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**PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND STAKEHOLDER  
CONSULTATIONS: A CASE OF CHIPINGE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL FROM PERIOD 2013 TO  
2015.**

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**Abstract**

This study was undertaken to analyse the effectiveness of participatory budgeting (PB) system in local authorities in Zimbabwe with special reference to Chipinge Rural District Council (CRDC). This was against the background that PB produced effective results in some local authorities and ineffective results in others. A critical analysis of PB in general from various authors through use of books, articles, resolutions, reports, acts, journals and internet was done to highlight PB theoretical foundation, procedures of PB at CRDC, contextual variables affecting PB and standardized set of best practice in PB system. In carrying out the study a stratified random sample and purposive non- random sampling was used to select participants for the study. Data was collected through the use of questionnaires and interviews from a sample of 96 participants. Quantitative data collected was presented and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The major findings indicated that participatory budgeting at CRDC exist in theory but not in practice. In light of these findings, the study recommends the need to amend the Rural District Councils Act Chapter 29:13 and the need for local authorities to consider the views and inputs of the local community in budget formulation.

**Keywords:** Participatory budgeting; stakeholder consultations; local authorities; rural district council.

## 1. Introduction

Chipinge Rural District Council (CRDC) is a wholly owned Zimbabwean local authority registered by the commissioner of Rural District Act 29:13. According to Mupingo (2013), the local authority was established in 2003, from a demerger of Gazaland District Council (GDC) to formulate Chipinge Town Council and Chipinge Rural District Council. Mupingo further states that, this was as a result of the President's declaration of the abolishment of the GDC.

Chikerema (2013) notes that, several significant failures in Local Authorities in Zimbabwe have led to an increased demand for regulations such as the Public Management Act 22:19, Rural District Councils (RDC) Act 29:13, Finance handbook, Ministerial directives and budget guidelines with regard to corporate governance within the Local Authorities.

According to RDC Act 29:13, sec 96, Local Authorities such as Chipinge Rural District Council (CRDC) are the arms of the government mandated to collect revenue from the ratepayers and proceed on to do service delivery to its residents in line with the compliance of Integrated Result Based Management. CRDC is a local authority for the whole of Chipinge District, excluding the town area, taking responsibility for activities covering an area of about 5393km<sup>2</sup> with a current estimated population of 325 870. Section 96 (2) of the Rural District Act 29:13 states that, the Local Authorities are obliged to do the following services to the residents:

- Road grading, maintenance and opening new roads especially in newly resettled areas
- Construction of bridges and making culverts throughout the district where necessary and need arises.
- Drilling boreholes and provides maintenance in rural areas.
- Assisting Council Schools with the construction of new building blocks and auditing their books
- Assisting Council clinics in the procurement of drugs and recurrent expenditures such as soaps, brooms, cobras, and overall administration of the clinics.
- Pegging and allocations of stands to the residents and make sure the constructions are inspected.

The Rural District Councils Act 29:13 Section 121 (3) postulates that, all councils are required to prepare estimates of income and expenditure on Revenue and Capital accounts. Section 121(5)(b) of the same Act requires that every council should send three copies of such estimates to the Minister for his information. During the preparations of the estimates, the Accounting handbook for Rural District Councils as read with Guidelines circular from the permanent secretary (28.08.2009) requires that Councils must consult the ratepayers. Budget consultations help in avoiding Local Authorities from prioritizing their administration expenses rather than service delivery which they are mandated to do.

According to the Accounting handbook for Rural District Councils as read with the Rural District Councils Act 29:13 Section 121(5)(a)(i) Local Authorities are mandated to incorporate the input from their stakeholders which are ratepayers, council employees, council committees and supplies during their participatory budgeting. They should do a stakeholder budget consultation exercise so that the stakeholders provides their views with regard to budget which will help the community

to own the budget by so doing payment of levies will not face resistance.

Despite the efforts made by the Local Authorities some council such as CRDC are failing to produce effective participatory budget results. The events for participatory budgeting are very minimal and in some cases community members are not even aware of the process at all, yet participatory budgeting is part of the community empowerment tool box. The events are targeted to certain wards and other wards are neglected. In addition to that those selected wards face the problem of the event being done at one center per ward which will be difficult for those too far away to attend the participatory budgeting meeting (Chipinge Residents Trust, 2013).

Furthermore, the time designed to conduct PB meetings by the Chipinge Rural District Council (normal working hours from 08:00 to 16:30 during the week) is not convenient for rates and rent payers because they are also at work at that time (Chipinge Residents Trust, 2013). This result in the councils' performance being below the expectations of the residents and the residents put blame on the Council and Councilors' for leaving out their views in budget preparation. CRDC has got 30 wards where it should consult its stakeholders each year. The table 1.1 below shows the 8 wards in which it consult stakeholders and the number of people in a ward and the number of people who attend the consultation exercise for the two years.

**Table 1.1: Consultation analysis table**

Ward	Number of people in a Ward	Number of people who attended the consultation		
		2013	2014	2015
1	189	67	47	52
2	147	4	108	70
3	163	7	52	42
4	244	46	143	105
5	226	39	148	156
6	526	394	226	293
7	389	185	326	206
8	286	88	220	149
<b>Total</b>	<b>2170</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>1270</b>	<b>1073</b>

**Source: CRDC budgets consultation reports 2013 to 2015**

The number of people in 8 wards who attended the budget consultation exercise in 2013, 2014 and 2015 was 830, 1270 and 1073 respectively. Besides that the consultation exercise is still viewed with suspicion by some people. Some councillors have ignored what has come up through the participatory process, instead putting forward issues that suit them. This lack of consultations of all stakeholders has led to some ratepayers resisting to pay their levies. At the end of the day due to default by residents to pay levies, Council is left with little to finance service delivery after operations thus leading to service backlogs. These service backlogs are known for affecting the welfare of the residents.

