

Creating the conditions for Social Accountability in Muchinga

Lessons from the field

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Florencia Guerzovich, Yeukai Mukorombindo, Elsie Eyakuze



In 2015 PSAM (Public Service Accountability Monitor) & Zambia Governance Foundation (ZGF) entered into a partnership and signed an MoU. The main objective of the partnership between PSAM and ZGF is to cooperate in their shared objective of strengthening and institutionalising social accountability monitoring in Zambia with special emphasis on strengthening the ability of civil society organisations and the media to hold government to account. Another objective of the partnership is documenting lessons for sharing with the wider social accountability monitoring community of practice (PSAM-ZGF 2015 & 2016 MoUs)

The partnership has supported strengthening social accountability in Muchinga Province as part of ZGF's broader affirmative action strategy. ZGF's affirmative action strategy intends to grow and develop CBOs & CSOs in provinces where ZGF receives the least grant applications or where they are the least successful due to poor civic presence and capacity.

In Muchinga, work was initially focused on 16 organizations with a discernible service delivery problem that could be engaged with using the SAM approach. In 2016 ZGF

introduced new support tools such as the Mini-Initiative Support grant and Imbuto Support facility for informal groups and grassroots organizations. A mixture of 9 CBOs and informal groups in Muchinga were awarded “Imbuto” support grants to work on service delivery issues and deepen social accountability work in Muchinga province (See Annex for full list of ZGF Consolidated Muchinga Imbuto Beneficiaries).

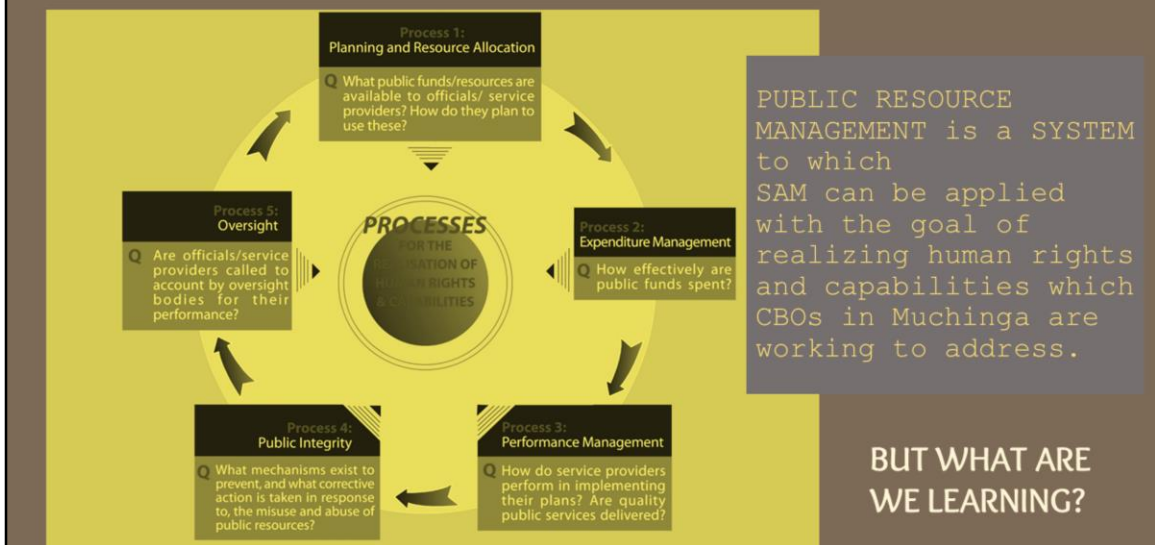
The Learning Pilot

- PSAM, along with partners in 4 countries, engaged in a process to deepen and improve their monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) functions and approaches with their overall strategies and social accountability practices.
- In Zambia the focus of the exercise was to capture, analyze and reflect on **why and how ZGF took on the PSAM approach in supporting community-based organisations in Muchinga Province and what ZGF and selected members of those organisations learnt by implementing this approach.**
- The goal is to inform the expansion of social accountability work to other affirmative action provinces, specifically Northern province in 2017, as well as to contribute to the continuity and improvement of ongoing work in Muchinga.

Methodology

- For this project we used an inductive-deductive approach to develop a conceptual framework for the exercise. The framework was built considering the learning questions presented by partners and the literature in the field, adjusted to the resources available for data collection and analysis.
- We traced and documented how ZGF's Muchinga grantees applied, iterated, and adapted the PSAM framework, highlighting the interactions and effects of key variables in a context, taking into account a theoretical presumption that we improved over time. We also conducted quick but extensive political economy analysis of areas and organizational relationships of interest. For this exercise we focused on 5 out of the 9 Muchinga grantees. These are i)NZP+ ii)Friends of the Needy iii) Maluba HBC iv) St John's HBC v)God Visits Orphans.
- The lessons emerged from capturing, analyzing selected ZGF Muchinga grantees reflections on why and how they took on the PSAM approach and what it has accomplished and triangulating information from other stakeholders and documentation .
- Pilot activities consisted of in-depth interviews between the 3rd and 7th of April of 2017 with various key ZGF Muchinga grantee stakeholders in Mpika and Chinsali In Lusaka we consulted stakeholders of the broader public resource management system (see annex for full list)

Premises of the Social Accountability Monitoring (SAM) Approach



The Social Accountability Monitoring (SAM) methodology allows public resources to be effectively and accountably managed through citizen participation and monitoring of government's public resource management (PRM) system. According to SAM, in order for government to convert public resources into services that meet people's most pressing needs, the state needs to implement five processes that form the basis of a system managing public resources (PRM system):

Process 1: Resource Allocation and Strategic Planning;

Process 2: Expenditure Management;

Process 3: Performance Management;

Process 4: Public Integrity

Process 5: Oversight.

The approach assumes that by applying SAM to the PRM system, demand side actors (civic actors & oversight members) will be able to hold the executive accountable for the use of public funds for service delivery and human rights outcomes.

This exercise seeks to explore variations in the application of SAM in a concrete

context (Muchinga) by a set of specific groups (community based organizations and informal groups) over a specific period of time (2015-2016). It hopes to inform a discussion about what and how the community of implementers of SAM across Southern Africa are learning from practice.

**SAM can contribute to
develop capacities so
that CBOs in Muchinga
are better equipped to
solve their problems**

The 3 stories below illustrate how SAM has contributed to developing select ZGF Muchinga grantees to abilities to solve service delivery problems see improvements, and its limits.

