



*Community Self-help Education Series no 16*

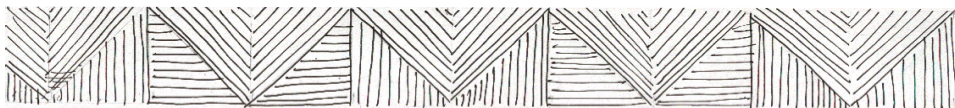
## **The Gender Equality in Governance Club**



## **Culture versus Human Rights**

*"Eradicate Poverty and Inequality"*  
*UPND Manifesto Key Area*

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Many women have not been involved in local governance or community participation because they have been preoccupied with domestic duties while men have engaged in governance due to traditions from time immemorial. Therefore time has come for women to get involved in local governance and participate in taking decisions that affect our lives. Women have had caring roles in the family and community for ages and their compassion and expertise are needed to influence our own and other people's lives through active participation. Stop to sit back and complain about services, lack of opportunities and stop blame the Government and others about our problems forgetting that democracy

[illegible]

## What is Gender Equality?

The old society was very stable and changes came slowly and everybody knew their place in the traditional society. The men went to war when conflicts arose, they went hunting to bring animals home to feed the family and the community, they met in political meetings to resolve conflicts and decide about the community future. There was a division of labour that gave different roles to men and women. The women took responsibility to look after the children, till the land to grow food crops, provide meals to the family and look after small livestock at the homestead. Children were helping at home and taught respect for elders, honesty and obedience to become well behaved members of society as they grew up.

Traditionally there were taboos that governed particularly what women should not eat, for instance egg and certain other foods. Now we know that a probable reason for these taboos was to reserve the good foods for the ruling class in the village – the MEN.

The political ruling class in that society, to use a modern term to label the rural order as a class structured society consisting of four classes: the king (chief) and his council on top, then the men who were the political leaders, then thirdly, the women who were the food producers and child bearers and finally the last and fourth class the children who also were allowed to eat last when first the men had been served.

This is a way to keep a society in order with clear rules about rights and obligations where the men are in charge and women are subordinate which is also shown clearly when bowing and kneeling when serving food to the men. This society has no concept of equality because the role of a man and a woman was clearly defined with different duties they should perform at home and in the society where women got duties at home and men in the community.

Meanwhile the Zambian society has changed, towns and cities have grown all over the country and more than half of the population have left the rural areas to settle in towns. But still the old structure of class and authority subordinating women to men prevails although the roles of women in employment have greatly changed as they have become breadwinners.

The role of men has also greatly changed, there is no more going to war to defend the community, there is no more hunting and most political issues are now taken care of by the chief and district council and the government on the national level. Hence most of men's traditional duties are no longer there. But still many men consider themselves superior to women.

**Intelligent Women**

If you ask a few men they will tell you that men are wiser and more intelligent than women and men can do things women cannot. Still education is not available to all in Zambia and women and girls are those that have lagged behind in literacy and education. Some men may have mistaken this lack of education that is more common among women for women not being intelligent. This is a wrong conclusion because we know when girls get a chance for education they do generally better than boys. Girls

NOTES

You are free to make copies and share the information with anybody that wishes to know more about education resources. However, we appreciate that you tell where you found the information.

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## Look for more information

Below are mentioned a few sources where you find latest information.

**Government Printer.** The Government Printer is situated in Lusaka on Church Road opposite the Boma. Here you can buy government gazette where new laws and regulations adopted by Government and District Councils are published. You can buy the national budget so your club can know how much money your district will get from the government coffers. Furthermore can you buy the 'Republican Constitution' and 'National Development Plan' to see women's rights and how your community concerns are prioritised. Ask for documents concerning Zambia's debt with the international community. There is also plenty of public information material for sale. The prices are reasonable and absolutely worth spending some club money on.

**Government Ministries.** All government ministries have prints of laws and regulations that guide their actions all the way down to the local community where you live. Some material might be free but you should expect to pay for a copy.

want to be popular with the boys so in mixed classes they may deliberately fail for instance mathematics, but in an only girls class they make very good results and do better than the boys. In countries where women have equal access to university education such as UK and USA, they outnumber the men graduates 3 to 2 at the BA degree and more women complete the Masters and Doctor degrees. It is clearly a myth that men are more intelligent than women.