Some residents that are mostly involved in the participatory budgeting events also blame Chipinge Rural District Council for not actually spending collected revenue as per agreed participatory budgeting meeting. They promise residents to deliver good projects such as purchasing graders to service the roads, tipping trucks to mobilize gravel for the roads maintenance, ambulance purchases for the Council clinics but rather purchase utility vehicles for executives. In a statement of complaint filed to the Ministry of Local Authorities by Mr Zuva a business man in Chipinge, "over 90% of the funds are used for utility vehicles instead of promoting the residential area in which those funds come from" ( Manica Post, 2013). This affects the willingness of ratepayers to pay in time and others resist paying since they lack confidence in the way in which the Council handled their levies. The Council always failed to do what they said they were going to do, when they said they were going to do it.

Table 1.2 shows that revenue collected made by CRDC for 2013, 2014 and 2015 was not 100% as compared to budgeted revenue. In addition the debtors have increased as shown on table 1.2 below:

**Table 1.2 Analysis of revenue collected Budgeted versus the actual**

Year	Budgeted	Actual	Debtors	Collection %
2013	US\$ 2 381 444	US\$ 1 637 311	US\$ 844 133	65 %
2014	US\$ 2 750 594	US\$1 897 605	US\$ 852 989	69 %
2015	US\$2,877,057	US\$1,812,546	US\$1,064,511	63 %

**Source: CRDC Budget and Actual Trends for the year 2013 to 2015**

The information extracted from 2013, 2014 and 2015 budgets for CRDC shows that the council collected 65%, 69% and 69.4% in 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively. It can be observed from Table 1.2 that there is a steady increase in the amounts collected. However the debtors figure are increasing from US\$ 844 133 in 2013 to US\$ 852 989 in 2014 and finally to US\$1 064 511 in 2015 as some ratepayers are not paying levies to the council. This failure by some residents to pay levies to the Council has hampered the service delivery by the Council.

According to management accounts of 2013 to 2015, participatory budgeting system at Chipinge Rural District Council failed to produce intended results. This is mainly due to the fact that it is implemented as a blue-print transplanted from the success stories of its effectiveness in Porto Alegre the city of Brazil without taking into consideration varying contextual variables. Thus, implementing participatory budgeting system as one-size-fits-all approach is questionable. To this extent, those who introduced participatory budgeting at Chipinge Rural District Council erred in the sense that they relied much on the content of the participatory budgeting policy and did not seem to have paid sufficient attention to the policy context. As a result there appears to be an incongruent relationship between the desired outcomes of participatory budgeting system and the actual ones courtesy of the impact of contextual factors on its implementation. Pursuant to this, the different contextual factors can account for the imperfect correspondence between the policies adopted and services actually delivered. The research is aimed at establishing ways of making participatory budgeting system effective so that the rate payers could pay their levies on

time and at the same time the council provide intended service delivery to the residents.

## **2. Literature review**

According to Anwar (2007), participatory budgeting (PB) directly involves local people in making decisions on the spending priorities for a defined public budget. This means engaging residents and community groups, representative of all parts of the community, to discuss spending priorities, make spending proposals and vote on them. Sherburne (2011) support the above definition when she argues that it is a process which allows members of a community to participate in making spending decisions about local things that affect them. Wampler (2000) cited in Shah (2007) notes that, participatory budgeting (PB) is a decision-making process through which citizens deliberate and negotiate over the distribution of public resources. Participatory budgeting programs are an innovative policy making process that ensures citizens have the opportunity to allocate resources, prioritize broad social policies, and monitor public spending. These programs are designed to incorporate citizens into the policymaking process, spur administrative reform, and distribute public resources to low-income neighbourhoods.

### **2.1 Stakeholder consultations**

There have been debates over who qualifies to be consulted in participatory budgeting. This results from the nagging question of whether stakeholders are a problem or solution in the scheme of solving development problems (Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith, 2003). This is especially so when consultants perceived to bring in personal benefits either in material form or image enhancing (Boon, 2012). Berner (2001) examines two types of stakeholders that are mandatory and permissive stakeholders.

#### ***Mandatory stakeholders***

According to Berner (2001), mandatory stakeholders are those required by law to be consulted. In many policy and governmental actions, certain individuals and groups of persons are mandated to constitute core actors. These actors then cannot be neglected in the stakeholder engagement processes. These stakeholders are said to have formal bureaucratic and political authority and therefore have the legitimacy to make decisions (Gilson, 2012). Although many of these mandated stakeholders may not be personally affected by the policy, the institutions they represent may have significant interest in the outcomes of the policy.

#### ***Permissive stakeholders***

Permissive stakeholders are made of two types of stakeholders that include the interest wielders and interest advocates (Michels, 2012). According to Rahman (2004) interest wielders constitute those stakeholders whose interests may be affected by a policy and for good governance purposes, are permitted to participate in the policy processes. Interest advocates on the other hand are those who purport to fight on behalf of the interest wielders who are incapable of fighting for themselves (Rondinelli, 2008). Included in this latter category of permissive stakeholders are civil society organisations which advocate on behalf of stakeholders or empower the stakeholders to hold duty bearers accountable.

This research adopts the mandatory-permissive framework as a guide in analysing the effectiveness of participatory budgeting in Local Authorities through stakeholder consultations. In other words, the research aims to identify how actors considered as mandatory in budgetary

process and how they get involved at the local level. It also tries to identify those actors who are permitted to be consulted and whether they are involved or not.

