

Mutare Service Delivery discussion Forum attendance figures

Males		Females		Total
Adults	Youth	Adults	Youths	
8	14	13	17	52

Social Audit of Mutare City Council by United Mutare Residents and Ratepayers Trust (UMRRT)

Mr. Edson Dube explained to the forum participants the findings of the Social Audit on the state of service delivery in the Mutare City Council. The audit was conducted by the United Mutare Residents and Rate Payers' Trust in the period October to December 2016. According to the report service delivery in the city of Mutare was deplorable and there was virtually no communication between residents and Rate Payers and the City Council. This state of affairs raised suspicion and mistrust which made the service provider too crippled to cope with demand for improved services as residents would not part with their money. The council had also become more secretive in their dealings while residents demanded transparency and access to information as they would pay for services only when they are made aware of budgets acquittals, tender issues and also improved transparency on governance matters.

Findings of the audit included:

1. Failure to account for utilisation of funds budgeted for Dangamvura water supply project. There is erratic water supply to the biggest residential suburb.
2. The education fund was imposed on residents by the city council and the purpose is not clear and the council is unable to account for it.
3. Council receives funds from ZINARA for road maintenance but the activity is not carried out and they are unable to account for the money they received.
4. By failing to share information, council missed the opportunity to discuss with residents causes of poor service delivery, which are rooted in macro-economic conditions such as the fall in revenue in council and withdrawal of central government funding
5. The city council did not give feedback to residents on the following set budget priorities yet the money was expended.
 - Fernhill layout plan
 - 3 and 4 Infill Layout Plan
 - Renovation of clinics
 - Repair of Turner Memorial Library
 - Renovation of Dangamvura CSD offices

Service Delivery as a constitutional matter

Mr. Timothy Kondo, consultant from the constitution Monitoring Consortium, in his presentation explained to participants that citizens and ratepayers are rights holders and should be able to demand for improved service delivery, information pertaining to resources and expenditures. Awareness was raised on the constitution and participants were encouraged to read the constitution

so that they are familiar with their constitutional entitlements so that they can be able to demand for them. They also should be able to engage the city councillors by attending ward feed back meetings and other consultative meetings so that they keep track of the events and informed of council priorities.

Plenary session

During plenary session residents acknowledged that the city council was facing real pressures from both residents and government. They also mentioned the below factors as central to poor service delivery.

- mismanagement,
- corruption,
- poor morale among workers,
- Residents defaulting in paying rates and arrears to council.
- Failure to pay workers' salaries and poor salaries affecting council's ability to supervise and monitor its workers thus providing poor quality service
- Poor management and lack of engagement of rate payers has also been highlighted
- The urban Councils Act which is in use by the city Council is not in harmony with the constitution making it difficult for inclusiveness and effectiveness regarding governance issues

Recommendations to Residents and Ratepayers

- Residents and ratepayers to demand information on the administration of the city to engage in informed participation in the running of Mutare city
- Citizens should demand platforms for dialogue with council management through their councilors
- Citizens should challenge duty bearers on corrupt practices and whistle-blowing against corrupt public officials.
- Citizens should be organised and follow up on service delivery issues.

Recommendations to Mutare City Council

- City Council should improve residents' access to key documents such as minutes and reports, budgets and key services i.e. housing, education etc.
- Council revenue collection systems should be open and convenient to facilitate improved revenue collection
- Council should readily provide information on decisions they make such as resolutions and levies
- Council should set up a public relations office to cater for service delivery grievances
- Council should encourage the residents to actively participate and make input in matters of service delivery
- Council should engage key stakeholders such as residents associations to enhance information dissemination and sharing
- Council should create spaces for regular information sharing, engagement and dialogue with residents

Recommendations to CSO and Government

- Raise constitutional awareness
- Continue facilitating Council and ratepayers engagement through discussion forums

Limitations

The town clerk and councilors did not turn up to respond to issues raised. They apologized at last minute mentioning an emergency Full Council meeting at the Civic Centre.

Way forward

Forum Recommendations will be sent to the Town Clerk, Mayor, Councilors, Director of Housing and Social Services, Ministry of local Government for consideration to effect improved service delivery.