

JULY 2020

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Creating a roadmap for equal participation for women in LG

WELCOME NOTE

Welcome to the 3rd issue of the LACEP newsletter!

The year 2020 started off like any other but has developed into a tough one for many due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The novel COVID outbreak had its first case reported in Zimbabwe in March 2020 and has presented significant challenges for the country, especially Local Authorities. As the tier of government closest to the people, local authorities have a great responsibility to ensure that citizens within their areas of jurisdiction are not only safe but have to ensure that service delivery continues undisturbed.

As LA's grapple with the new reality, various contributions to support LA's in the fight against COVID-19 have come through from individuals, business community, NGOs, diaspora national government and from one council to another. At LACEP 2, we have been working tirelessly to ensure that programming continues as we adjust to the 'new normal'

Happy Reading!

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LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THE FRONTLINE: PROTECTING VITAL SERVICES DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

FISCAL IMPACTS OF COVID-19 HAVE BEEN UNFORGIVING. LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE FACED NON-RECOVERABLE LOSSES DRIVEN BY RISING COSTS AND PLUMETING REVENUE SOURCES. CITIZENS NOW MORE THAN EVER ARE DEPENDING ON LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO PROVIDE VITAL SERVICES.

In a matter of weeks, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic turned life upside down. Posing a public health challenge unlike anything we have seen in our lifetime. Local Authorities (LAs) across the country have worked to support frontline action and ensure accessible essential services. LAs have been doing all they can to keep their residents safe and to weather the storm.

COVID -19 is shining the spotlight on the vital role LAs play in daily life. Now more than ever, residents are relying on their local leaders to keep essential services running for public safety and to create a secure environment during the pandemic. These services include local public healthcare, clean water and wastewater services, refuse collection, infrastructure and local social services in general.

Before COVID-19, LAs managed a razor-thin budget for service delivery largely due to the unstable economic environment in Zimbabwe. However, operating in the midst of COVID-19 has proved to be more challenging as LAs are incurring deep losses due to the pandemic-a combination of foregone revenues (rates,

levies, rentals, etc) and unanticipated costs (public safety measures and support for vulnerable populations). This challenge is not limited to cash flow challenges but irrecoverable losses that are seeing LAs digging into limited or non-existent reserves that were not designed for a crisis of this scale.

The Associations of Local Authorities (Association of Rural District of Zimbabwe and the Urban Council's Association of Zimbabwe) held an interface with the Permanent Secretary of Local Government on a Bailout request resulting in Local Authorities being allocated a share of ZWL 1.8 Billion from the National ZWL 18 Billion COVID -19 Response bill. The ALAs are still pursuing measures to enhance sustainability of the support as LAs prepare for the new normal.

With plummeting revenues, rising expenses, and the imminent risk of having to cut essential services, more needs to be done to ensure that LAs remain solvent and the base level support via the Bailout Fund is supplemented by targeted measures to meet the distinct needs of each LA as they continue to keep residents fully served and protected.

LAUNCH OF CHARTS OF ACCOUNTS AND PROGRAMME BASED BUDGETING IN MANGWE RDC

MANGWE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL SYSTEM SET-UP AND IMPLEMENTATION FOR MAPPING REPORTING SEGMENTS AND REPORTING ACCOUNTS FOR THE EXTRACTION OF GENERAL-PURPOSE FINANCIAL REPORTS, MANAGEMENT REPORTS; BUDGETARY REPORTS AND NATIONAL ACCOUNTING REPORTS (GFS).

LACEP 2 in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government Public Works National Housing (MoLGPWNH) and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) successfully launched on site the new Charts of Accounts (CoA), Programme Based Budgeting (PBB) and Budgeting Reporting for Mangwe RDC in July 2020. Mangwe RDC is among the 5 targeted Local Authorities under the LACEP 2 project being used as pilots to test the new paradigm shift under the new public finance management (PFM) reforms. The launch in Mangwe RDC will pave the way to standardise the approach and formats of the new chart of accounts and PBB to the remaining 91 local authorities in Zimbabwe.