Four years in Muchinga in 1 Story



The Network of the Zambian People living with HIV/AIDS (NZP+) is a national non-governmental organization established in 1996. NZP+ opened up a branch in Mpika district in Muchinga in 2005. The Mpika branch eventually set itself up as an independent body. The organization's strategy was survivalist and their work was entirely about addressing service delivery gaps focusing on patients. Their work did not include advocacy for improved service.

In 2014, ZGF approached NZP+ Mpika branch and offered training on Human Rights Based Approaches (which lays the foundation of SAM from a human rights approach). This was a critical juncture in the organizations' trajectory. After the training, ZGF awarded them a short term grant from June 2016 – January 2017 to tackle the issue of accessing ARVs at Mpika District Hospital. NZP+ members felt empowered by knowledge that access to drugs is their right and that as citizens the concept of social accountability also gives them the right to demand from government. Their organizational strategy has shifted towards solving the problems of drug shortages through advocacy and empowerment. NZP+ applies social accountability tools such

as citizen score cards, questionnaires, video recording to write a report. NKP+ presented findings to the District Medical Officer who in turn has committed to help resolve the problems within her competency.

Four years in Muchinga in 1 Story

Maluba in 2012 was an organization that wanted to do send Orphans & Vulnerable Children to school through self help or funding initiatives. The lack of results had disillusioned its members

In 2013-6 engages ZGF. It learns about free education policy & the concepts of human rights & SAM - a new approach to demand & monitor implementation of free education policy & solve the problem of public schools charging fees

Maluba members and the organization feel empowered to solve the problem

What is the potential of an organization whose members believe that

"At first OVCs couldn't go to school but now they are going. We thought it was impossible but human rights made it possible. The training removed fear. We didn't know. Now we know now, where to ask and take our issues" - Maluba HBC Project coordinator

Maluba Home Based Care (HBC) group was initially set up to provide home-based palliative care to Aids patients. Since the drop in HIV rate in the province, Maluba HBC turned their focus towards self-help initiatives aimed at keeping children in school and mitigating other social issues. Maluba supported Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) by paying for their school fees as they were not aware of the free education policy and that free education is a right. Maluba HBC were approached by ZGF in 2013 and obtained organizational development support in 2014 through ZGF District Resource Persons (DRPs). Maluba HBC and were shortlisted to receive training on HRBA in 2015.

ZGF awarded them a short term grant from June 2016 to January 2017 for effective implementation of the free education policy in their area. The concept of social accountability empowered them to demand that right. What seemingly was once impossible became possible but more importantly since receiving the training, Maluba HBC perceptions and

strategies have moved beyond survivalism to monitoring and demanding accountability. Maluba HBC felt empowered enough to conduct community sensitization meetings and to conduct baseline research into the implementation of free education policy in 9 schools in Chinsali. Maluba disseminated this research and engaged the District Education officials on findings and solutions.

Fours years in Muchinga in 1 Story



Since the 1990s, St John's HBC has been providing palliative care to Aids patients at home. With the reduction of HIV/AIDS rate in the district, they shifted their focus to self-help initiatives aimed at improving access to water since the area suffers the problem of boreholes drying up. For the last 5 years, they received funding by Catholic Relief Services to deal with the issue of water and sanitation through awareness creation and chlorine distribution to households.

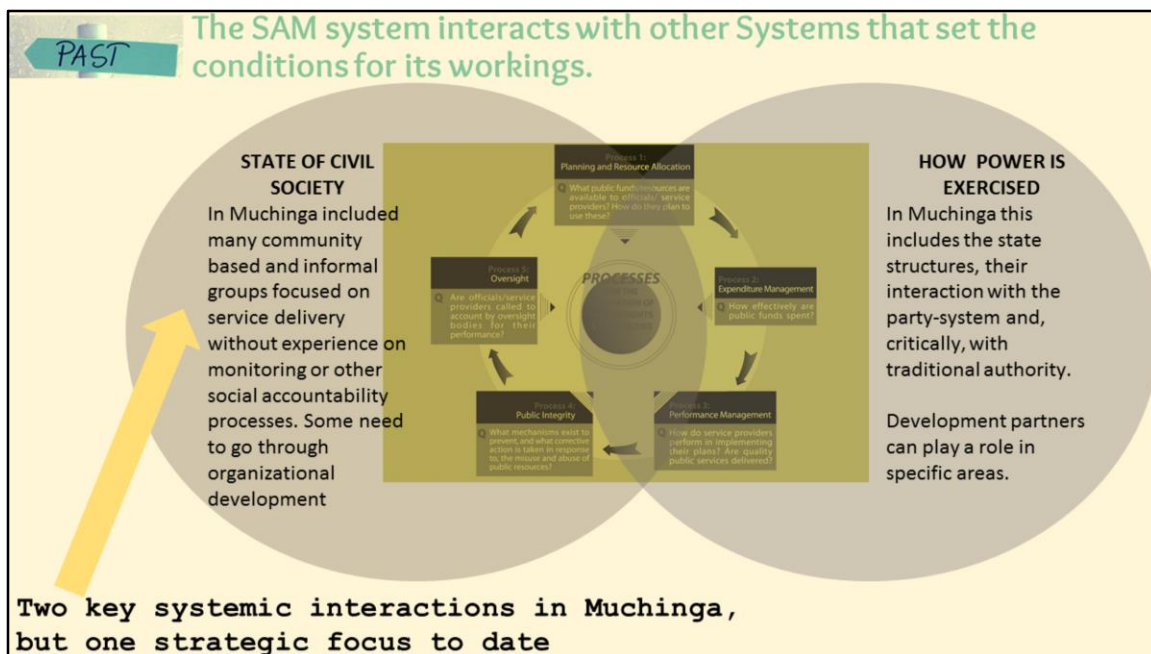
In 2014, St Johns was approached and mentored by ZGF and in 2015 they were shortlisted to receive HRBA training. After the training St. John's realized they need to help prevent disease outbreaks and enhance community awareness that access to safe and clean water since is their fundamental right. In June 2016, ZGF awarded them a short term grant aimed at improving access to safe and clean water: addressing the drying up of boreholes in Chinsali. Since receiving training, they have felt confident and empowered enough to conduct social accountability monitoring by conducting a citizen score card and mobilizing and training community members on social accountability tools and HRBA. They have since engaged key persons such as

the District Water Coordinator who tabled a district water & sanitation plan in local council with input from St John's.

Three sets of big picture insights about the past, present and the future of SAM in Muchinga



- How ZGF created pre-conditions for CBOs and informal groups that ultimately want to improve service delivery?
- How ZGF supports organizations to use SAM?
- How can ZGF nurture Muchinga CBOs and informal groups to turn SAM into concrete results?



