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Workshop Report Monitoring Shurugwi Residents' Community Advocacy Plans

25 JUNE, 2015

Nitchrute Lodge, Shurugwi



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Overview of the Workshop

This report presents key highlights from a workshop on monitoring residents' community action plans held on the 25th of June 2015 at Nitchirute Lodge in Shurugwi. The workshop was organized by the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT) in collaboration with the Shurugwi Residents Association (SHRA). The workshop was conceived from the background of the Basic Needs Basket Project that the Poverty Forum Trust (PRFT) has been implementing in Shurgwi in collaboration with the Shurugwi Residents Association (SHRA) since October 2013. This meeting provided a platform for SHR leadership to provide feedback on the progress in carrying out advocacy work in Shurugwi. The meeting was attended by the Assistant District Administrator, Mr Charles Mutimbairi, representatives from the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), the pastor's fraternity, people living with disabilities, leadership and members of Shurugwi Residents Association. The workshop used a participatory approach where residents, stakeholders and women advocacy groups were given opportunities to raise several service delivery issues which were affecting their livelihoods in Shurugwi. The workshop strengthened SHRA's working relationship with the District Administrator's Office and other residents in Shurugwi. The workshop was used as a platform to strengthen engagement on social service delivery and community development as a number of recommendations and actionable points were drawn from the discussions.

Background to PRFT's work in Shurugwi

The Poverty Forum Trust (PRFT) has been working with the Shurugwi Residents Association (SHRA) on the Basic Needs Basket project since October 2013. Through the Basic Needs Basket project, a social research tool, PRFT has been providing the recently registered SHRA and other community based organizations with evidence for lobbying for affordable, accessible services such as housing, water and sanitation. To strengthen Basic Needs Basket advocacy work in Shurugwi in 2014, the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust equipped the leadership of the SHRA with advocacy skills to engage service providers on various social and economic challenges. The qualitative and statistical information on the cost of basic goods and services required by urban households in Shurugwi was used by members of SHRA as guidelines to formulate community advocacy plans which they committed to implement. When PRFT started to work on the BNB project in Shurugwi, the community was not formally registered and it was almost non functional. During the 2014 advocacy training workshop, the residents cited the lack of formal recognition of the association as a challenge in terms of effective engagement with

the local authority and other service providers. As part of their community action plans which they developed, SHRA leadership wanted to register the association to improve their engagement with policy makers on service provision. Through a registered association, the leadership wanted to create sustainable dialogue platforms with the Shurugwi Town Council (STC) on service delivery. In other community action plans (see annexure b) the association wanted to lobby for improved road infrastructure and STC's waste management systems among other issues. The advocacy strategy had certain benchmarks on what the communities wanted to achieve through lobbying different stakeholders on the challenges which they identified. Against this background, it was now important to bring together the membership of SHRA and other stateholders to discuss the progress in terms of the implementation of community action plans and to learn from them, the successes and challenges that they observed. PRFT invited to the workshop, a pool of stakeholders which included the District Administrator's Office, Shurugwi Town Council (STC) management, leadership of SHRA, workers from mining companies, the disabled, church leaders and ordinary members.

Workshop Objectives

The workshop conducted on the 25th of June 2015 had the following key objectives

- ▶ To provide a platform for the members of GRRA to provide feedback on the community actions which they committed to implement in the 2013 Advocacy Training workshop
- ▶ To generate lessons and recommendations to improve advocacy work in Gweru
- ▶ To strengthen engagement on service delivery issues
- ▶ To discuss possible ways and synergies on how PRFT can further collaborate with different local stakeholders on the Basic Needs Basket Project

Workshop methodology

The half day workshop was organized by PRFT in collaboration with SHRA. During the workshop, various approaches were employed to get the feedback on the progress in the implementation of the plans. Some of the approaches used in the workshop included presentations from the leadership of SHRA and plenary discussions. Plenary discussions were also held to give other residents and key stakeholders, a room to give their responses and to validate the presentations which were shared.

The outcome of the Workshop

The following information was extracted from the presentations that SHRA leadership made on the progress.

