



## *Workshop Report*

### **Promoting Citizen Engagement and Advocacy in Community Development: A focus on the progress in Bulawayo**



**23 June 2015**

## **Summary of the Report**

This report gives key highlights of the workshop held in Bulawayo on the 23rd of June 2015. The workshop was organized by the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT) in collaboration with the Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association (BPRA). Since inception of the Irish Aid Project Fund (IAPF), PRFT has been working closely with BPRA and successfully launched the Basic Needs Basket (BNB) project. The BNB is a socio-economic tool that has been tracking the household incomes and price changes in the high density suburbs of Emakhandeni, Mabutweni, Lobengula and Pumula North in Bulawayo. Bulawayo was the third location (after Harare and Mutare) to have the BNB launched and currently, PRFT is conducting these surveys in a total of 7 locations (Harare, Mutare, Shurugwi, Bindura, Masvingo, Gweru, Bulawayo and a rural version in Dora, Zimunya District). Poverty is multidimensional, having a youthful face, a woman's face and a rural face. With 98% of those between the ages of 24-35 being employed in the informal sector, the pangs of poverty are heavily experienced in the urban areas. The demands placed on individuals in urban areas include the payment of rent, electricity, water and transportation among other expenses. If there is no adequate or stable income, destitution may be experienced.

It is against this background that the workshop in Bulawayo was hosted. The workshop brought together the members of BPRA, community leaders and ordinary residents to discuss the progress in terms of the implementation of the community action points made at a workshop in 2013. The stakeholders also shared lessons on how to improve their advocacy work based on their experiences from this project.

## **Background on PRFT's work in Bulawayo**

PRFT's presence was first felt in Bulawayo when the BNB was launched between the 29<sup>th</sup> of August and the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2012. In a bid to accurately tell the Bulawayo urban poverty story, PRFT further undertook a detailed study on urban poverty in October 2012. The research analysed the period 2008-2012. Between 17 – 18 July 2013, PRFT held an advocacy training workshop. The main objectives of this workshop were to identify community problems, their causes and to establish community action plans that sought to address these community problems. In this advocacy workshop, training touched on defining advocacy, using the problem tree approach to identify community problems, using the stakeholder power analysis approach (SPA), the Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis and ultimately coming up with the action plans. Table 1 shows the action points that were agreed upon by the workshop participants and the progress made.

### **The workshop had the following key objectives**

- ▶ To provide a platform for the members of the Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association (BPRA) to present feedback on the community advocacy plans.
- ▶ To give community members an interface with public officials particularly from Bulawayo City Council's (BCC) key departments.
- ▶ To serve as a platform to strengthen engagement on social service delivery and to generate lessons and recommendations on what works and what does not work in civil society's advocacy work.
- ▶ To discuss possible ways and new synergies on how PRFT, local authorities, members of the BPRA and other Civil Society Organisations can further collaborate on the Basic Needs basket project.

### **Methodology**

The Poverty Reduction Forum Trust organized the workshop in collaboration with BPRA. The facilitator for the workshop was also from BPRA. Progress reports on the community action points were presented by two key members of BPRA including the Vice Chairperson of BPRA Ms. Ntombizodwa Khumalo. The plenary session at the workshop provided a platform to seek clarity and validate the information that was delivered in the presentations. Table 1 below provides the necessary details.