The SAM approach presumes that civil society organizations can engage in evidence based public resource management across the public resource management system. This does not happen in a vacuum- other systems interact with and influence the potential to deliver on SAM’s assumptions. Two systems stood out as we traced the trajectory of ZGF grantees in Muchinga:

1. The state of civil society is relatively weak in terms of civic space and capacities to engage in advocacy activities. Strengthening these variables in the last few years appears to be creating a stronger enabling environment to implement SAM.
2. The exercise of power in Muchinga is complex. It includes government authorities and political parties, but also traditional authorities and economic powers. In some areas of interests to ZGF grantees, international funders also have sway. These relationships influence the potential and limits of SAM work.

ZGF’s decision going into Muchinga was to enhance the state of civil society prior to focusing on the PRM system. The implementation of SAM was difficult, if not unviable in Muchinga in 2012. In 2017, it is still not realistic for Muchinga CBOs to apply SAM

in all the PRM system. In the long term the hope is that by tackling the state of civil society, power will be exercised more democratically. However, tracing the stories of ZGF Muchinga grantees suggests their interaction with various power structures seems to have emerged on an ad-hoc and self-initiated basis without much support. In addition, previous as well as new decisions related to supporting grantees by ZGF has potential to influence the present and future potential of SAM in Muchinga.

PRESENT

Nurturing CBOs to do SAM in Muchinga should be a multi-pronged effort



ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES FOR CBOs



TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY MONITORING APPROACH



STRENGTHENING POLITICAL SAVVINESS



STRENGTHENING THE ABILITY OF CBOs TO COURSE CORRECT

The learning pilot traced the experiences of 5 Muchinga grantees. The individual stories and the comparisons of the trajectories with each other and with research from the Global Partnership for Social Accountability (Guerzovich and Poli 2014) underscored the state of & critical capacities for social accountability among these grantees.

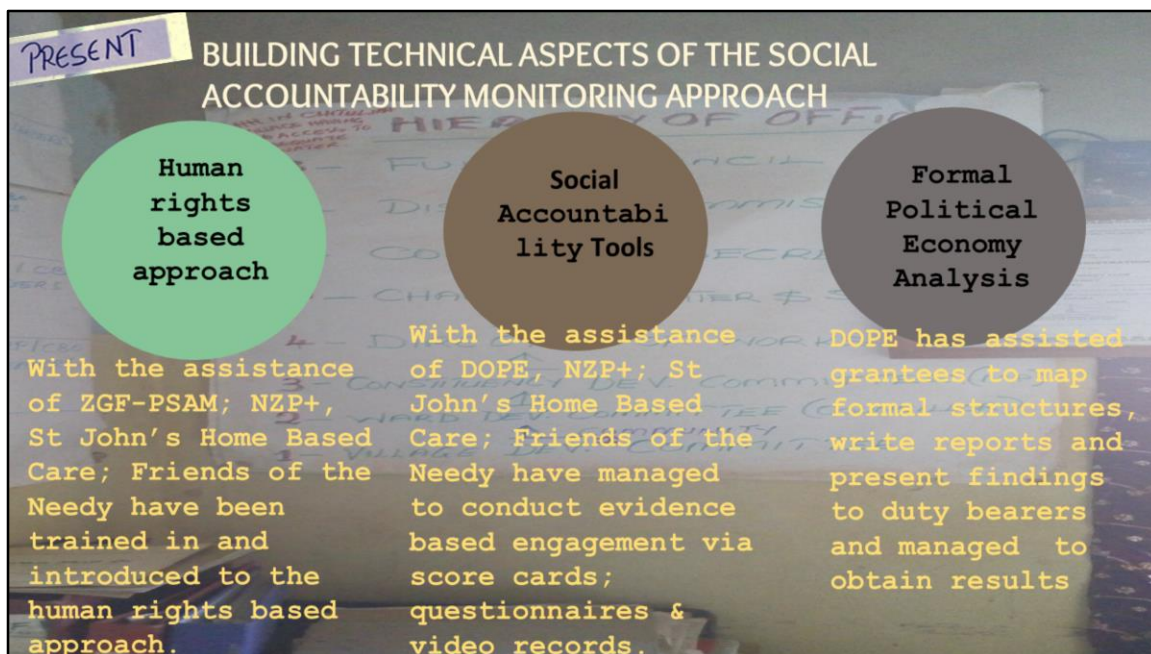
These include organizational capacities, which ZGF has invested most of its support in to create necessary administrative and managerial capacity such as governance, planning, strategizing, managing books and funds.

This learning pilot examined other capacities as they relate to SAM because they have the potential to illuminate how organizations like Maluba HBC, Friends of the Needy and St John's HBC went from self- help initiatives to organizations using social accountability and the human rights agenda. These capacities include:

- Technical aspects of the social accountability monitoring approach
- Strengthening political savviness, including the ability to implement strategies that are responsive and realistic for the local context or to nurture and leverage

relationships to make the most of opportunities and constraints.

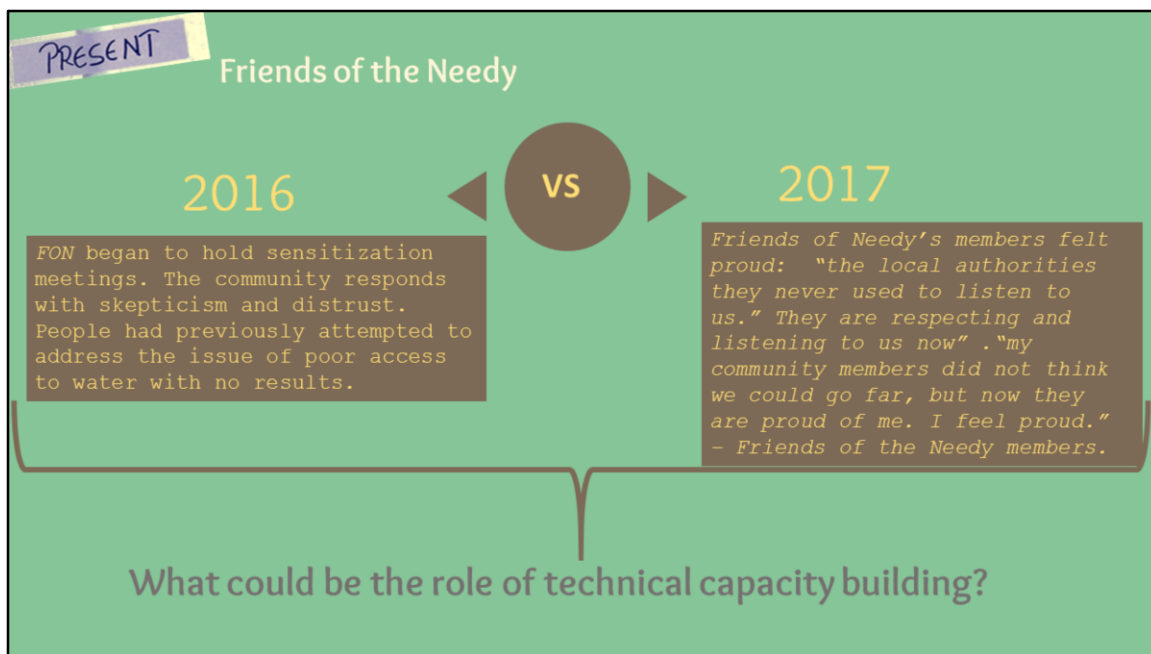
- Strengthening the ability of CBOs to course correct as a result of learning from past experiences, new information/data, or changes in context.