It is no longer justified to maintain the old order of women being subordinate to men because the old division of labour no longer exists for the men, as hunting, politics and warfare belong to the past. But the women's duties are still there particularly in the rural areas, gardening, and livestock, cooking and raising the children. Plus they have more worries as climate change has made the success of their crops more uncertain. Therefore it is now common to find also men engaging in peasant agriculture like what women always have been doing.

Zambia being party to international conventions about human rights has brought a host of new laws for Zambian government to implement. These conventions and treaties are signed by Zambia and then become law of the land.

## Old Order Changing

This means that there must be equality between women and men. A woman must not be submissive to a man because he is a man and traditionally belong to a class above her in the old social ranking order.

These new laws give equal rights to every human being, a man, a woman and a child. Human rights law is getting more known and this means a revolution against the old order have started and we see from the newspapers every day how domestic conflict erupts when the old order is challenged by women claiming their say and equal rights in everyday life in family and society.

In the past we had a traditional power structure or class society where men ruled and women and children were submissive because that was the order everybody accepted because this politi-

cal system was inherited from the ancestors and the only system people knew about and therefore accepted.

To bring about change in such a power structure may be a painful process as some men will demand respect. He feels that being born a male is enough qualification to be respected by women in that power structure. Other men will understand that the old order is changing and his role is now equal to a woman or even subordinate to a women leader in the work place or a wife employed and being the only in the family earning a wage to take home to feed the family. She has taken over the role most men used to have in the past as head of household because she has gained economic power. In UK 1\3 of households now has women\wife\mother bread winners.

One symptom of the change of rights between men and women in modern society is conflicts and violence in the family. The Government is addressing this challenge through the Zambia police service victim support unit where women can go for help as being a father or a husband is no longer a free ticket to beat and discipline the daughter or wife through violence. Women's organisations like YWCA and NGOCC are active in defending women's issues on the national scene when girls and women are mistreated in their families and demanding police and authorities to do more to protect girls and women by action of government departments.

So some aspects of the transition of women's role to equality are getting support and pressure is put on the authorities but the change of the role of men is paramount to this problem. Unless the attitude of men changes towards respect and acceptance of being equal to women, the violence will continue as these men are resisting change and are fighting to keep the old order. It may be difficult to change this generation of adult men. But this is the right time to train all boys in human rights issues so they do not take after the vices of their fathers but learn equality at school. This should be addressed in the primary schools where lots of emphasis should be put on equal rights and women and men being equal and sharing responsibility for family and children.

Men must be taught that women are wise and intelligent and no

## **Community Self-help Education Series**

### *Empowering Communities through information*

You have in your hand one of the 16 self-help education manuals in the "*Community Self Help Education series*" which are published by Response Network for use by community leaders;

1. "Let's start our own community school".
2. "Let's start our own community sports club".
3. "Let's start our own community literacy class".
4. "Let's start our own community skills training".
5. "Let's start our own women's group"
6. "Organic Vegetable Growing"
7. "Let's start our own community HIV/Aids support group"
8. "Let's start our own community health and nutrition club"
9. "Let's start our own community 'Know your rights club'"
10. "Let's start our own community alcohol awareness and support group".
11. 'Let's start our own community mental health club'
12. 'Let's start our own community participation (governance) club
13. 'All included' Let's start our own community support group for children with special needs'.
14. 'Let's start our own women's rights club – stop the violence'
15. 'From team to Inclusive Sport Club'
16. 'The Gender Equality in Governance Club'

The manuals supplement each other so you will benefit from combining the resources from two or more manuals to increase the scope of your education project.

The manual no 9 about 'know your rights' is complementary to 'The Gender Equality in Governance club' and members of both clubs will benefit from reading the other.

If you are looking for more manuals, contact Response Network, Nkumbi Road, Plot 936, near the ZAWA offices Livingstone, Zambia. Fax : 0213 323634 Tel: 0213 320491. Or write to P.O. Box 60817 Livingstone.



## Abbreviations

ADC	Area Development Committee
CCJDP	Catholic Commission for justice, development and peace
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
FINNIDA	Finnish International Development Agency
FODEP	Foundation for Democratic Process
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NRC	National Registration Card
TC	Town clerk
UN	United Nations
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association
ZNBC	Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation

## Dictionary

Civil Servant	An officer employed by the Government to ensure that the funds and services decided upon by the National Assembly (NA) reach the people and implementations follows the regulations decided by the N.A. or the Ministries.
Civic leader	The Chief, district councillor, Member of Parliament, priest, church elders, service club leaders are examples of civic leaders
Councillor	Elected representative to the District Council
Democracy	See under appendix
Governance	See under appendix
Government	See under appendix
MP	Member of Parliament, - the representative from your area elected to the National Assembly in Lusaka
RDC	The Residents Development Committee is a committee found in the urban areas to assist the communities to initiate improvement. The committee is sometimes called Area Development Committee.

inferior being to men. Men must be taught that women are a great resource of creativity and initiative that is an asset to improving family and community and national life.

