organisation had released a report that was not well received by certain individuals. The abuse and harassment of women on social media has been divisive and is evidence of a deeper problem with regard to the respect of the rights of women.

In many instances the mainstream media has amplified these matters, giving society a different view of women in leadership. These attacks negatively affect women’s participation as attention is diverted to sexuality issues that would not arise for men, and they that are unrelated to the merits of the job at hand and issues of competency.

Uneven playing field

The study noted that a significant number of public service posts, particularly high-level appointments, are politically influenced. As such, political allegiance, networks and connections may influence who is appointed where.

Socialisation issues and spaces for women

Some of the respondents identified women’s socialisation as another hindrance, mainly because society teaches women to be “followers” of men and to be subservient. As such, most women shy away from taking up leadership positions because of fear, and also the accompanying controversies which come with being in the spotlight.

In many of the platforms that women in leadership have created, women just talk to each other rather than engaging men and educating them. The platforms are used as a form of peer support. In addition there are too few spaces where

4 <https://www.mysimbabwe.co.zw/news/27937-my-private-life-is-my-private-life-zec-boss-priscilla-chigumba-hits-back-at-ex-sunday-mail-editor.html>

5 <https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2018/10/04/man-convicted-over-chigumba-tweethttps://www.techzim.co.zw/2018/09/priscilla-chigumba-presses-criminal-charges-against-popular-twitter-user-for-posting-an-insulting-retweet-of-her/>

women can engage and share ideas and information. Platforms such as bars and social clubs can be used to network, share information and identify opportunities, but this has largely benefitted men. While these spaces do not necessarily bar women, the spaces are not conducive for women, and those who frequent them are deemed immoral by society.

Limited role models and absence of mentorship programmes

Role models for women in leadership positions are limited. A young woman from the public service sector referred to the negative perceptions about individuals commonly peddled by the media and how these are discouraging to aspiring leaders. Asked to describe what the feeling is like, she said, “*You end up just telling yourself that I don’t want to get there.*” Another one said it was basically the absence of mentorship programmes or the unwillingness by women in leadership to mentor young women and to prepare them for the harsh world. “*There is need for women in prospective positions to have the personal drive to research and find out programmes that train and mentor women to emerge as powerful leaders. Continuous exposure to activities that give experience in leadership and having women in leadership positions as mentors*”, said a Principal Civil Engineer in the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing.

Family responsibilities

Women face “time poverty” as their day-to-day duties are demanding, resulting in limited meaningful exposure. Women are involved in a lot of unpaid care work, especially within their households. The burden of these key responsibilities does not allow them to participate in local meetings or in national level forums on leadership.

Some women who are attaining the necessary education to compete for leadership positions with men, have missed opportunities because of family commitments and responsibilities. One woman from the public administration sector said that although the Gender Policy requires promotions to be awarded based on merit, women sometimes fail to take up decision making positions because they fear leaving their families if vacancies arise in an area far from home. Many women end up putting their marriage first by saying “*Tozozviona kana maopportunities emuHarare or mumatown auya.*”

Although public service policy encourages married people to work in the same location as their spouses, it has been difficult for the government to meet the demands of married women if the couple is in different professions or if one of them is outside the public service sector. For example, if a female teacher gets an opportunity to be head of a school in another town, but there is no vacancy for her husband, she may opt to turn down the offer in order to stay with her family. Some women consider commuting to visit their families over the weekend, but if it is not cost-effective, they would rather turn down the offer.

Programming inconsistency

Women appreciated the capacity building programmes conducted by CSOs, but they noted that some of them are one-off events, thereby compromising their positive impact. Most CSOs’ programming gears up towards elections when there is increased interest by donors, hence more funding to implement activities. Thus there is a need to invest in longer-term programmes.

Information deficiencies

Women from the Chinhoyi chapter identified many factors that influence the effective and full participation of women in leadership positions. These include a lack of information and education, socialisation, and the patriarchal society. The women expressed their eagerness to take up leadership roles as they want their voices to be heard. They stressed that women are still being abused in the communities they reside in and are denied access to adequate and objective information by the male-dominated society.