Registration of the Shurugwi Residents Association and the creation of engagement platforms with local stakeholders

Through the support and advocacy training from the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust (PRFT), the SHRA members successfully registered their association in September 2014. After its formal registration, SHRA is now actively playing its oversight role in service delivery in Shurugwi urban. SHRA has managed to carry out a number of developmental engagement meetings acting as an intermediary between the residents and the council. The association held several sensitisation and feedback meetings with residents on the service delivery issues. For example,

after a break out of diarrhea in shurugwi in October 2014, SHRA complemented Ministry of Health and Shurugwi Town Council in carrying out awareness campaigns and community mobilization to stop the spread of the disease.

As part of its major successes since registration, SHRA has engaged the business community and local councilors and lobbied them to assist less privileged children with university school fees. The association also lobbied the same stakeholders to assist in providing attachment opportunities to local university students who were facing challenges in meeting their university's attachment timelines. As a result of this engagement, the Shurugwi Urban's Ward 12 councillor, Mr Hapazari, who operates some retail shops in Shurugwi, assisted three (3) prospective MSU university students by giving them temporary jobs so that they can raise fees for their university education.

The residents association had also represented ward 10 residents who were locked out from council houses after failing to pay rentals. On this issue, the SHRA members managed to engage the council in March 2015 and lobbied against issuing of summons to defaulters. The SHRA's submissions and demonstrations on this issue resulted in further dialogue between the council and the SHRA leadership which reversed the action as a mutual agreement to reschedule the payments of the arrears was reached.

The other success that SHRA leadership noted after registration was their improved recognition by Shurugwi Town Council and other development partners on key service delivery decisions. For example SHRA leadership was incorporated into the UNICEF's WASH programme together with the STC. In this programme, the association was consulted to assist in identifying the needs of households in terms of water, hygiene and sanitation issues.

As part of its advocacy work, SHRA is now producing its monthly engagement reports and the reports are being shared with other stakeholders which include the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust and other residents associations. SHRA has also started to mobilize other residents to increase its membership and fundraising initiatives.

The association has started to increase its networking drive with other residents associations such as Harare Residents Trust (HRT). The leadership of the association was invited to a information sharing platform for all residents associations in Harare in May 2015, which was a first for them

Progresss on prositution

The leadership also gave an update on the levels of prostitution, a critical issue that the members had raised in the advocacy training workshop in July 2014. As part of community action plan, the members wanted police raids to increase as a way to reduce prostitution which had reached alarming levels in Shurugwi. The residents were mainly concerned with the community's increased exposure to diseases such as HIV and AIDS due to high levels of prostitution. As a feedback, an improvement in the situation was noted. The ZRP officer who attended the workshop confirmed the reduction in prostitution levels after a series of raids.

The officer also indicated that police's work to arrest prostitutes in Shurugwi was not difficult since in most cases the culprits were found in the act mostly behind buildings. The officer revealed that Shurugwi does not have enough buildings which can be used and prostitutes mostly use open spaces for their activities. She also mentioned that the raids are carefully done in line with the current law on prostitution which does not criminalise sex workers if there is not enough evidence that confirms that one has solicited for the activity. However, she indicated that although the police had tried to work on reducing prostitution in Shurugwi, it was very difficult to completely eliminate the problem because most people were involved in it for a living. The stakeholders recommended for a holistic approach in solving prostitution issues in Shurugwi. One of the challenges noted was that there were few employment opportunities and this has led to most people indulging in prostitution as a means of earning an income.

Dusty Roads in Mambowa and ZBS

As part of the strategy, the SHRA leadership organized a ward meeting in October 2014 and engaged the councilors on the issue of dilapidated roads which are exposing households to health risks due to excessive dust. The association mobilized other residents and presented their concerns with regards to the dusty roads challenge. However, it was revealed that the council did not take any action with regards to solving the problem. As part of their activities, the residents association had planned to be proactive in implementing short term measures which included watering the roads. The idea to water the roads could not be implemented because the important equipment such as bulzers could not be availed. The other key challenge that emerged was that the the river which the residents had recommended as a source of water was also drying up .

As a way forward on this issue, the Assistant District Administrator and the leadership of SHRA committed to engage mining companies in Shurugwi to come aboard to help in supplying quarry stones which participants felt could be spread on the roads as a way to reduce the dust. The SHRA leadership was recommended to make follow ups with the District Administrator's Office with regards to the meeting.