Men must be taught that women can contribute to making the society better and must be elected to posts in the civic organisations and district political committees and governance.

## Get Involved in Governance

Woman should get involved in local Governance issues through; Ask to meet the Chief to discuss the practice of initiation of young girls. Girls should only be taught about sex in marriage when they are about to get married as initiation in childhood is a violation of children and girls rights. Marriage and child bearing started early in the old rural order. This is no longer the case because girls must first complete school before thinking of marriage. Initiation ceremony can no longer be practiced as before because training for marriage must wait because it is an advantage for girls to get married later in life.

Ask to meet the chief to discuss the taboos and what can be done to gradually change the way some taboos are practiced. Have some removed and keep what is justified. Pregnant women will improve mother and baby health by eating eggs and protein rich foods so this should be encouraged and the taboo belong to history.



Ask to meet the chief to discuss the submissive greeting traditions women are taught and subjected to and find out how this can be changed to promote equality between men and women. Such as the tradition to serve food when kneeling is one such tradition. In other countries where equal rights are practiced, women and men

all shake hands or bow in reverence for each other and greet through words.

Ask to meet Chief to discuss women representation in his tribal council

Visit the rural development council (RDC) meetings and find out if they are addressing need for clean water, literacy and other concerns women have. In some places the committee might have a new name; (ADC) 'Area Development Committee'.

Visit the district council meetings, which are by law open to the public, and 'district committees' meetings and learn how the council addresses the equality and women's rights issues. Read minutes from district council and district committee meetings and check if they violate equal rights for women and discuss in your club meetings.

Ask for meetings with the different government departments to discuss next year's community needs and how more women representatives can be included in the planning process so they can plan for it locally and inform the government offices in Lusaka.

Buy Government official documents such as the Gazette and the Constitution that is sold at Government Printers in Lusaka and discuss in your club meetings. Buy the National Budget and find out how much money has been allocated to the various departments in your district and the club should influence the local departments to spend the money on real community felt needs and promotion of women involvement in governance. If you are not able to buy these, try to borrow them from government of council offices or your (MP) Member of Parliament. When newspapers publish such information, keep copies. Look up [www.parliament.zm](http://www.parliament.zm) on the internet for decisions made by the National Assembly.

Invite women organisations such as YWCA to teach your members about rights and strategies to attain rights. Find list of organisations later in the manual and look for their offices in the district. Get women engaged in party politics so they can propose women members to the various parties when they select candidates to

If a few community projects co-operate and share the cost of purchasing the book, all will benefit when making partnership with foreign donors. The book also explains how to present an application for support in a winning manner.

### **Follow up the initiatives!**

Note that whenever applying for support somewhere, - make follow up visits by person or by telephone to find out if the letter was received, - or maybe you omitted some important information so the application is not attended to. If you are not used to writing an application, seek advice from partners you trust.

### **Do you need more coaching?**

*If you get stuck somewhere in the process of developing the Gender Equality in Governance club, or you feel that the assistance we have recommended to you, is encouraging or disappointing, – you are welcome to contact the writer of this manual: Arnfinn Solli, Email: [sarnfinn45@gmail.com](mailto:sarnfinn45@gmail.com), or [mail@responsenetwork.org](mailto:mail@responsenetwork.org) and you will get a reply to the questions as soon as possible.*



## **NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE (NGOCC)**

Non Governmental Organisation Coordinating Committee office is situated in Lusaka. They empower women to participate in governance Tel. 0211 227 538/227 529, Fax 227 514

## **YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION**

YWCA is a large NGO which empowers the women in the community to achieve a better community. P.O. Box 50115, Lusaka, Plot No 7391 Nationalist Road. Tel. 0211 255 204//252 726/255 305/292 121. Fax 0211 254 751, 257 249/50. E-mail: [ywca@zamnet.zm](mailto:ywca@zamnet.zm) YWCA has local branches all over the country. Visit the branch at your place.