Women in leadership positions in both public administration and CSOs said that education has assisted them in boosting their self-esteem, self-actualisation and sense of belonging. These women reiterated that, because of education and the

leadership positions they currently hold, they aspire to be role models to young women and future generations. However, some women in the public service noted that they cannot afford to further improve their educational qualifications, and prospects of promotion are limited by the increasing number of young, more educated people.

Capacity gaps and inadequate resources

Networking gaps, technical and academic capabilities, and knowledge gaps were identified as some of the factors that hinder women from rising to leadership positions. Most of the meetings identified training and development as an important intervention that could help increase the numbers of women in leadership.

Women in leadership in the public sector underlined the inadequacies in funding to support some of their initiatives. *“At the end of the day we are perceived as incompetent leaders because we do not have resources to implement some of our planned interventions,”* said a respondent from the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development.

Lack of solid support structure

Some of the women cited the ‘pull her down’ syndrome as a deterrent factor. This is mostly done by other women because they only believe in men as leaders. The Mutare participants also cited lack of a support mechanism from women themselves which negatively impacts on their confidence and aspirations. The general feeling was that women do not have the sisterhood spirit and they do not support and encourage each other, especially in elective roles. *“Fear paralyzes us as women and so we are not confident to participate in leadership roles, we do not encourage or motivate each other as women, #sisterhood,”* reflected a woman from Bulawayo.

The dependency syndrome was noted as another factor that weakens women’s capacity to lead, as most of them rely on men right from household level, for example when women consult men before making any decisions.

Women with disabilities

Although people with disabilities are represented in parliament and other spheres of society, there is a notable absence of policies that directly benefit and uplift women with disabilities to take leadership positions. The infrastructure of government and most organisations is not disability friendly, thereby preventing women with disabilities from getting into jobs that will allow them to grow their careers. Girls with disabilities are not exposed to educational opportunities in the way that able-bodied children are.

Furthermore, young women and women with disabilities are not exposed to empowerment programmes and therefore are unable to contend for leadership positions. Some of the young women interviewed amplified the above sentiments and added that they lack confidence to take up leadership roles as they have no good mentorship systems and leadership development training opportunities.

Closed market and limited opportunities

Due to the challenges in the socio-economic environment, Zimbabwe’s unemployment rate remains high. The labour unions and CSOs believe the unemployment rate is above 90%, but the last ZimStats’ figures released in 2017 pegged the rate at 6.62%; ZimStats argues that work in the informal sector is considered as employment. Some of the aspiring women interviewed indicated that there is a huge formal employment deficit. They said that as young women already employed and aspiring to be elevated into leadership they do not foresee much growth. *“The market is so closed there are no jobs in the CSOs and I do not see any of my managers or even Director getting another employment opportunity in the near future and this therefore closes my opportunities to grow as well as an employee in the same organisation,”* said an aspiring young woman. Another senior manager said she has been working for the same organisation for the past 16 years; when she joined, the current director had been there for 5 years and she does not see her leaving anytime soon. *“So how do I grow in your view, unless if I get a higher position in another CSO. At one time I attempted to leave for a high position and*

only to realise that the remuneration I was getting in my managerial position was much better than what was being offered in the other organisation for a Director position.”

Some women interviewed were asked where they see themselves in the next 10 years.

Below are some of the responses:

“I will be a key player in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in the nation and on the Continent”, Commissioner Patience Chiradze, National Peace and Reconciliation Commission.

“In the next 5-10 years I want to see myself at a level where I am able to make direct influence in the national affairs and that would require the exposure I referred to above”, Blessing Gorejena, Executive Director, Human Rights NGO Forum.

“As women in leadership we need to live exemplary lives, have values, ethics and principles that we live by so that we can inspire young women to follow suit”, Deputy Chairperson Lilian Chigwedere, National Peace and Reconciliation Commission.

“I hope to own my own business and I will invest more on saving for this and increasing my knowledge of chosen sector”, Patience Zirima, Director, Media Monitors, Zimbabwe.

“To be the voice of the voiceless starting from grassroots and having projects that encourages more women participation ensuring that by equipping them with knowledge or skills they also reach to other women. #sisterhood attraction”, Lorcadia Sithole, African Village Director, Bulawayo.