LACEP 2 in partnership with the relevant Ministries, has been working to ensure that Councils have a sound PFM system that supports aggregate control, prioritization, accountability, and efficiency in the management of public resources which can contribute to the improvement of service delivery to residents. The project has undertaken extensive review of government and Council's documents and reports relating to the reforms, undertook a baseline survey to establish the status quo of the existing PFM system in the LAs. As a result, the ongoing support towards strengthening PFM reforms has also included supporting Councils with Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS), revenue collection, budget formulation, implementation, monitoring and reporting; and strengthening budget transparency.

The ongoing economic crises and unprecedented coronavirus pandemic, COVID-19, have negatively affected Councils, but with strengthened PFM capabilities, they can continue to fulfill their mandate. The support is expected to yield positive results in terms of improved transparency and accountability, reporting and service delivery.

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LOCAL AUTHORITIES DELIVERING SERVICES DURING LOCKDOWN DESPITE LIMITED RESOURCES

Following the public announcement made by the State President, His Excellency, Emmerson Mnangagwa on the 30th of March 2020 regarding the global pandemic COVID-19, Zimbabwe went into a series of nationwide lockdowns which is now in its 45th day as at 15 May 2020.

LAs have gone into overdrive, albeit with limited resources, in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic which has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives worldwide and infected more than 4 million people. LAs are at the coalface of this fight ensuring the safety of their residents by promoting preventive measures as well as improving services in particular those with an impact on sanitation and hygiene.

During the lockdown LAs have continued to deliver their mandates which include among others the following:

- Provision of potable water
- Provision of sanitation
- Regular collection of solid waste
- Operations of reliable ambulance services
- Maintenance of passable roads
- Regulation of food markets in compliance with the health requirements
- Protection of staff on duty during the lockdown by providing sufficient and appropriate protection and information

Some local authorities are using the lockdown period to uplift infrastructure and also clear illegal vending stalls and tuck shops which occupied open spaces in most high-density areas. Local authorities have also disinfected all the public spaces such as vegetable markets, shopping malls, health facilities and bus termini just to mention a few. UCAZ President Cllr Josiah Makombe said that LAs had identified new sites from where the vendors would be working. He said that the exercise was being carried out to decongest public spaces as

well as restore order in the interest public safety.

Twenty-four isolation facilities have been established in urban LAs to quarantine and test suspected COVID-19 cases. The majority are being supported by UNICEF while a few by the WASH Sector.

Taking advantage of the empty public places local authorities have fumigated these spaces. "As you are aware the COVID-19 virus is heavy hence it falls to the ground within 1 meter to 2 meters from a cough or sneeze. That means that surfaces may get contaminated when the virus settles on them. When people get into contact with contaminated surfaces they may get infected. This raises the need to disinfect surfaces especially in public places such as such as markets, streets, shops, bus termini and other such places," said Mr Kelton Chinowaita, Chief Environmental Health Officer for Bindura Municipality, He added that government had donated some disinfectants to larger local authorities for disinfection of public places while smaller ones teamed up with corporate partners.

Other activities undertaken by local authorities during the lock down include repair and maintenance of roads, clearing of illegal dumpsites and repair of water and sewer infrastructure.

While the efforts by local authorities are quite commendable the relaxation of lockdown to a level where people are now allowed to move around, it is important to produce Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material for display in public areas like boreholes, clinics and shopping centres where large numbers of people frequent. UCAZ is working on making use of posters, pamphlets, static and electronic billboards to raise awareness of the COVID-19 pandemic among citizens.

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Notice

on the COVID-19 pandemic

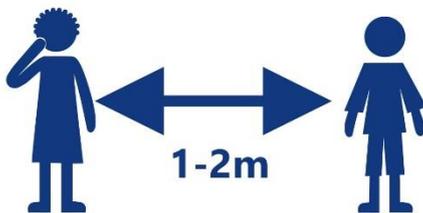
- Wash your hands with running water and soap for at least **20 seconds** frequently



- Always wear a mask covering your mouth and nose when in public places



- maintain social distancing between 1-2m in public places



- We are encouraging residents to stay at home and avoid unnecessary movements.



For more information contact the Ministry of Health or the nearest Clinic
Prevent the spread of the Corona Virus
Stay Healthy
Support your Local Authority, Lets pay our rates



This project is funded by the European union " and "this project is implemented by CLGF& LACEP in partnership withUCAZ and ARDCZ".
Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission".

INFORMATION SOURCED FROM: World Health Organisation (www.who.int/) & Centre for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019)