Poor Waste management

In the 2014 advocacy training workshop, the members of Shurugwi Residents and Ratepayers Association had committed to lobby for an improvement of waste management system in Shurugwi. In this action plan, the SHRA members used the WASH programme platform to raise awareness on the impacts of poor waste management in Shurugwi. The SHRA leadership assisted in mobilizing and educating other residents on the health risks of drinking unsafe water and poor waste management at household level. The presentation revealed that the communities responded well to the programme as it used a grassroots participatory approach to address contemporary community problems. However, the SHRA members also cited the lack of timely refuse collection by city council as a challenge in fostering sustainable waste management system in Shurugwi. The SHRA members planned to take further engagement on waste management by using a holistic approach which incorporates all stakeholders including residents and the city council.

Fostering Transparency and Accountability

In its effort to lobby for transparency and accountability in the Shurugwi Town Council(STC), the SHRA leadership submitted an engagement report lobbying the council to account for the money it was collecting through education and refuse collection levies. In its submissions, the SHRA argued that there were no visible service delivery projects which the council was carrying out using the levies.

In the same engagement report, the leadership also unsuccessfully lobbied the council to provide expenditure reports for public scrutiny. The SHRA wanted to analyse and provide feedback on accountability. Responding to the issues of transparency and accountability, the Assistant District Administrator, Mr Charles Matibaira indicated that the Ministry of Local Government is in a process of institutionalising its transparency and accountability guidelines at local authority level. He highlighted that the ministry is pushing for local authorities to adopt a programme which will provide a platform for local boards to disclose what they

are getting in terms of revenue and how they are utilising the funds. In this programme, the local authorities will disclose to the public, a full package of income and expenditure reports in the spirit of promoting good governance. Mr Matibaira recommended SHRA to effectively work with the council on issues of transparency and accountability.

Plenary discussions

Following the presentations from SHRA leadership, a dialogue was opened up and participants deliberated on the feedback on community action plans and other new advocacy issues. One of the key issues that residents discussed was the shortage of Earlyhood Child Development centres in Shurugwi. The discussion on this issue was stimulated after PRFT shared its May 2015 Basic Needs Basket policy brief on challenges facing the child development sector in Zimbabwe. The BNB research which PRFT conducted in six urban areas (Masvingo, Bindura, Shurugwi, Mutare, Bulawayo and Gweru) had revealed poor government investment in ECD as a key challenge undermining the country's objectives to promote universal primary education and access to quality of education. The situation was found to be worse in Shurugwi where Shurugwi Town Council does not own a single primary school although it was revealed that households have been charged an education levy of 50 cents per month as part of their bills since 2005. According to the discussions, the council introduced this levy to generate resources to fund local educational assistance projects. This levy is currently appearing on households' monthly bills.

While sending children to government ECD schools was revealed to be cheaper as compared to private schools offering ECD classes in Shurugwi,¹ there were three (3) particular issues which residents raised during the discussions. These are;

1. Increased household poverty is making it difficult for households to pay for school uniforms and nutritional food, which are other essentials required by their children besides the \$20 school fees obligation. The households revealed that they are failing to bear the huge costs of keeping the wellbeing and good nutritional status of their children due to low disposable incomes.
2. In other areas, the distance which children under the age of five walk to the nearest government school is not conducive for quality educational

¹ Government primary schools in Shurugwi are charging \$20 for ECD pupils per term while private schools are charging between \$75 to \$90 per term.

outcomes. For example, ECD children from Dark city area in Shurugwi have been revealed to be walking a distance of about 4km to get to Railways primary school, which is their nearest government primary school. It was revealed that the long distance which children are walking to ECD schools was affecting their concentration levels and the time they spend on school work as they will be exhausted through spending more time to walk to and from school.

3. The few government urban ECD schools available were said to have a pupil – teacher ratio which is above the 1:24 recommended by the Ministry of Education, sports and culture for urban ECD centres. This was found to compromise the quality of learning outcomes of children.

Recommendations generated

- The residents planned to take further action in lobbying the council to work with private players to increase the number of ECD schools in Shurugwi. As a short term measure to solve the plight of children, the residents urged the council to consider using council buildings that are lying idle for ECD classes.
- SHRA recommended for a community information centre in Shurugwi, where residents can access important government information such as the new constitution, government policies and development programs such as the ZimAsset and local authority bylaws. SHRA also recommended to have this information translated into shona which can be understood by the most local residents.

Challenges

From monitoring the action plans which SHRA undertook, there were gaps and challenges noted. Below are some of the concerns that SHRA shared.