### ***Stakeholder participation***

Stakeholder participation is a desired and necessary part of community development and should be encompassed in any policy formulation process and in this case participatory budgeting (PB) process. According to the Wampler (2000) participation means taking part as an individual and as a community in decision making at each step of the development process.

This entails that all stakeholders should be able to participate actively in the local authorities PB process for development process to yield fruitful results. Lisk (2012) further defines participation as the involvement of the broad cross section of population in the choice, execution of programmes and projects that are designed to bring out significant upward movement in their living standards. He also observed that the concept of participation relates to the involvement of the broad section of the population to influence decision making in favour of popular developmental needs and aspirations.

According to Fung (2009) participatory budgeting (PB) in local authorities gives citizens the freedom to participate in making decisions that are locally appropriate and serve the needs of the local community. This means rule by the people, giving people a say in the decisions that affect their lives and access to resources for improving their quality of their lives.

According to the Parliamentary Assembly of Europe's Resolution number 1121 of 2002 on instruments of citizen participation as cited in Michels (2012), a truly living participatory budgeting (PB) process depends on the active contribution of all stakeholders in its process. Their participation in every aspect is thus a decisive factor for the smooth functioning of the local authority. Makumbe (2009) identified two types of participation that can be applied to the participatory budgeting (PB) process in local authorities and those are active and passive participation.

According to the United Nations (2004) as cited in Makumbe (2009) observed that active participation requires time to attend meetings and inform oneself about issues. Active participation goes beyond merely choice making from predetermined alternatives. Passive participation according to the United Nations (2004) largely points to such choice making and even manipulation of the masses by those who will benefit from critical decisions in the first place. According to Chikerema (2013) if stakeholders are passive, they tend to shun participation and even lose interest to programs, policies and projects that lead to underdevelopment of local communities.

The research adopts the active participation as a guide in analysing the extent of stakeholder participation to enhance the effectiveness of participatory budgeting in Local Authorities through stakeholder consultations. This is because their participation in every aspect of participatory budgeting (PB) process is a decisive factor for the smooth functioning of the local authority.

## 2.2 Theoretical Foundations

Participatory Budgeting started in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989 and spread to other Brazilian cities like Belo Horizonte (Keith and Mclean, 2005). Data from the World Bank (2001) indicates that, since that time, the initiative were further exported to over 1,500 cities in Latin America, North America, Asia, Africa, and Europe. According to the study by Reuben and William ( 2013) there were over 2778 municipalities around the world that have implemented this tool of participatory budgeting in 2012. However, in these different contextual environments, the results vary from place to place and across time.

Matovu and Kundishora (2014) noted that, in some countries, especially in Sub- Saharan Africa, the effective implementation of participatory budgeting (PB) points out to unsatisfactory as a result of prevailing contextual variables which are not hospitable to the participatory budgeting (PB) blue print. In some countries, it has improved local governance and service delivery through social accountability tools and strong participation of citizens in the management of public affairs and monitoring project investments. It is now well known that if participatory budgeting is well structured and adopted, it can play an important role in dedicating a percentage of local authority funds to target specific priority needs at the community level (Matovu and Kundishona, 2014).

To date, over 800 local authorities across Africa are reported to be implementing participatory budgeting as a governance tool. In recent years, several activities were carried out to mainstream participatory budgeting: A few activities are highlighted below:

a) The 1st International Conference on participatory budgeting held in October 2008 in Saly, Senegal gathered over 200 participants from Africa, America, Asia and Europe (Michels, 2012).

b) The Special Session on participatory budgeting held during the Africities Summit in July 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya, allowed African local governments to share their experiences and practices of participatory budgeting (Mazorodze, 2014).

c) The Special Session on participatory budgeting held during the Africities Summit in December 2009 in Marrakech, Morocco, allowed African local governments to share their experiences and practices of participatory budgeting (Matovu and Kundishona, 2014).

d) A Networking Session between African and Brazilian municipalities practicing the Participatory Budgeting approach was held in April 2010 in Rio de Janeiro, during the World Urban Forum (Craythorne, 2012).

e) The International Observatory on Participatory Democracy in Africa was launched in December 2012, in the presence of Local authorities, Representatives of African States, Civil Society, Academia, Technical and Financial Partners (Borongo, 2015).

f) During the 6th Africities Summit held in Dakar, Senegal in December 2012, the first cooperation agreement between African and Latin American local authorities' putting into practice participatory budgeting was signed (Matovu and Kundishona, 2014).

g) In December 2013, an International Conference on the theme "Participatory Budgeting and

Citizenship in Africa” was held at the Palais des Congrès in Tunis, with over 3000 participants around African continent. Organized with the collaboration of the German Cooperation, this Conference permitted not only to draw the panorama of experiences, but also to discuss on achievements and challenges, to further promote and mainstream the practice of Participatory Budgeting in Africa, while highlighting the mobilizing role of locally elected women (Uddin, 2015).

Additionally, the Municipal Development Partnership for Eastern and Southern Africa (MDP-ESA) has over the years, organised a series of interventions that are meant to build capacity of local government officials in Participatory Budgeting. These include training through on-line modules, direct technical assistance to local authorities, knowledge development through research, peer-to-peer learning and mentoring (Brillantes, 2005). Besides that, since 2010 the MDP-ESA with financial support from the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), has been offering a training programme called ‘the Blended Learning Course on Participatory Budgeting in Africa’ to local government officials. To date about 250 local government officials and representatives of civil society organisations have participated in the training. The training offers the participants the opportunity to share experiences regarding the potential of Participatory Budgeting in improving local governance in Africa (Boon, 2012 and Vijayalakshmi, 2014). A study by Wagle, Swarnim, and Parmes (2003) indicated that considerable capacity building and related benefits could be obtained from sustained exposure to best practices.