ZGF's Muchinga grantees received technical capacity building for SAM on a number of issues that collectively enabled them to begin implementing the first, baby steps of a social accountability approach.

St John's HBC; Maluba HBC, and Friends of the Needy collected data through score cards & questionnaires. NZP+ recorded videos showing plight of patients poor service when trying to access drugs at the District Hospital. They have acquired skills to conduct community sensitizations. Friends of the Needy have elaborated power mapping of local government structures to inform a plan of action.

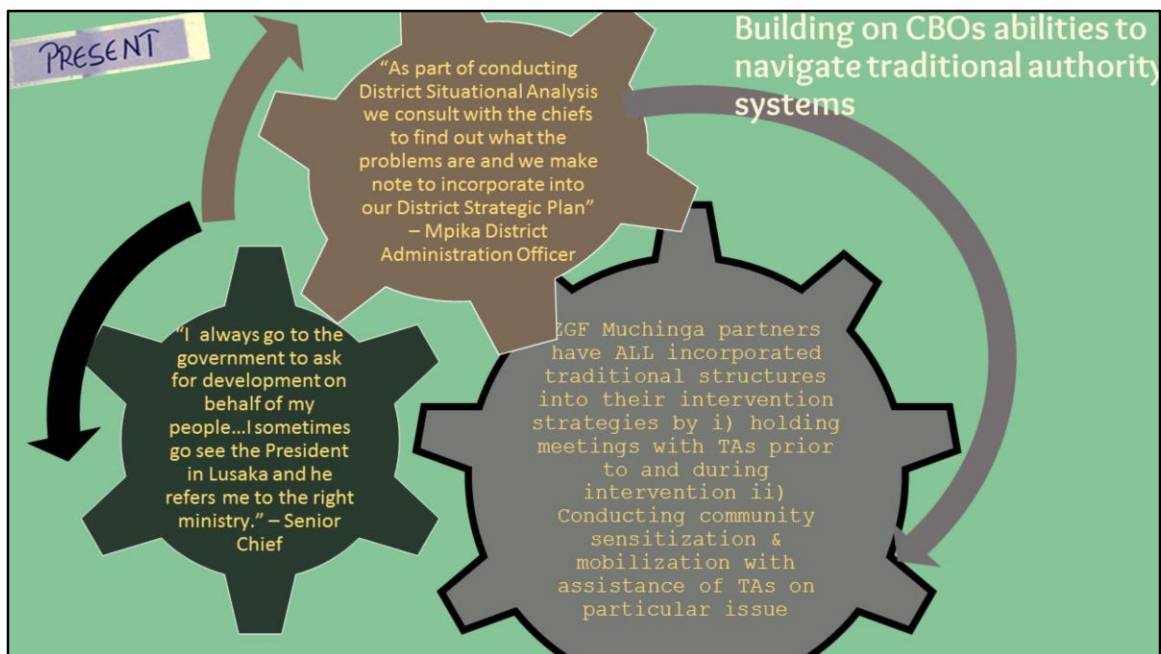
In these organizations' journeys, numbers and evidence seems to have been a necessary, not sufficient, condition to influence officials' responsiveness to community begs the question if numbers and evidence is not enough, what other tactics or actions were brought to bear?



Friends of the Needy (FoN)'s experience provides insights into the use of these technical capacities as part of their trajectory in context. Collecting information and sharing it with a local council that appreciated it, is a component that seems to have contributed to this change. If The Friends of the Needy had not acquired these multiple technical capacities, and stayed on its previous course, it is unlikely that its members would have gained this empowerment in their own community. It would have been unthinkable for councilors to request formal training from a community based group like them. Councilors were not responsive before, let alone value feedback or knowledge coming from the community. We reflected with them that the more likely pathway would have been them joining the many in their communities who did not trust.

At the same time, just knowing technical matters cannot provide a full account of the trajectory of Friends of the Needy or other groups in Muchinga or its limits. For example, the formal political economy analysis incentivized Friends of Needy to write a strategy that merely followed governance structures. This means that they may

have missed opportunities that require political savvy, understanding and navigating how those structures work in practice. We turn, to these next.



Everyone we interviewed seems to know that building relationships that help you effectively engage traditional authorities is key to getting anything done. In a chief's words: *“ if it doesn't come through me it doesn't happen.”* Traditional leaders' influence and power also helps to open and grease the networks and relationships and spaces.