7. Findings and recommendations

While many of the identified gaps are not necessarily new to the women’s movement, this section proffers recommendations on how some of them can be effectively addressed taking into account the existing programmes and interventions being undertaken by women’s organisations. The results of this study show that women in leadership in Zimbabwe generally face a number of challenges in spite of the many interventions that have been spearheaded by CSOs, government and development partners. One thing that remains clear is that opportunities still exist for women to take up or excel in their current leadership positions. The recommendations in this section cover specific policy issues, strategic interventions and other approaches that WCoZ can specifically engage in. The recommendations and proposed interventions were collected from the consultative chapter workshop reports, interviews, and discussions. Some of the proposals require substantial human, technical and financial resources, while others can be implemented with minimal resources.

7.1 Capacity building initiatives for leadership skills

i. Findings

Some women have the theory but lack the practice of good leadership skills. Often women find it difficult to make decisions without consulting male counterparts.

ii. Proposed Action

Mentorship of aspiring women and relevant capacity building initiatives is critical in both public administration and CSOs. Women leaders should continue to mentor young women in their institutions or organisations. Mentoring is important not only because of the knowledge and skills one learns from one’s mentors, but also because it provides professional socialisation and personal support to facilitate success.

iii. Possible Interventions

Mentorship programmes can be either formal or informal. Due to the busy schedules of women in leadership, programmes

can involve young women who are in middle management mentoring those at a lower level and passing them on to those in leadership such positions at a later stage.

7.2 The need for consistency in programme support for women's interventions

i. Finding

There is inconsistency in programme support for women's interventions. Capacitating women and developing leaders is a long-term, continuous process that needs to be invested in if results are to be achieved.

ii. Action

There is need to explore more sustainable, value-addition, long-term approaches to women's programmes so that there is continuity, and to strengthen the WE4L programme which aims to provide capacity building programmes informed by women's needs. There is a significant number of women who have risen to leadership positions over the years and the need for sustaining those key positions and elevating those aspiring cannot be ignored by the women's movement. The development of women is essential to the future of the Zimbabwean women's movement and this will ultimately promote a progressive women's development agenda in the country.

iii. Proposed Interventions

WCoZ should strengthen the women's clusters at community level and build ownership of the initiative so that there is collective responsibility for the growth and development of women. There is a need to include and engage women in the public sector at community level, as many programmes seem to only include women activists or those in CSOs.

- Establish networking platforms for women in leadership to share information at various levels.
- Build on resources that have already been developed over the years, e.g. training tools and manuals.
- Engage development partners to adopt long-term approaches to programming for the effective development of women leaders.

7.3 Strengthening existing capacity building interventions

i. Findings

Women believe that capacity building continues to help boost confidence levels. Capacity building programmes also help women in establishing network links through platforms such as meetings, workshops, conferences and exchange visits. These platforms were identified as important for information sharing and exchange of ideas. These programmes should be strengthened. Women who have served in the public sector for many years indicated that they lack regional and international exposure and networks to enhance their capacity in their current positions.

ii. Proposed Action

WCoZ should ensure that women acquire practical experience during the capacity building programmes through either short internships or exchange programmes, as women often fail to put into practice what they have learned in theory. WCoZ may also consider utilising the competencies of its members to train counterparts. Exposure for women at regional and international level is critical, and such opportunities should be identified and availed to women.

iii. Proposed Interventions

Implementation of the curriculum of a training manual that WCoZ has already developed.

The trainings should be all-encompassing and include:

- * grooming and etiquette
- * public speaking and effective communication skills
- * networking skills
- * time management
- * Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) skills
- * report writing
- * public relations
- * decision making
- * research skills and analysis
- * policy dialogue
- * media engagement
- * lobbying and advocacy
- * coaching and mentoring
- * strategic thinking and leadership
- * complaints handling techniques
- * good listening
- * resource mobilisation
- * critical thinking and confidence building
- * creativity and innovation
- * knowledge management
- * conflict management
- * counselling
- * change management, and
- * talent management

In addition

- Enhance the capacity of the pool of trainers identified and consider refresher trainings on agreed and clear thematic areas.
- Trainings should be decentralised to provincial and community levels, in a cascading model with trainers and participants being drawn from both the public sector and CSOs.
- WCoZ should identify and share any opportunities for women at regional and international level.