### **2.3 Participatory Budgeting legislatives in Zimbabwe**

The starting point for any participatory budgeting process is the legal framework within which it is situated. Every country has some form of citizen participation in the budgetary process. This section describes the different approaches the Zimbabwe country have adopted and examines the impact participatory budgeting processes are having on increasing the allocation of scarce resources where they are needed most.

In Zimbabwe, the participatory budgeting (PB) system in local authorities was introduced through an Act of Parliament called the Rural District Councils Act: Chapter 29:13 of 1996 as read with Sec 288 (1) of Urban Councils Act 29:15 of 1996, states that before the expiry of any financial year the finance committee shall draw up and present for the approval of the council estimates in such detail as the council may require of the income and expenditure on revenue and capital accounts of the council or the next succeeding financial year. When the estimates presented in terms of subsection (1) have been approved by the council and signed by the chairman or mayor of the council, as the case may be, the council shall ensure that copies of the estimates are forthwith made available for inspection by the public.

The Act stipulates that all local authorities’ budget proposals are to be published in three issues of any newspaper so as to give the public a chance to scrutinise the budget (Chikerema, 2012). Chikerema further notes that participatory budgeting (PB) as a legislative creature was introduced as part of the overall strategic effort to promote local democracy in local authorities and its main objectives are to promote civic interest and participation in local authorities, to involve the community in generating self-sustaining livelihoods options as well as to promote accountability and transparency in local public finance and budgeting (Chikerema, 2012).

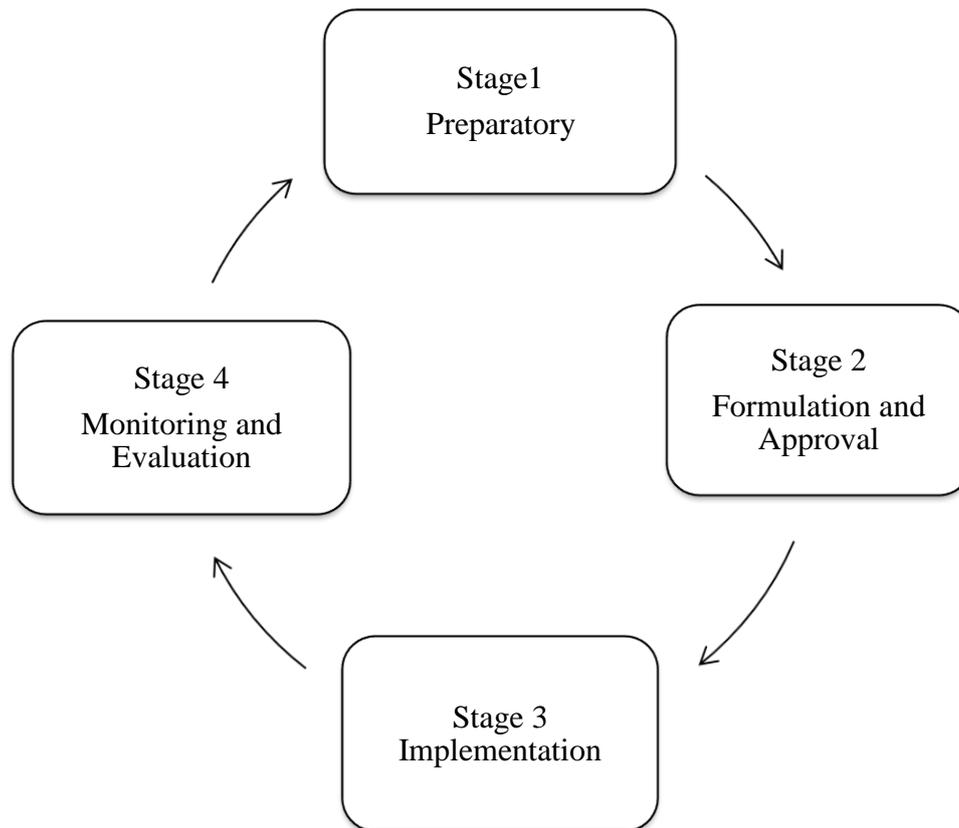
The Rural District Act Chapter 29: 13 (1996) and the Urban Councils Act Chapter 29:15 (1996)

states that, by-laws of councils cannot, however, become law unless the Minister of Local Government and Housing has approved them. Mupingo (2009) states that, legislation in Zimbabwe advocates for consultation rather than participation. The United Nations publication as cited in Makumbe (2009) states that, the citizens are not included in the decision-making process in Zimbabwe but are permitted to make public objections after decisions have been made. According to the Participatory Budgeting Unit (2010), participatory budgeting (PB) has eight ingredients as its internal policy anatomy. These are effective community engagement, adequate resources, money, sound leadership, effective communication, sound planning, learning and support.

#### **2.4 Procedures of participatory budgeting in Chipinge Rural District Council**

Based on the theoretical underpinnings of the participatory budgeting system mentioned above, an observation of how the actual system is being operated in Chipinge Rural District Council (CRDC) is necessary. This is because the current operative process of the participatory budgeting system in most local governments resembles each other.