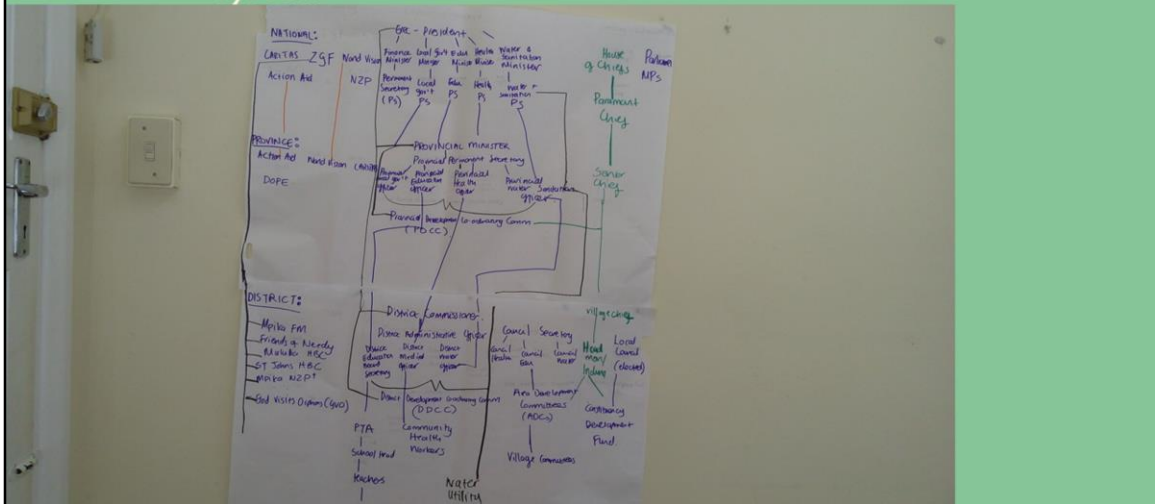
Nurturing this political savvy was not part of the capacity building package from ZGF-PSAM. Muchinga grantees learned about the need through trial, error, and adaptation. St.John's HBC first attempts to make use of scorecards to gather evidence of inadequate water supply in several wards were thwarted. According to a member, *“there was some issues from PF cadres. They were suspicious of our activities [...] it was during election time so we decided to [...] involve Chief Chene. He called a meeting with village head men and the community to share the information we had found and it allowed our work to continue. Our engagement with traditional leaders helped us to identify village wash committees who put us in touch with the district water coordinator. The district water coordinator considered our report and*

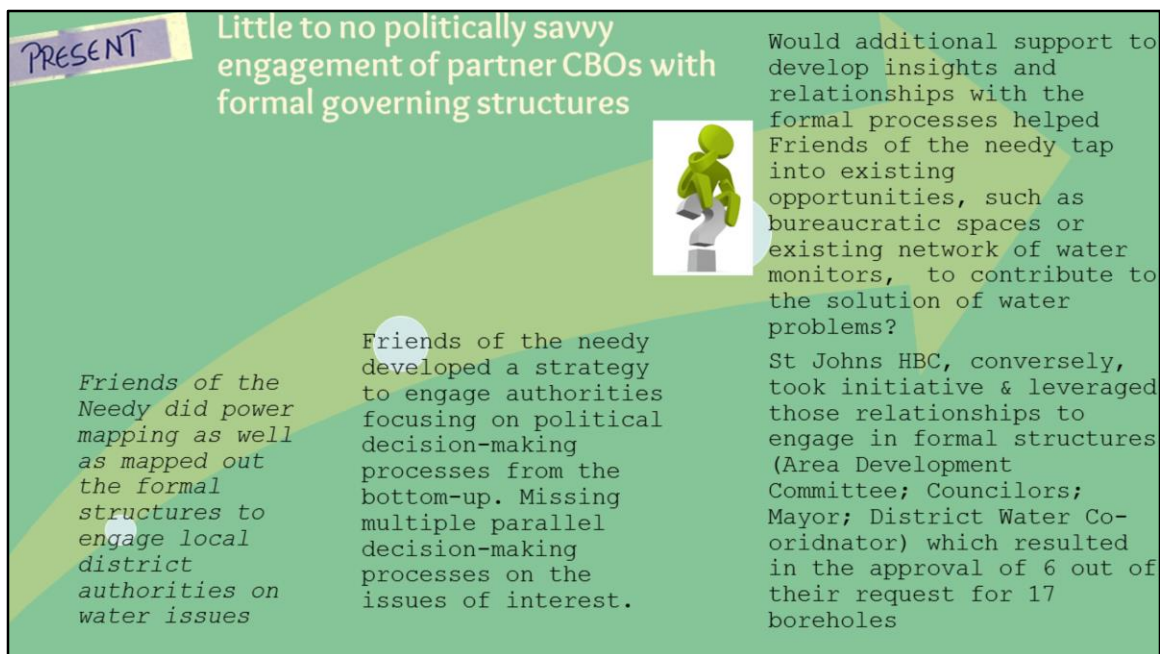
incorporated it into his district water plan which has just been approved by council.”

This anecdote also reflects the experiences of other organizations in the province. Conversely, the ‘small p’ engagement between St. John’s and Friends of the Needy (i.e. the water focused grantees) and the district water office seems to have contributed to a missed strategic opportunity, i.e. the lack of coordination with other District water monitoring network members.

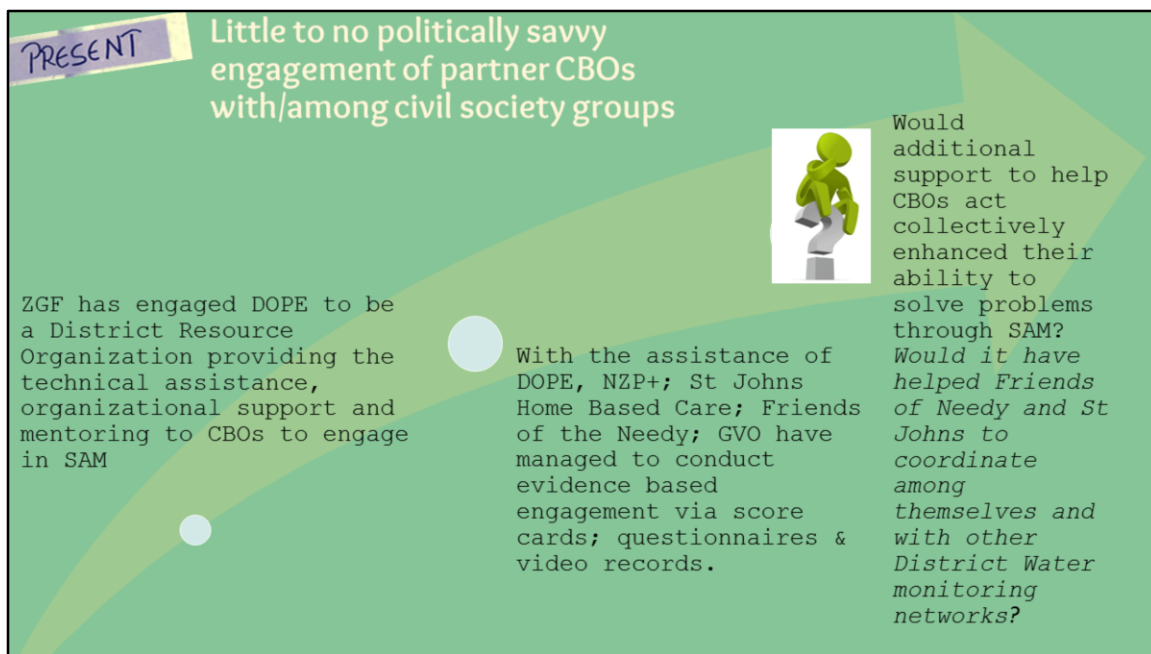
PRESENT

But decision making to change problems in Muchinga entails navigating a much more complex system