- Whilst the launch of the Poverty Reduction Forum Trust's Basic Needs Basket in Shurugwi played an important role in the formal establishment and registration of SHRA, the collaboration of SHRA with other civil society organisations working on other developmental projects is still lacking. Examples of such projects include human rights, peace building and legal representation projects. There is need for more partners to come on board and collaborate with SHRA and provide capacity building on these areas.

- Whilst SHRA's registration created an opportunity for formal engagement with policy makers, the environment was said to be polarized and this has been seen as a challenge to effectively implement advocacy work.
- The presentation highlighted lack of financial resources and other expertise for example fundraising skills for their sustainability as some of the major challenges that SHRA was still facing in terms of effectively carrying out its operations.

Lessons learnt from the workshop

- Social dialogue between residents and government leaders plays an important role in solving community development problems. As a result of the presence of the office of the District Administrator, a way forward was mapped on some key advocacy issues. The presence of the D.A at the Workshop was of great value as he provided critical information on the operations of the government and other stakeholders. In its next engagement meeting in Shurugwi, PRFT will invite more local development actors such as mining companies.

Annexure a : List of participants

Name	Organization	Designation
Gift Mvuu	PRFT	Policy Intern
Tafara Chiremba	PRFT	P.rogramme Coordinator
Cherish Ratisai	PRFT	Programme Officer
Lucia Madzivire	SHRA	SHRA Chairperson
Tinashe Chitakunye	SHRA	SHRA Secretary
Tawanda Shumba	SHRA	MEMBER
Charles Matibaira	Ministry Of Local Government	Assisant District Adimistrator
K Mapfunde	SHRA	Member
Antony Dharara	SHRA	Member
William Chimuchenga	SHRA	Member
Mercer Simango	SHRA	Member
Loyce Tagwi	SHRA	Member
Cecelda phiri	SHRA	Member
Tafara Chemhuru	SHRA	Member
Tsepo Hwatiwayo	SHRA	Member
Emmaculate Mapfeka	SHRA	Member
Mercy Madzima	SHRA	Member
Taurai Chivurugwi	SHRA	Member
Memory Kateza	SHRA	Member
Loice Musinga	SHRA	Member
S Mayari	SHRA	Member
E Marirwa	SHRA	Member
Pst w Nago	Pastors Fratenity	Pastor
Barbara Banda	Min of Youth	Member
Shlean nyati	SHRA / PRFT	SHRA Treasurer/ PRFT Enumerator
Pst AMahove	S.A.P.D	V.C
Egnes Elisha	SHRA	member
Tichaona chimbiya	SHRA	Member

Annexure b: The table which summaries the activity action plans which Residents committed to implement after the Advocacy Training Workshop in July 2014

Group	Advocacy Issue	Specific changes which they wanted to see	Stakeholders identified	Activities which were followed
Makusha ward 3, 8, 9 and 10	Creation of Social platforms which are apolitical	Specific changes to see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A functional residents association • Residents invited to council quarterly meetings • Residents involved in decision making on issues affecting them • Improvement in transparency and accountability in the use of public resources 	Residents, Council management,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration of SHRA • Mobilization of the residents • Stakeholder meetings (business community, civic society organisation and church leaders) • Crafting a position paper • Submission / presentation of the Position paper Feedback / Follow Up Meetings with residents
Ward 11 and 12	Road maintenance through Private Public Partnerships (PPPs)	Specific changes to see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tarred roads and reduced dust in the streets 	Residents, Motorists, The council management (Road department), Councilors (Ward Councillor), ZINARA,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement Meetings with ward councilors, business community, church leaders • Ward developmental meetings with residents, sitting councilors and council management and District Administrator • Community work in watering the dust road • Awareness campaigns against

			Ministry of Transport, Shurugwi Residence Association (SRA)	dust <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular report feedbacks
Mambow a suburb and sabanga park	Increasing police raids at night and Enactment and enforcement of bylaws which restrict the number of members in a household	Specific Changes to see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduced loitering in late hours and prostitution levels in Shurugwi 	Residents, ZRP Police officer in Charge, Ward councilor, the council and the Management, Council police, Ministry of local government, District Health Officer, Shurugwi Residents Trust and Ministry of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement meeting with residents to gain support • Advocacy committee meeting to selecting office bearers and drafting a advocacy paper • Engaging the town council • feedback meetings/ monitoring and evaluation review meetings with residents