According to the Participatory Budget Unit (2010) the general policy content of participatory budgeting (PB) comprises the involvement of stakeholders in the formulation, adoption, implementation and evaluation of the Council's budget. These stakeholders comprises of the general citizens, residents' representatives, private sectors, church organizations, civil society organizations and other public institutions that have a direct or an indirect dependency with the local authority. This enquires the participatory budgeting (PB) outreach consultation meetings to be undertaken effectively at designated meeting points and objections to the budget draft to be freely expressed by the stakeholders. In this respect, the voices of stakeholders should not only be heard by the Council officials but also influence decision making in the ensuing budget. To this extent, the final budget draft ought to reflect the demands, priorities and needs of the stakeholders who are bound to be affected by the budget. Figure 2.1 illustrated below Chipinge Rural District Council Participatory Budgeting cycle:

**Fig 1.1 Chipinge Rural District Council Participatory budgeting cycle*****The preparatory stage***

It is basically the design stage of the budget cycle (UN-HABITAT, 2008). It involves mainly the distribution of information, the initial discussion of policies and priorities by citizens in their localities, estimation of revenue, establishment of the general resource allocation or budgeting criteria and methodology, putting in place the relevant participatory structures and the election and establishment of the number of elected representatives . To this end, this stage is characterized by the following steps: (a) informative plenary sessions in the rural wards, (b) situation and problem analysis meetings in each ward, and (c) capacity building, training of citizens and key participatory budgeting stakeholders (CRDC Charter, 2014). The first step of informative plenary sessions is in the wards whereby the Council explains PB process to local residents and key stakeholders. To this extent, the chairing on these meetings is Council chairman, Chief Executive Officer, Council Treasurer and Council Planners. The main thrust of these meetings is for the Council staff to collect information of the previous year's audited results, budget performance for the half year and the projected performance, including capital projects implementation status and projections to the year end (CRDC Charter, 2014). At the end, the Council explains to the stakeholders the financial position for the current year, the financial performance of the previous year, the basis of revenues and expenditure, how resources were spent, what was realized and the potential constraints for the ensuing fiscal year. Revenue and expenditure forecasts are also presented so as to make residents acquaint with the potential budget limitations. During these meetings the top management employees that chairs the meeting, also explains to stakeholders the Council's budgetary matrix and the participatory budgeting

process as a vehicle of public participation in decision-making. Videos, films and several communication tools are used to explain the participatory budgeting process (CRDC Charter, 2014).

The second step is the situation and problem analysis meetings in each ward, which intends to assist residents and key stakeholders with problems and needs identification of Chipinge Rural District Council (CRDC Strategic Plan 2012 to 2016). The chairing person in such meetings is Ward Councillor. In this step Council officials together with the councillors help to identify problems and needs of the locality, defining residents' demands and priorities and to assess the technical and financial feasibility of possible solutions (CRDC Charter, 2014). This will go a long way in institutionalizing the idea of participatory planning and formulation of the Council's budget. This stage also comprises of capacity building, training of residents and key stakeholders in the technical terms and procedures of budgeting systems. This helps in making all stakeholders well versed with the intricacies and complexities of the Council's budget. This is essential in institutionalizing the culture of participation in all budget deliberations in the Council.

### ***Budget formulation and approval***

According to UN-HABITAT (2008) the participatory budget formulation and approval stage is concerned mainly with setting priorities and allow citizens, directly or indirectly through their representatives, to set priorities and decide on project investments. The stage is also characterized by the convening of the Budgeting Committee Meetings and the debating and voting of the budget proposal by the Committee. Thus, policies, programs, plans and projects that will be executed in the ensuing fiscal year are analysed (Participatory Budgeting Unit, 2010). This helps in making stakeholders familiar with the budget issues which are bound to affect them. This stage has three steps, namely ward deliberative and decision-making plenary session, participatory budgeting Committee meetings, and debate and voting of the budget proposal (CRDC Charter, 2014). The first step of ward deliberative and decision-making plenary session entails the decision and prioritization of the problems to be tackled first which were identified during situational and problem analysis. The stage involves mainly the convening of Participatory Budgeting Committee Meetings and the debating and voting of the budget proposal by the committee. Its main activities include prioritization criteria, the prioritization matrix and decision-making mechanisms for priorities (CRDC Charter, 2014).

### ***Implementation***

UN-HABITAT (2008) argues that, the participatory budgeting implementation stage is the actual problem solving stage. This is because all that was planned and agreed on in the participatory planning meetings are being worked on, the budget implementation process is arguably conducted throughout the fiscal year. On participatory budget implementation stage, the International Observatory of Participatory Democracy (2006) argues that, the budget implementation process usually involves the complex process of contracting services or public works that include detailed planning, writing the terms of reference, calls of interest, tendering, tender opening and selection, awarding of tenders, signing of memoranda of understanding with winning bidders and then execution of the projects.

### ***Monitoring and evaluation***

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The participatory budget monitoring and evaluation stage is about giving periodic budget performance reports to citizens (International Observatory of Participatory Democracy, 2006). These reports will state project implementation status and problems encountered. To this end, periodic participatory site visits to inspect projects can also be organized as a way of project implementation. Some of the tools mentioned below can be used for monitoring and evaluation of project implementation at the council level. According to UN-HABITAT (2008) the tools comprises of participatory site inspection and supervision, reporting, and use of community score cards. The local authority can also use the hybrid process of the techniques of audit, community monitoring and citizen report cards in monitoring and evaluation (UN-HABITAT, 2008).

At this stage the Ward councillors and citizens also monitor the budget implementations through on-site monitoring and evaluation of project implemented (Participatory Budgeting Unit, 2010). This is done in a participatory manner to ensure that implementation is done as proposed in terms of meeting deadlines and targets as well as consuming the planned resources. Further, this stage also helps to adjust the implementation plan especially when contextual variables dictate otherwise (Participatory Budgeting Unit, 2010).