7.4 Improving women's literacy levels

i. Finding

Women's educational qualifications are questioned more than men's. Affirmative action has enabled more women to access higher education, but there are still gaps with regard to women who come from under-privileged socio-economic groups. Women in public administration expressed the need to advance their careers by improving their academic qualifications. Even though the public sector puts emphasis on merit, women feel threatened by young people who are better educated than them.

ii. Proposed Action

Most women aim to continuously improve their education and skills. They would also benefit if programmes were tailor-made to suit their needs. Some said that, as much as they want to advance their education qualifications, their remuneration is not enough to sustain the related costs. They encouraged the government and CSOs such as WCoZ to help them identify scholarships opportunities internally or externally.

Intervention

- Initiate programmes that sponsor women in the public sector to advance their education.
- Increase women's capacities and skills in fundraising techniques and financial management.
- Self-study modules for women to undertake courses in project management, business management, feminism, human management and leadership skills, and community development skills.

7.5 Leadership training for Zimbabwean women in leadership positions

i. Findings

Women Empowered for Leadership (WE4L) is a networking, information and training forum established for sustained leadership development for Zimbabwe to develop a strong cadre of women leaders at personal and collective levels, to influence policy and decision making. Its aim is to achieve a lasting qualitative difference in the lives of women in Zimbabwe.

ii. Proposed Action

WCOZ should remain committed to women's leadership development and the focus should shift to "raising the bar" by equipping women with relevant skills and knowledge to effectively participate in leadership and decision making processes. Women should be capacitated with skills and knowledge that will enable them to achieve personal empowerment; develop critical thinking; begin to question existing structural barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment; individually and/or collectively organise to transform the lives of Zimbabwean women.

iii Proposed Interventions

- Provide leadership training for Zimbabwean women who are in leadership positions in government institutions, civil society or corporate bodies and other related sectors that promote women's economic empowerment.
- Empower Zimbabwean women living in fundamentally patriarchal communities with self-development and life-skills training.
- Initiate platforms for young and old women to meet and build alliances for individual and professional support.

Strengthening Leadership Capacity for Women in Public Administration and Civil Society Organisations

- Develop a mentoring and role modelling system in order to benefit from the knowledge, skills and expertise of older women.
- Capacity building programmes should include confidence building training and understanding emotional intelligence in relation to the work environment.
- Strengthen existing national and regional networks through networking and solidarity and build and sustain links with the international women's movement.

What can be done to address the capacity gaps cited during the interviews?

"I want freedom to make and own my own decisions and stand by them and not live under the shadow of a husband or society. I often tend to make decisions based on what society may say or think. I am easily swayed and influenced. But now I want to stand out and do things differently but would need enhance my skills and knowledge – acquire necessary skills." Aspiring young woman leader, Public Sector.

"I need to become part of a network of female leaders which shares ideas and experiences whilst maintaining confidentiality." Dr Ellen Sithole, Deputy Chair, Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission.

"Institutions are providing education and opportunities for women to be leaders and there are more programmes that support the participation of women as leaders. This education has not been provided for men to show why gender equality and respect for difference is important." Director, Deaf Zimbabwe Trust, Barbara Nyangairi.

"I want to be networked at the SADC level with other female Commissioners and the same at the AU level so as to grow my network and learn through my peers." Commissioner Netsai Mushonga, Zimbabwe Electoral Commission.

"WCoZ should collaborate and network with other organisations and organise career guidance sessions in Manicaland schools to inspire young women to take up leadership positions." Mutare Chapter Consultative meetings report.

"Global competition in terms of cost, quality and technology, understanding change processes and understanding financial concepts, thinking globally and managing locally." Dean of Faculty of Science, University of Zimbabwe.

7.6 Building a reading culture

i. Finding

There is no culture of reading; women prefer meetings, workshops and other initiatives.

ii. Action

Build a culture of reading to enhance knowledge and keep abreast with developing trends.

iii. Interventions

Establish reading clubs. These can be facilitated by WCoZ chapters at local level, and books can be exchanged with other chapters. Women can then meet at agreed intervals to share knowledge and information or to reflect on new knowledge and how it can positively influence them in their various spheres.