## **Lions club, Rotary club, Round Table, Jaycees and local businesses**

Find out if there are service clubs, such as Lions club, Round Table, Rotary club and Jaycees in the area where you live. You may apply to them to fund the action plan for the equality right for women efforts in your community. Explain what you want to buy or do and enclose a detailed cost estimate of the expenses you appeal to them to support. Be realistic and apply for the funds needed only and not large amounts. Provided you write a proper application letter with a budget, the chances are good to be funded by service clubs.

**Constituency Development Fund.** Constituency Development Fund is found in every district and has a yearly capital of K 200 million for each constituency. The fund may support any community initiative to alleviate poverty. Make an application and a budget and give to the Town Clerk or the Council Secretary.

## **Donors are looking for partnership with community projects**

The “**MPS Funding Guide**”, a comprehensive book which includes detailed information on over 300 donor/funder organizations dedicated to Catholic Missionaries and lay-persons seeking financial support for community and patrol projects, is available for purchase at [www.missionprojectservice.org](http://www.missionprojectservice.org). Current cost of the MPS Funding Guide is \$59 but MPS does offer various discounts during publishing cycles so it is best to check their website or email [info@missionprojectservice.org](mailto:info@missionprojectservice.org) for additional information.

stand for election to National Assembly and district council elected seats.

Arrange meetings with people that wish to be elected to District Council and Parliament before the elections and make concerns known to him\her about equal rights and issues women are concerned about. The MP should be your best source of information about government documents as the MP has easy access to all such documents. Make use of the MP!

Encourage girls and women to register on time to get a voters card before elections so they can vote for the candidate that promised to support the community's issues and women's rights and involvement in governance after winning the elections.

Arrange meetings with the elected politicians every six months after the election to discuss with them about what they have done and ask them to address the issue of equality for women.

To enhance the work of the women in governance club you may also use manual no 9 'know your rights' in the Community Self Help Education Series because human rights is closely connected to governance issues.

Visit the district council office and ask to read the Government Gazette which is the government newsletter about the decisions made by the National Assembly and new regulations adopted by the Ministries.

Read newspapers as often as you can as they publish a lot of government information such as the National budget. Use such articles as a base for discussion in the club. You could compare news and information found on the ZNBC radio, the Times of Zambia, Daily Mail and the Mast newspapers.



Buy a internet modem for a cellular phone in the village that has the internet option, then the club will be able to communicate with women with likewise interest around Zambia as well as Internationally to get inspiration and information.

## The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights

*The UN declaration was adopted by the United Nations. Zambia has signed the declaration. The following is a selection of some of the articles (shortened) of the human rights:*

*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. (1)*

*Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security as a person. (3)*

*No one shall be held in slavery or servitude. (4)*

*No one shall be subjected to torture, or inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment. (5)*

*No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile. (9)*

*Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. (16.2)*

*Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression (19)*

*Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. (20.1)*

*Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in her\his country (21.2)*

*Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitations of working hours and periodic holidays with pay. (24)*

*Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of her\himself and her\his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. (25.1)*

*Everyone has the right to education. (26.1)*

*Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible. (29.1)*

For the full text please go to the Internet: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

## Definitions of governance, government and democracy

The terms Governance, Government and Democracy are interrelated so the definitions should be seen connected to each other; **Governance** is the exercise of authority; control and a method or system of government or management, **Government** is the political direction and control exercised over the actions of the inhabitants of the state and the communities, **Democracy** is Government by the people which is a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system. *Ref. Webster's Encyclopaedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language. (1989)*

To translate the definitions above to plain language; this manual will help people to understand the importance of governance or community participation, how they can get involved and learn the value of participating in matters of local governance.

This simplification of the term governance is chosen because a new democracy like Zambia is participatory, inclusive and wants to be sensitive to the needs of the people. Community participation is therefore a merger between the consensus decision making of the village meeting and democracy in a modern nation state (rule by the people). This has been the domain of the men and time has come for the women to get involved on a large scale using their equal rights enshrined by law.

## Who supports women in governance efforts?

As the women governance club grows and makes activity plans there will be need for support and funding to hold women rights classes, print newsletters, hold meetings, train leaders and embark on equality rights education programmes to girls, women and even men. Start with applications to the local businesses and the civic society organisations and later when you have gained more experience apply to national and international donors listed below and in the appendices section at the end of the manual.