Further, the participatory budgeting monitoring and evaluation stage is about local authorities giving periodic budget performance reports to citizens (Moyo, 2002). Against this background these reports will state project implementation status and problems encountered therein. In doing so the Council can use, among other tools, participatory site inspection and supervision, reporting, service delivery surveys and use of citizen report-score cards involving the use of questionnaires (CRDC Charter, 2014). More importantly, at this stage the Council supplies detailed information on a regular basis about the way budget is being implemented. Thus, the top management employees of the council prepare a clear budgetary report which can be easily understood by citizens. Linked to this is that stakeholders can also inquire about specific issues and demand supplementary information in order to authenticate how budget are implemented at a particular point in time (UN-HABITAT, 2008).

## **2.5 Best Practices in Participatory Budgeting in local authorities**

For the purposes of this study, the researcher defines best practices as given by Edward and Jennings (2007), as the identification of what works in effort to implement participatory budgeting. Therefore, it is necessary to outline key essential characteristics of participatory budgeting (PB) that are necessary for its success. However these key essential characteristics are examples of best practice as well as the essence of Participatory Budgeting system.

### *a) Participatory Budgeting's participants need to co-decide a significant amount of the budget*

According to Rutasiye (2008), for the initiative and implementation of participatory budgeting (PB) to succeed, the participants need to co-decide a significant amount of the budget. This will help the participants to feel that their involved in participatory budgeting (PB) is worth more than their time. Mupingo (2008) also cited that it shows the local authority's commitment to its stakeholders. This also means that decentralisation should be advanced enough for the local authorities to be able to implement projects that will respond to the needs of its stakeholders. The co-decision is also necessary because participatory budgeting (PB) has to be differentiated from other

consultative processes so that it does not increase cynicism among the stakeholders (Chikerema, 2012).

*b) Participatory Budgeting procedures needs to be deliberative*

According to UN-HABITAT (2008) a highly deliberative quality of a local authority means not only that participants are treated as equals and the elected representative are actually giving back the decision making power by chairing the meetings, but also means the move from individual self-interest to collective interests. Mazorodze (2014) supports the above arguments and added that a highly deliberation of the local authority is shown on the ability to reinforce the projects legitimacy and ensuring that the needs of the entire stakeholders are considered. Moreover, effective deliberation empowers stakeholders as they feel their views are heard.

*c) Participatory Budgeting system needs to have pro-active policies to increase participation*

To legitimise participatory budgeting's outcome, the projects need to come from a large group of representative participants. According to UN-HABITAT (2008), the local authority should develop clear and shared definition of the policies and procedures of the budgeting process. These policies and procedures refer to the stages and their respective time periods, the rules for decision making in the case of disagreement, the responsibility and decision making authority of each actor. Makumbe (2009) supports the above argument and added that the method of distributing responsibility, authority and resources among council's different wards and the composition of Participatory Budget Council should have a policy. These rules cannot be decided unilaterally. Matovu and Kundishona (2014) state that those policies and procedures must be determined with full participation of the stakeholders and subsequently adjusted each year, based on the results and functioning of the participatory budgeting process.

*d) Participatory Budgeting system needs to be transparent*

Michels (2012) states that participatory budgeting (PB) educates stakeholders with understanding and direct insights into how a local authority actually works, especially when stakeholders would actively and properly participate in the local authority's decision making processes. Berman (2007) supports that by stating that, through public discussion, deliberation, and negotiation on budget issues, participatory budgeting increases the range of citizen participation and enhances the citizens' awareness of the whole budget process. In addition, fostering positive citizen attitude through a variety of strategies of participation, information, and reputation reduces cynicism (Berman, 2007) that arises when the participants do not know the extent of their influence in participatory budgeting system. Hence, participatory budgeting needs to encompass, technical information, a follow-up committee and criteria to prioritise the projects that are decided by the participants (Matovu and Kundishona, 2014).

*e) Participatory Budgeting system should have a feedback mechanism*

Where the stakeholder is asked for input, there should be a feedback mechanism so that citizens know whether or not their inputs were received, and whether and why they were not incorporated into the relevant plans or budgets (Simonsen and Robbins, 2002). According to Rutasiye (2008), the mechanism should take the form of a written document and, where possible a, public forum.

The feedback must also be made available in a timely manner and easily accessible to every stakeholder.

*f) Participatory Budgeting system needs constant adaptation while keeping the above-mentioned criteria.*

Whether it is the changing context, such as the role of associations, the budget size, a new party in power, or problems that arise such as a lack of participation, they will need answers not first provided by Participatory Budgeting system (Callahan and Holzer, 2009). Therefore, PB should adapt to new circumstance and thus the rules have to be able to be modified. However according to Berner (2001) such adaptation should not diminish the other essential bases of participatory budgeting such as deliberation by giving more power to one group of the population thus reinforcing inequalities as it impacts on the legitimacy of participatory budgeting and its outcomes and thus eventually on participation.