7.7 Advocacy on enforcement of policies on zero tolerance of corruption

i. Finding

Corruption, largely in the form of nepotism, is a contributory factor that reduces opportunities for women with leadership capabilities.

ii. Proposed Action

Enforcement of policies on anti-corruption and punitive measures against offenders to discourage corruption and nepotism in the workplace.

iii. Proposed Interventions

Advocate for the enforcement of policies focusing on zero tolerance of corruption; encourage the implementation of whistle-blowing policies and mechanisms.

7.8 Engagement of societal structures to minimise the perpetuation of patriarchy

i. Finding

Patriarchy is still prevalent and negatively affects women's growth. Whilst acknowledging that it is difficult to dismantle an inherent system, progress has been made to date.

ii. Proposed Actions

Break away from traditional stereotypes by encouraging women to rise above the cultural ceilings and participate fully in public administration. Engage societal structures, particularly men, to minimise the perpetuation of patriarchy.

iii. Proposed Interventions

- Lobby for gender equity issues to be added to the school curriculum.
- Engage and lobby the traditional stakeholders such as Chiefs and traditional leaders to discourage practices that suppress women since they are cultural custodians of thinking processes that suppress women's leadership roles.
- Lobby influential bodies such as churches to preach and teach congregants to demystify the myths surrounding women in leadership, while acknowledging that existing efforts in this regard are already taking place.
- Involve men in gender dialogues, to educate them on the importance of women's participation in governance and democracy and the overall development of the country.
- Partner with men's organisations such as Padare in engaging men.

7.9 Strengthening women's skills to balance different roles

i. Findings

The caregiving role that women have reduces their time to interact, network, build capacity, get exposed, and mobilise resources to secure opportunities. However, these roles should not be denounced or relegated as they are equally important for the development of society.

ii. Proposed Action

Women should be equipped with skills to balance their caregiving roles with their aspirations for leadership.

iii. Proposed Interventions

- Create safe spaces within which women can interact and share.
- Maximise women's gatherings such as "Mubatanidzwa" of churches and raise awareness and capacity building.

- Equip women to create support systems that will assist in creating time for networking and capacity building programmes.

7.10 Reform and implementation of legislation and policy frameworks and organisational policies

i. Findings

Progressive policies were noted to be in existence at domestic and international level but implementation is inadequate, thereby stifling the rise of women into leadership positions. Absent, outdated and unenforced gender policies exist in organisations. Women leaders highlighted that policies to promote and encourage women's elevation into leadership positions do exist in most institutions and organisations, but there is little or no implementation of the relevant policy provisions.

ii. Proposed Actions

Policies with clear timelines need to be created that enforce the 50/50 constitutional provisions. There is need for robust advocacy campaigns to ensure that policy makers commit to enforcing the implementation of these policies. Women in leadership in both public administration and CSOs should engage the government to ensure that all institutions and agencies adopt the 50/50 principle by putting in place enabling legislation and mechanisms.

iii. Proposed Interventions

- Engagement of policy makers on the establishment and implementation of the 50/50 principle.
- Advocacy campaigns targeting policy makers which can include radio and television programmes with policy makers, social media campaigns, editorial articles in the mainstream media, meetings (informal and formal), workshops, production and dissemination of information, education and communication materials, and simplifying and repackaging policy documents.
- Assist organisations, particularly CSOs, in drafting, reviewing and implementing their gender policies.

7.11 Capacity building programmes tailor-made for women to be competitive

i. Finding

The playing field is uneven not just in political contestations, but also in the working sector. Women have to work much harder than men to be recognised.

ii. Action

Equip women with skills to boost their confidence so that they are competitive in the work environment.

iii. Proposed Interventions

- Conduct capacity building programmes for women so that their competence is unquestionable when vying for leadership positions.
- Facilitate coaching and mentoring programmes for women leaders.
- Advise and link women to make use of the Private Public Partnership and women in business, for financial assistance for aspiring political candidates.