**Table 1: Community Action Points**

<b>Advocacy Issue</b>	<b>Specific activities which the community wanted to carry out</b>	<b>Activities which were/are being carried out</b>	<b>Progress on activities, outcome and key challenges</b>
<b>Electricity - the need for gradual payment plans of electricity debts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Engaging local authorities by forming committees and assigning committee members tasks.</li> <li>▶ Conduct weekly ward consultative meetings (2 in each ward).</li> <li>▶ Approach the Parliamentary portfolio committee on mines and energy with a petition imploring the Zimbabwe Electricity Distribution Company (ZEDC) to implement a favourable payment system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Conducting monthly meetings in the ward.</li> <li>▶ Approached the parliamentary portfolio committee on mines and energy with the petition to be allowed to pay electricity bills over time. It was with great concern that BPRA questioned why the government is not allocating more resources to electricity which is important in order to improve the distressed investment climate in the economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ These efforts contributed to the acceptance of gradual debt repayments.</li> <li>▶ It has been difficult in some instances to coordinate residents in their specific committees and this stalls the effectiveness and progress of advocacy work.</li> </ul>
<b>Water supply – On prepaid water meters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Conduct weekly committee meetings</li> <li>▶ Engage councillors and the local authorities on the issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The local authority was engaged. This led to dialogues as well as a demonstration against the introduction of pre-paid water meters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The issue of having prepaid water meters was highlighted as a clear issue in which the local leaders including councillors are accused of not listening to residents.</li> <li>▶ According to residents from Cowdrey Park, the pre-paid water meters actually increase poverty as this takes away the right to clean water for those that are poor. However, it is alleged that the councilor from Cowdrey Park has been seemingly avoiding dialogue on this issue.</li> <li>▶ Councillor Norman Hlabano of Ward 26 mentioned that without dialogue on community issues, it is not possible to have</li> </ul>

			meaningful development. He encouraged residents to be at the forefront of setting up meetings with their respective councillors.
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Hold weekly committee meetings in the wards.</li> <li>▶ Engage the relevant authorities and stakeholders such as the private sector and NGOs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ BPRA engaged the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) on the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM). It was discovered that Bulawayo Metropolitan Province is allocated the least in terms of BEAM grants. Therefore BPRA sought to understand the criteria for choosing BEAM beneficiaries.</li> <li>▶ The Schools Development Associations were engaged as well as the Ministry of Education with regards to the payment of high levies. BPRA was against children being sent away from school for failure to pay school fees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ There tends to be the lack of transparency on the issue of BEAM.</li> <li>▶ This collective action is believed to have contributed to the cessation of students being sent away due to failure to make timely fee payments.</li> <li>▶ Not only has the introduction of ECD posed as a challenge but the introduction of the Grade 7 examinations fee also poses as a challenge.</li> </ul>
<b>Deindustrialisation, unemployment and underemployment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Organize regular community meetings.</li> <li>▶ Residents to sign a petition.</li> <li>▶ Engaging potential partners e.g. NGOs and the private sector for support.</li> <li>▶ Approach the powerful stakeholders e.g. Parliamentary portfolio committee on industry and energy, the Minister of Primary &amp; Secondary Education or permanent secretary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Started monthly meetings on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August 2013.</li> <li>▶ BPRA has since engaged the Ministry of Industry and Commerce on the issue of deindustrialization, voicing the need to revive industry in Bulawayo. Industries offer a sustainable solution to formal and stable employment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ There has been talk of making Bulawayo an Export Processing Zone. However no tangible change that has taken place as companies continue to reduce capacity and shut down.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Organize regular report feedbacks.</li> </ul>		
<b>Women Empowerment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Organize ward meetings once per month.</li> <li>▶ Mobilize residents.</li> <li>▶ Inviting councilors and Members of parliament for a public meeting.</li> <li>▶ Engage councillors to present the petition in support of women's empowerment in chamber meetings.</li> <li>▶ Organize regular report-back meetings (monitoring and evaluation).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ BPRA has conducted gender workshops on gender roles as well as sexual violence.</li> <li>▶ There is the promotion of income generating projects around the girl child in areas such as Ward 14 in Pumula.</li> <li>▶ Social clubs and groups have been created by BPRA. For example groups that pool financial resources through monthly subscriptions for all to benefit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Although there has been marked progress, cultural barriers still continue to affect the economic standing of many women.</li> </ul>

## **Plenary Discussions**

### **Devolution of power**

BPRA is advocating for the devolution of power as enshrined in the new constitution. According to BPRA, some causes of poor social service delivery are as a result of centralisation. In particular, the Ministry of Local Government has more power than is required and this has resulted in local authorities failing to run efficiently. For example, the Ministry gave land to residents in Cowdrey Park in 2005, unfortunately the land was not serviced and there was no clear communication between the Local Government and the City Council. Now the residents are demanding the council to service the land but the city council has no access to funds. To this day, the area has no electricity, no tower light and there are, poor health and sanitation facilities. BPRA suggests that the provincial councils be given more power and budgetary support for them to be more effective..