### 3. Methodology

The research adopted a triangulation approach or a mixed approach which is defined by Johnson (2004) as the class of research that combines quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single study. The main aim of using the triangulation approach was to validate the information collected by each research instrument. In this study the target population was 325 870, comprised of the Councillors, Chipinge Rural District Council rate payers, top management employees in the council, residents associations and Government Officials in the Ministry of Rural Developments. The study used stratified sampling to divide participants into different groups or stratas depending on the collective interests identified in the local authority circles as well as their relevance to the study. The study also employed purposive sampling, a form of non-probability sampling whose main goal was to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest to the research. The following statistical formula was used to find out the sample size. The statistical tool according to Cochran (2001: 75) is given as follows:

$$n = \frac{\frac{t^2 pq}{d^2}}{1 + \frac{1}{N} \left( \frac{t^2 pq}{d^2} - 1 \right)}$$

Where t = definite confidence level = 95% = 1.96

p = probability of success = 0.5

q = probability of failure that means 1-p = 1- 0.5 = 0.5

d = standard error = 10% = 0.1

N = population =325 870

n = expected sample size

$$n = \frac{\frac{1.96^2(0.5)(0.5)}{0.1^2}}{1 + \frac{1}{325\ 870} \left( \frac{1.96^2(0.5)(0.5)}{0.1^2} - 1 \right)} = 96.012$$

n = 96

The sample size was 96 which was arrived at using Cochran formula. The sample comprises of 5 government officials, 40 rate payers, 20 councillors, 21 residents associations and 10 council employees after taking into account qualitative factors such as the importance of the decision, the nature of the research, sample size used in similar studies and resource constraints.

The study used a likert scale questionnaire and structured interviews as data collection instruments. A document analysis exercise was also carried out on policy documents, reports, ministerial policy statements and minutes of previous meetings. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to present and analyse quantitative data and quantify the qualitative data obtained.

#### **4. Results**

A total of 96 questionnaires were distributed to respondents by the researcher. The respondents managed to return 87 out of 96 distributed questionnaires giving a response rate of 90.63% which gave the researchers an opinion that such a response rate is sufficient to be representative of the reality on the ground. Interviews were conducted to 18 participants.

In this study 68% were male and 32% were female. Although women participation was unsatisfactory, the research picked 29 who made their contribution towards the research problem. The highest number of the respondents came from the age group of 31-40 years, accounting for 60.92% of the respondents. The second largest number of respondents came from the age group 41-50 years with 18.39% followed by Age groups of 0-30 years and 51-60 years picked 12.64% and 5.75% respectively. The smallest number of respondents came from the age groups above 60 years with 2.3% of the respondents. In respect of positions held, 11.50% were council employees, 23% were councillors, 40.20% were rate payers, 20.70% were residents associations and 4.60% were government officials.

8% of the respondents strongly agree with the statement that council has a comprehensive participatory budgeting policy statement while 10.3% agree with no emphasis and 5.7% of the respondents were neutral. The majority of 75.8% of the respondents disagreed with the question that council has a comprehensive participatory budgeting policy statement. When asked to respond on government's intervention on council's participatory budgetary policy, 18.40% of the respondents strongly agree that there is an intervention of the government in council participatory budgeting system while 71.3% agree with no emphasis totalling to 89.7% all in agreement while 10.3% were not sure.

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#### **Table 1.3 Invitation to Council budget meetings**

**Council invites stakeholders to council meetings.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	13.8	13.8	13.8
	Disagree	62	71.3	71.3	85.1
	Agree	3	3.4	3.4	88.5
	Strongly Agree	10	11.5	11.5	100.0
	Total	87	100.0	100.0	

The above table depict that 85.10% of respondent either disagree while 14.9 were supporting the statement of being invited to council budget meetings. This means that the majority of the residents were not part to the budget formulation hence this affects the performance of the budget.

On perception of the council's budget, 20.70% strongly agree that Council engages well with different sections of the community. 24.10% respondents agree that participants are representative of the wider community. 3.40% respondents are neutral about whether participants are positive about the experience. 33.30% disagree that there is convenient time for participatory budget meetings and 18.40% respondents strongly disagree that Councillors are broadly positive about participatory budgeting.

12.6% strongly disagree that there has been no proper discussion of participatory budgeting at senior level. 40 respondents which represent 46% agree that there is lack of awareness and understanding of participatory budgeting within the Council. 4.6% were neutral about the worries about the complexity of the participatory budgeting systems while 26.4% agree that there is uncertainty and gains about participatory budgeting. 10.30% strongly agree that the stakeholders have good perception about the scope of participation in participatory budgeting.

3% respondents strongly disagree that resource constraints affect participatory budgeting, while 6% respondents disagree that bureaucratic structures affect effectiveness of participatory budgeting. 35% respondents agree that corruption affect participatory budgeting and 37% respondent strongly agree that disposition of implementers affect participatory budgeting.

## 5. Discussion

All the respondents were familiar with the concept of participatory budgeting in the council although they have different definitions of concept. However the study noticed that most of their definitions of participatory budgeting were in agreement in viewing it as a budgeting process that involves all stakeholders in the planning, organizing, leading, controlling, coordinating, monitoring and evaluation of Council's budget.

Most of the participants within the study cited out that there is a disconnection between 'what

ought to be' and 'what is' in as far as participatory budgeting system is concerned. The justification for this argument was that Chipinge Rural District Council (CRDC) usually has its final budget draft before going into the field for budget consultations. Thus, consultations are merely for procedural reasons. The respondents further highlighted that the outreach budget consultations conducted by the council, their turnouts were less than the accepted quorum. Therefore despite this dissenting view, it can be argued that participatory budgeting system exists in theory but practically irrelevant largely because stakeholders are complaining about their exclusion.

Budget is the blue print through which the demands of the citizens are represented that is why it is essential to involve the general people in setting their priorities but the study revealed that most of the participants did not know how many actually attend in budget making. However a very few respondents estimated about 800 to 1200 people which concurs with the budget consultation report of 2013 to 2015.

Most of the respondents does not support the statement that Rural District Councils Act (29:13) and other legislatives governing local authorities are relevant to empower stakeholder participation in participatory budgeting. They justified that the Act and other legislative instruments are in favour of the Minister and the Council. For instance, according to the Rural Councils Act Chapter 29: 13 Section 314 the Minister may reverse, rescind resolutions and decisions of the council, approves local authority budgets, may appoint commissioners to act as councillors and approves all subsidiary legislation passed by the council. They further elaborated that even the councillors have no executive powers to Council decisions but rather the Minister.