Interviews with NZP+/Maluba HBC revealed that they were yet to develop their political savvy. This was revealed by their admission that they were waiting for formal invitations from the government to engage with them, rather than taking the initiative. Lack of initiative means that NZP+ and Maluba HBC are missing critical opportunities to position themselves strategically through building and nurturing relationships with relevant persons. The capacity to position one's self strategically with a diverse group of stakeholders is an important dimension of doing SAM work. Furthermore interviews with St Johns and Friends of Needy revealed that there is very little to no 'small p' engagement not only with formal governing structures but amongst each other as CBOs. Inter-organizational relations are lacking between grantees, which has hampered their ability to work together to gain traction and to obtain sustainable solutions. Initial ZGF-PSAM efforts to factor deliberate interactions into their strategy to enhance the Grantees' service delivery actions and maximize effectiveness did not pan out and, in some cases, were not sustainable. Relationships have not become stronger over time.



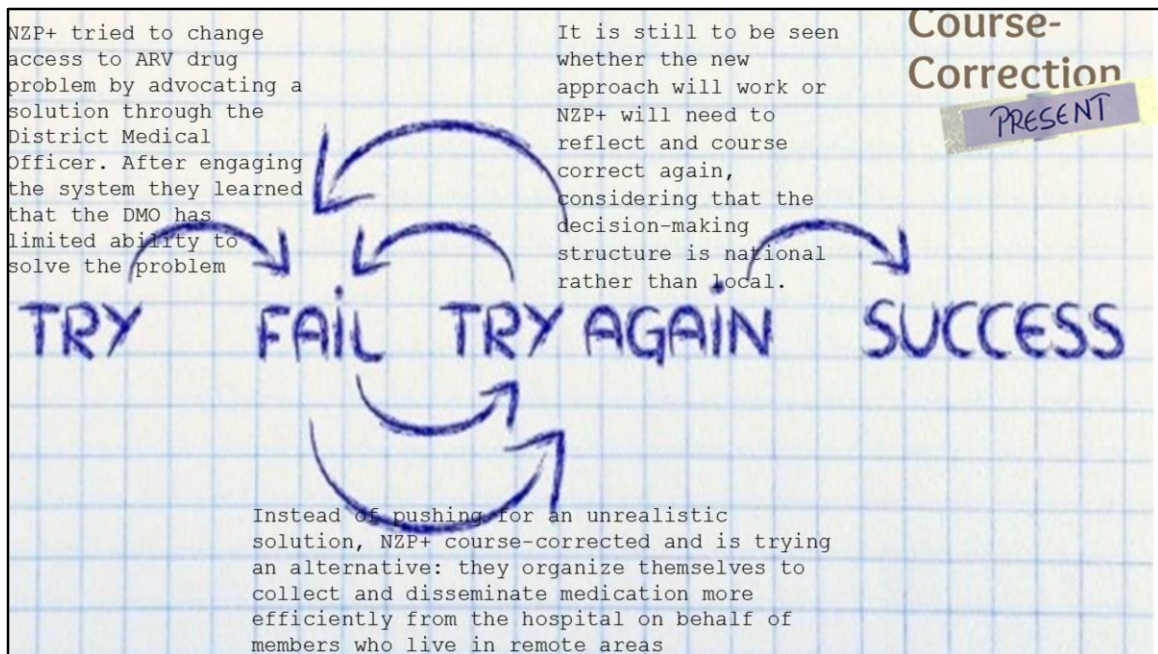
Organizations in Muchinga do not engage with each other and formal government structures as well as they could. They do, however, understand that confrontation with public authorities for advocacy purposes will not deliver results in their context and may in fact backfire.

Development for People's Empowerment (DOPE)'s staff explained that *"working constructively with duty bearers makes our work easier in terms of advocacy"*. DOPE links social accountability to the Sustainable Development Goals because they have identified that public officials appreciate seeing the results of their interventions. *"We take them (duty bearers) through how a specific intervention will help them achieve their goals"*. –Programme Officer, DOPE

DOPE rarely uses media or any other techniques that may be perceived to be negative towards duty bearers to reveal lapses in service delivery. Rather, DOPE opts to use the media as a last resort.

When it comes to engaging with local budgets and plans, ZGF Muchinga grantees do not seem to be applying a similar level of political savvy. In discussions with local

stakeholders, we identified multiple pieces of information that are accessible but not accessed. For instance, the council meetings where the budget for relevant services is discussed is open, but officials and organizations confirmed that the latter do not show up at those discussions. Only prominent business people and other high level stakeholders take advantage of the opportunity. It would seem that ZGF Muchinga partners do not even ask for publicly available information or use their civic spaces fully. *An area for improvement and support?*



As in the case in which organizations learned to engage productively traditional authorities, there are many other examples about the role of trial, error, and course-correction to keep them moving towards their goals.



Training was but one of a range of tactics to nurture CBOs and community groups' capacities in Muchinga. Training has multiple purposes such as;

Opening spaces and networks: Training can enable an organization to entrench its strategic position and relationships with key stakeholders. Friends of the Needy do this well when they combine the transfer of technical capacity with buy-in from traditional leaders and community members. This is a small 'p' tactic that helps to achieve the goals of a bigger strategy.