### **PRFT's recommendations**

- ▶ There is need for close collaboration between the Ministry of primary and Secondary Education and the Ministry of Health and Child welfare (MOHCW) to ensure that nutrition becomes an integral component of social protection programmes targeting children.
- ▶ At local level, the local authorities and government departments should develop child sensitive plans in collaboration with citizens.
- ▶ One critical requirement is to optimise the utilisation of local resources managed by local authorities, by deriving specific data to support local planning to cater for children's needs.
- ▶ There must be a participatory approach to the quantification of children's needs and the collection of monitoring and evaluation information data on children's education programs.
- ▶ The government should improve its coordinating role to make sure communities at grass roots level are involved and capacitated in monitoring and evaluation of the local plans and social protection programs aimed at children.

### **Plenary Session - Suggestions for the way forward**

During the plenary session, workshop participants came up with recommendations for the way forward:

- ▶ BCC should take a leaf from the Victoria Falls Council. Instead of sending debt collectors after companies, council should engage the companies to do some work for the council. For example, if a company is into property or land development, it may provide services such as paint jobs, construction, servicing of roads etc to council. This will increase the viability of BCC.
- ▶ There should be advocacy work against Grade 7 examination fees.
- ▶ Instead of all the BCC's collection of rates going into a central pool, wards should have a percentage of direct allocations. This will encourage increased payments in the wards. For example, for all the bill payments in a ward, 4% can be directed specifically to that ward even though there could be other allocations over and above the 4%.

- ▶ There has to be needs assessment by BCC in collaboration with the MoLSW in order to correctly identify the families that need help. This will ensure allocation of resources to those that need them the most.
- ▶ BPRA should follow up on BCC's Educational Assistance Fund for students in secondary schools. Information on the number of people that have benefited from this fund should be provided as well as the criteria that are used to fund the students.
- ▶ Since PRFT is operating in various locations, there is need for residents associations to take advantage of this link and learn from what other residents associations are doing.
- ▶ PRFT should have consistent programming. There is need for more visits since PRFT last came to Bulawayo in 2013.
- ▶ It would be more complementary to have programmes on the ground that can assist in poverty alleviation together with the BNB research.
- ▶ There should be a stakeholder platform held at provincial level in order to have more influence in terms of advocacy work.
- ▶ The local authorities should have the needs of the disabled as priorities to ensure that they receive services to support them.



## Appendix A: List of participants

Name	Organization/Area	Designation	Gender
B. Moyo	BPRA	Secretary of Water	Male
N. Bhebhe	PRFT	Enumerator	Female
O Sibanda	BPRA	Secretary for Welfare	Female
V. Sitotombe	PRFT	Enumerator	Female
C. Ndlovu	BPRA	Ward Chair	Male
M. Ncube	BPRA	Sports & Culture	Male
A. Gumende	BPRA	Member	Male
G. Mahlangu	BPRA	Vice Chairman	Male
I Moyo	BPRA	Organiser	Female
J. Moyo	BPRA	Committee Member	Male
T. Ndlovu	BPRA	Secretary	Male
A. Ndlovu	BPRA	Chairperson	Male
M. Moyo	BPRA	Committee Member	Female
T.Chiremba	PRFT	Programs Coordinator	Male
N. Khumalo	BPRA	Member	Female
N. Hlobombo	BCC	Councillor	Male
P. Mpofu	BPRA	Logistics Officer	Male
M. Fuzwayo	Ibhetshulikazula		Male
P. Tshabalala	BPRA	Secretary for Finance	Female
C.Ratisai	PRFT	Program Officer	Female
G. Mvu	PRFT	Program Intern	Male
W.M. Phiri	BPRA	Ward 21 Chair	Male
J. Phiri	BPRA	Ward 28 Secretary for Water	Male
W. Mpopoti	BPRA	Ward 28 Secretary for Admin	Male
B. Jomala	BPRA	Committee Member	Male
C. Mbambo	BPRA	Chairperson	Male
L. Dube	BPRA	Youth Secretary	Male
N. Ndlovu	BPRA	Ward 18 Secretary	Male
C.Mhlanga	BPRA	Ward 18 Comittee Member	Female
S. Mhlanga	BPRA	Ward 9 Chairperson	Male

## Appendix B. Bulawayo Advocacy workshop in pictures