The respondents further noted that Ministerial directives turn out to be interests of the political party that the Minister represents. The respondents further expanded on this observation by citing that more often the Minister slashes budget of the council to put forward the issues that suit their political party and this led to the dwindling of the revenue bases of the council.

Moreover, the above outcome contradicts with few which agreed. They acknowledged that laws are clear and they were not enacted to serve the interest of a certain group in the society. On this, they indicated that the Rural District Councils Act Chapter 29:13 and any other legislations governing local authorities in Zimbabwe were enacted for the public interest, hence they are citizen driven.

By this, it shows that the statutory regulatory in Zimbabwe local authorities is compromising participatory budgeting in councils. Thus, it can be argued that the legislative framework have a negative impact in empowering stakeholder participation in budgeting system.

Corruption was blamed as the major factor affecting participatory budgeting performance in Local Authorities. The respondents claimed that, the top officials in the council think that being in the Council is an opportunity for self-enrichment. In other cases responses indicated that the low salaried are a source of corruption as some think that they are entitled to compensate their lower salaries through corruption. Other responses pointed out that corruption is now rampant in the Council to the extent that more than 75% of the revenues generated are illegally diverted to salaries of top officials, of which service delivery are awful need of radical surgery. They believed that it is difficult to implement participatory budgeting system when the local authority officials are misusing public funds through corruption.

Lack of resources capacity was mentioned by respondents as the stumbling block to all development projects in the Council. The respondents cited that, the resource constraints in the Council has been contributed by the debt cancellation to all rate payers who failed to meet their obligations since the inception of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in year 2009. They further highlighted that no central government transfer was done to compensate these losses. This negatively affected participatory budgeting implementation because of resource starvation.

The respondents also indicated the bureaucratic structure in the council as a factor affecting the effectiveness of participatory budgeting to the situation of describing the council structural arrangement as 'bureaucratic malaise.' This means that the bureaucratic structures at the council are associated with overlapping of duties, duplication and delays. They further highlighted that the council has many agencies overlapping duties too often, coordinating too rarely, wasting too much money and doing too little to solve real problems. Some of the interviewees also disclosed that there are no clear cut definitions of duties and responsibilities amongst the 6 departments in the council. To this, it can be noted that participatory budgeting cannot be effective in the council because calls for mutuality of goals, common vision and harmonization between and among departments.

Political environment was stated by respondents as the factor affecting effectiveness of budgeting in the council. The respondents cited that the outreach budget consultations are turned into political rallies by councillors hence it will be very difficult to express freedom of speech. They further highlighted that the political environment is extremely harsh to all meetings that call for freedom of expression and speech. Therefore basing on these findings, it can be underscored that the prevailing political environment in the country is affecting participatory budgeting in the councils.

The varied suggestion to improve participatory budgeting in local authorities is the need for the council to have good corporate governance. The respondents cited that council officials must be transparency, accountability, legitimacy, openness, responsiveness in the implementation of participatory budgeting system. They also state that the council should be highly transparency and accountable in the handling of issues especially to do with finance. They further cited that the council should be responsive to stakeholders' priorities.

Most of the respondents have the opinion for participants to co-decide a significant amount of the budget, procedures to be deliberative, the system to have pro-active policies that enacted from the amendment of Local Government Legislative framework to restrict the powers of the Minister to facilitate and oversight roles. They also stated that the Act should promote whistle blowing and specify rewards for whistle blowing to curb corruption in the local authorities. Other respondents stated that the council business should be set free from political interference and the budget to be constant adaption to new circumstances.

## 6. Conclusions

Considering the above observations, the research safely concludes that there is no proper Participatory Budgeting at Chipinge Rural District Council (CRDC) as the consultations are carried out as a way of rubber stamping the already formulated budget. This again violates the Rural District Act Chapter 29: 13 that promote local democracy in local authorities. Prevention is better than cure, the study would say, Participatory Budgeting system is like a “double-aged sword”. This is because if it is implemented properly, it is believed to enhance local authority accountability and effectiveness, if not; it may cause low administrative prestige and agitate citizens.

The study did not seek to undermine the great works made by the Central Government of Zimbabwe to impose Participatory Budgeting system as a requirement in local authorities but rather sought to augment the way local authorities bungle the policy. The research notes that good corporate governance should at least exhaust all known factors that are inherent to the ineffectiveness of Participatory Budgeting in local authorities. Thus, the inclusion of poor corporate governance is viewed by the researchers as the main reason for the ineffectiveness of Participatory Budgeting system at Chipinge Rural District Council (CRDC). In the section that follows, the research offers some of the recommendations deduced from the study that are thought helpful as we move towards achieving the above goal.

## **7. Recommendations**

This study is recommending for the establishment of enforceable rules and regulations that should guide the implementation of PB system in local authorities by following the cycle according to plan. When space is given for participation, it is important for the participants to have the capacity to engage the duty bearers. This can be done by raising awareness and understanding about PB through innovative communications such as the organization of civic meetings. Regarding the inadequate limited resources for PB system in the council, the study is recommending for availing adequate financial resources to the system. This can be achieved through financial capacity building. To capacitate local authorities financially, this can be done through revising upwards the budgetary vote allocation and outsource funds from stakeholders such as the civil society organizations and other government departments. Involvement of citizen from initial stage of budget design through dialogue because early engagement of citizens in the council budgeting process is likely to be more effective in influencing decisions, building trust and reducing skepticism about councils and empowering citizens.

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