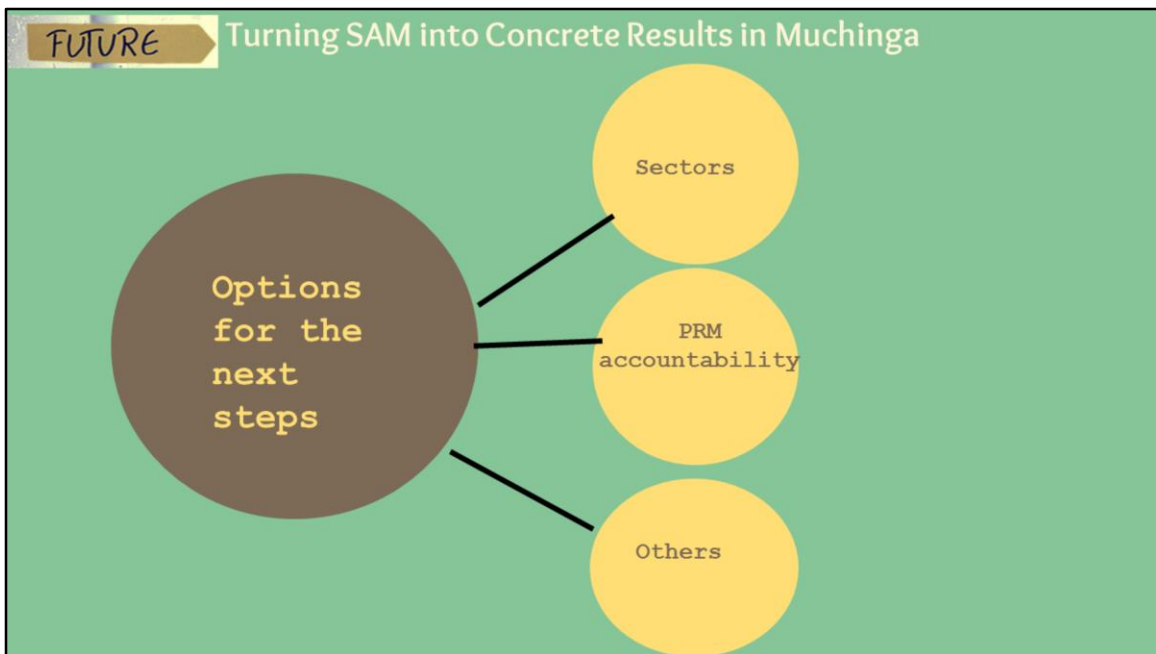
Learning by doing: It's better to add to the arsenal of approaches learning by doing not just learning top-down through training.

Mentoring, Technical Assistance and Support: ZGF Muchinga grantees highlighted the need and appreciation for further training, mentoring and handholding of ZGF grantees SAM by DRPs. All expressed the usefulness of ZGF mentors and their value add. St John's HBC, Friends of the Needy, Maluba NZP+ all thanked and referenced assistance of DRPs for milestones achieved. Mentorship adds to training, and in some cases mentoring organizations can open up spaces for grantees through their own

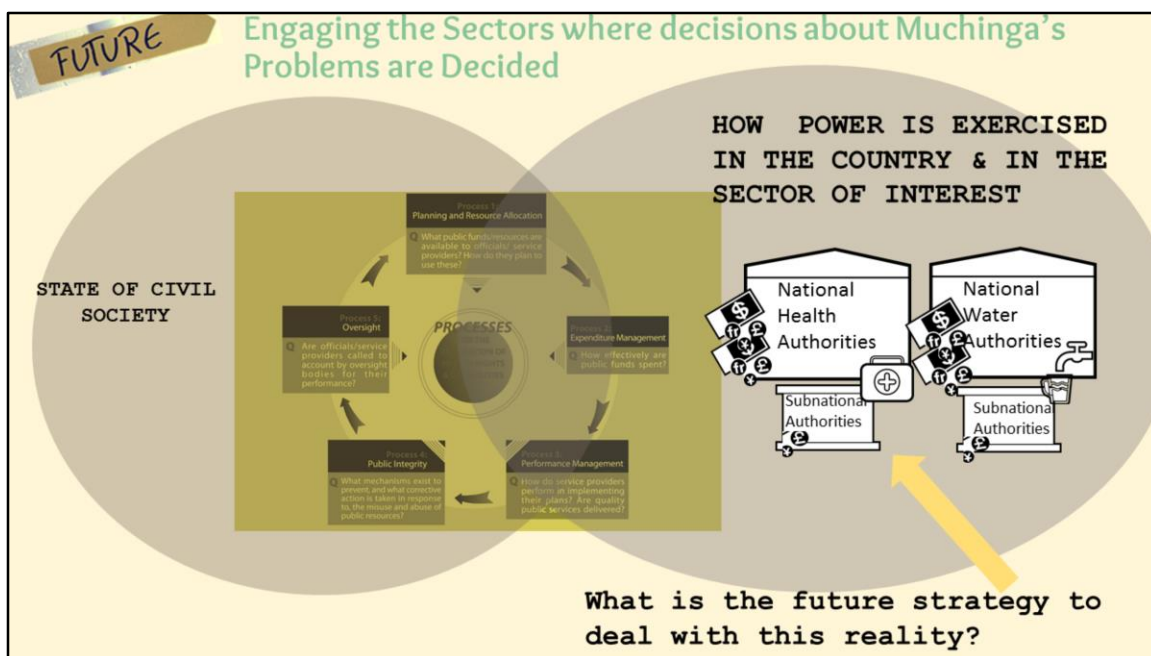
social capital.

As a selection mechanism: Training can be employed as an identification process for selecting suitable partners to work with, based on their responsiveness and commitment. This is a strategy which worked well when ZGF & PSAM conducted HRBA training with a group of organizations in Muchinga between 2014 -2016 before narrowing down 9 partners to fund and support.

These insights highlight that training is but one element in an overall strategy, but it plays multiple roles.



This pilot can only provoke thinking about the future. The evidence collected is limited. There are a range of factors that inform decisions about the future. Still, the journey in Muchinga suggests at least two ways forward that merit further exploration.



Muchinga CBOs and informal groups see SAM as a means towards solving complex problems. Their actions so far may have enabled organizations to obtain a few boreholes, but they are far from resolving the main problems. Part of the challenge is that the service delivery problems grantees and communities are interested in solving require understanding how to navigate the systems where decisions about the sector are made.