7.12 Advocacy for proper conduct on social media

i. Finding

Women, particularly those aspiring to, and in, leadership roles, often endure harassment and abuse through social media. Usually the attacks divert attention from the issues and employ sexual degradation, so that the focus is on a woman's physiology and marital status.

ii. Proposed Actions

- Denounce the abuse of women through social media.
- Educate citizens and the general public on other forms of redress that are not abusive.

iii. Proposed Interventions

- Name and shame abusers online in order to curb online mistreatment.
- Build solidarity amongst women to counter the abuse in a positive manner. Retaliation by abuse will only fuel the problem.
- Encourage victims to redirect conversations to the issues and create a support structure that will back up the narrative to refocus.
- Conduct online campaigns on social media abuse, its impact and effects.

CONCLUSION

The WCoZ needs to constantly review its programmes and assess if they are responding to the needs of women in an ever changing environment. Whilst some past challenges are still prevalent, new problems are emerging that hinder women from excelling or rising to leadership positions.

This assessment has clearly revealed that women in leadership positions have huge aspirations, notwithstanding the day-to-day challenges they continue to face. It is hoped that the recommendations proffered in this report will assist the WCoZ in addressing some of them, particularly the capacity gaps, so that women are fully empowered to reach their goals. Listening to where women envisage being in the next couple of years is a clear indication that women are visionary leaders and need the required capacity building to be able to be confident despite the challenges they face and the many roles they play.

Annex 1

Capacity Needs Assessment Tool 1

Question/Statement

The current policy framework of governance encourages women's participation in leadership position.

- (a) In which sector are you a woman leader?
- (b) How long have you been in the current position?
- (c) Does the current policy framework of governance encourage women's participation in leadership positions?
- (d) Which policies are available?
- (e) Are they adequate?
- (f) If not, what improvements can be suggested to ensure leadership strengthening and support needed for aspiring women?

2. Is the administrative structure in public administration or civil society encouraging women to get into leadership positions?

- (a) Is there recognition in terms of promotions and merits for women who excel?

3. Are there any issues/challenges faced by women in leadership positions in Zimbabwe? Are these issues being raised by women in politics, academia, and media or by civil society organisations that deal with women?

- (a) How does society perceive women in leadership and how have they dealt with these controversies?
- (b) What effect do these controversial issues have on women's morale and participation in leadership positions or aspirations?
- (c) How should women deal with these controversies?

4. Have there been any reported incidents targeted specifically on women in leadership, i.e. threats of physical violence, embarrassment, harassment, that stifle women's aspirations to leadership positions?

5. Is education and illiteracy still an issue for women in leadership roles in Zimbabwe?

- (a) Are education institutions providing the relevant education that can strengthen women in leadership or aspiring women leaders?
- (b) Is there a significantly lower literacy and reduced access to education by women?

6. Are there regular platforms where elected women or women in influential positions in public administration or women CSO leaders can discuss pending concerns and grievances that affect women in leadership positions?

- (a) Who are they discussing with?
- (b) How are concerns raised and addressed in these platforms, and by whom?
- (c) Are these platforms working? If not what can be done to increase their effectiveness?

7. Was the 2018 harmonised electoral period better than previous elections with focus on women's rights and participation?

- (a) What are the key challenges that affected women's participation in the 2018 harmonised elections?
- (b) How can these challenges be mitigated in future elections.

8. Do political parties have any operating rules for encouraging women's participation in the electoral process?

- (a) Are the political parties making pronouncements and undertaking practical actions towards encouraging women's rights and participation in electoral processes particularly as candidates or in political hierarchy/positions?
- (b) Is this entrenched in the political party constitutions and is it adhered to?
- (c) What can be done to strengthen women in leadership positions?

9. Is the election authority one that is viewed as an institution that encourages women's participation and also addresses irregularities with regards to the participation of women?

- (a) What can be done to effectively address the electoral irregularities pertaining to women's participation?

10. Are there cultural restraints that affect women's participation in leadership?

- (a) If yes, which ones are these?
- (b) Are there any other impediments to women in leadership positions in political parties, public administration and CSOs?

Annex 2

Capacity Needs Assessment Tool 2

Question/Statement

1. What is hindering women who already occupy senior positions from reaching the top of the management hierarchy?
2. What are the capacity need gaps of women in general?
 - (b) What do they require to occupy higher positions than those they currently have?
3. What are your capacity needs as a woman in leadership?
4. Where do you see yourself in the next 10 years? How do you intend to get there?
5. Have you ever mentored young women? How would you evaluate the experience?

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