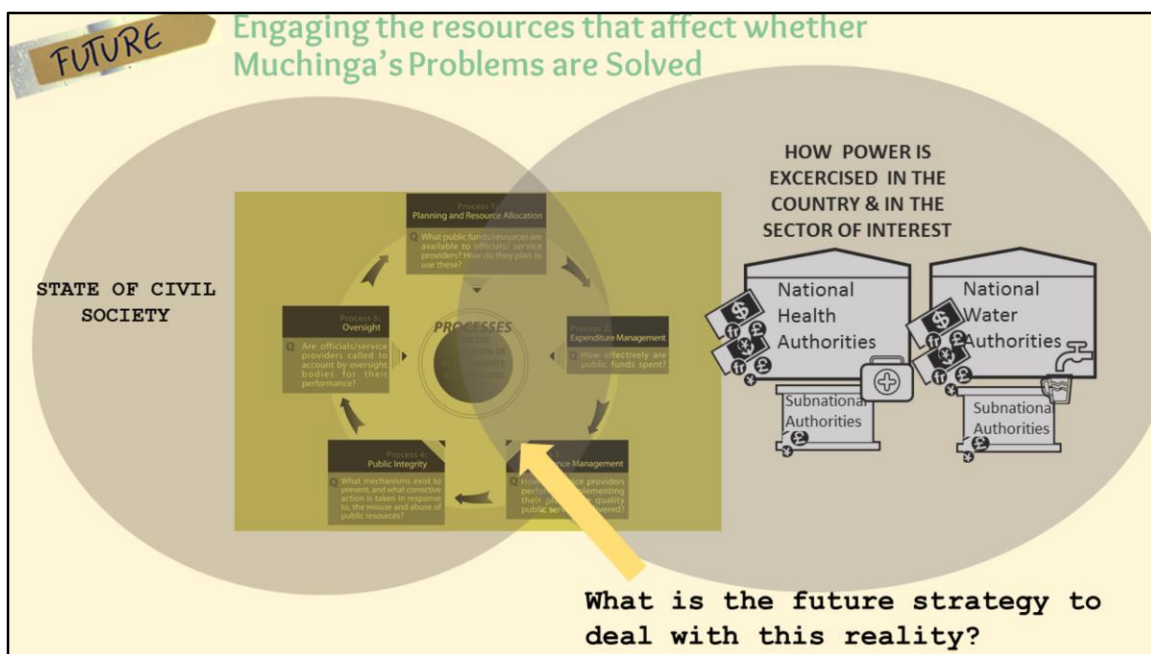
For example, in the water and sanitation sector as well as in health, District officials (DMO & District Water Coordinator) confirmed the limited authority in practice to sustainably resolve many of the problems raised by the community.

In the case of NZP+ they narrated a story in which soon after compiling a research report detailing poor health services at district hospital & presented it to the District Medical Officer (DMO). The DMO was honest in her response by stating that she would address only what was within her competency. Since submitting the report to the DMO NZP+ reported improvements in terms of management issues relating to

drug access. Despite DMOs efforts, NZP+ still lamented the persistence of drug shortages as well as insufficient primary health care centres especially in remote areas- issues which were beyond the DMO's competency.

While in the long term a strategy solely based on local participatory and sectoral authorities would be ideal, while the process of decentralization is not finalized that kind of strategy may not be enough. The risk is not only failure to obtain solutions, but that unmet raised expectations contributes to community disengagement. Muchinga grantees seem well aware of the later risk, as it was an unintended consequence of previous interventions.

A question for the future is: what to do to deal with this, and what other sectoral realities should be dealt with? One thing to consider is managing expectations that cannot be met where advocacy is happening, so that realistic achievements may be appreciated and strategies are designed that consider and incorporate the non-local elements of problem-solving (or impact) on a sectoral level.



From the perspective of local authorities, many problems will not be resolved until resources are allocated to them. This means making use of budgeting and planning processes and documents. Through our interviews, we learned that information, plans, and processes to determine budgets are open and a possible avenue for engaging effectively the sectors.

“The District Situational Analysis and District Plans are public documents & we publicly display information pertaining to council meetings and DDCC sub-committee meetings but nobody comes to meetings or engages us on our plans. My advice to CSOs is to engage the DDCC.” – Mpika District Administrative Officer.

In the example of St John’s HBC, they had initially advocated for 17 boreholes based on the evidence they collected using score cards. Unfortunately the district office and local office is not authorized to implement large borehole projects. Projects larger than KMW25 000 can only be approved at the national level. As a result, the district

water office and local council approved a district plan targeting 6 boreholes which were within the local government's limitations. For a sustainable water solution, St John's would have to engage at the national level.

Is the time ripe to take advantage of both sectoral dynamics and the PRM system to find solutions to the problems Muchinga CBOs care about? In some instances, Muchinga CBOs may have to engage these systems individually or collectively. In others, they may need to establish partnerships with national CSOs and authorities. In an interview with national CSO JCTR, they pointed to targeting their interventions at both the local level & national level in order to successfully address water service delivery problems at the local level. *"Through interactions at both national and local level we have managed to engage government and water companies to be responsive to major problems in water and sanitation."* – JCTR Program Officer

SAM can contribute to develop capacities so that CBOs in Muchinga are better equipped to solve their problems

ZGF Muchinga grantees hold some insights for other provinces

- ✓ The SAM system interacts with other Systems that set the conditions for its workings. It is important to invest in those pre-conditions.
- ✓ Build and nurture the following capacities for effective social accountability outcomes
 - i. technical aspects of SAM approach
 - ii. Navigation of complex systems
 - iii. political savvy engagement with other civic actors
 - iv. course correction of strategies
 - v. capacity to do constructive engagement

Insights for taking forward the work in Muchinga

- ✓ Make use of budgeting and planning processes and other processes of the PRM system
- ✓ Engage power and resource structures that affect problem solving for Muchinga problems
- ✓ Engage sectors & governance levels where decisions affect Muchinga's problems.

ANNEXURES

ZGF 'IMBUTO' MUCHINGA BENEFICIARIES

No	Organizations	Service Delivery/Policy Focus	Name of Social Accountability Initiative
1.	Friends for the Needy	Access to Water	Improving the access to adequate water in Chitulika Village.
2.	Mpika FM Radio Station	Constituency Development Funds (CDFs)	Popularising the constituency Development Fund Guidelines
3.	Mpika NZP+	Access to ARVs	Long waiting hours to access ART at Mpika District Hospital
4.	God Visits Orphans HBC	Child Labour	Reducing incidences of child labour and promoting the free primary education policy in Chinsali district"
5.	Maluba HBC	Access to Education	Improving the implementation of free primary education policy in Chinsali district
6.	St John's HBC	Access to Water	Improving access to safe and clean water: addressing the drying up of boreholes
7.	Chilanga Area Women Association	Food Security	Strengthening the implementation of the food security packs
8.	ISO FM Radio Station	Constituency Development Funds (CDFs)	Popularising the constituency Development Fund Guidelines
9.	CHOZI Youth Alive Movement	Access to Education	The absence of a secondary school in the area

References

Memorandum of Understanding between Caritas Zambia, the Jesuit Theological Reflection Centre (JCTR), and Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR) And The Centre for Social Accountability (now the Public Service Accountability Monitor 2011- 2014

Memorandum of Understanding between PSAM & ZGF for 1st February – 31st December 2015

Memorandum of Understanding between PSAM & ZGF for 1st February – 31st December 2016

ZGF Consolidated Muchinga 'Imbuto' Beneficiaries Action Plans June 2016 – June 2017

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