Barriers to Women Participation in Local Government Elections in Zambia

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DISCLAIMER

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECZ	Electoral Commission of Zambia
FCM	Federation of Canadian Municipalities
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
FGDs	Focused Group Discussions
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LA	Local Authority
LGAZ	Local Government Association of Zambia
WDC	Ward Development Committee
ZDC	Zone Development Committee

Executive Summary of the Main Findings and Recommendations

1. Introduction

Zambia is a country with a population estimated at 18 million, based on the projections by the Zambia Statistics Agency (ZamStats)[1]. By gender, the country's population comprises slightly more females (50.3 percent) than males (49.7 percent). Across all regions (rural/urban and province), female population is marginally higher than male population. However, women continue to be relegated to only a few seats at both local and parliamentary level.

Despite the country being a state party to a number of international and regional instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women (AU Protocol) as well as the Southern African Development Committee (SADC) Protocol on Gender, Zambia has not made good progress regarding women participation in governance (Ministry of Gender, 2020).

This Research Report on *"Identifying Barriers to Women Running for Local Government Elections"* was carried out in five of the ten provinces of Zambia to highlight the obstacles or inhibitors that the women face in their pursuit to aspire for local government leadership. It is envisaged that the findings will provide opportunities for LGAZ project team, to come up with strategies that will enhance and promote women leadership at local government.

The research team largely used qualitative approach. The research team took into consideration the need to include and ensure the participation of several women, inclusive of those who lost the local government positions and the currently serving women councillors and some key stakeholders in the provision of information related to the challenges or barriers that the women face in running for the local government elections.

The team used a participatory method for the purposively selected targets especially the focus group discussions to identify the potential barriers or challenges that the women have faced in running for the local government elections. In addition, the consultant used interactive and participatory data collection methods using the following methods desk review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Thirteen (13) districts were visited which included 7 town councils, 3 municipal and 3 city councils selected from five of the ten provinces of Zambia.

2. Main Findings

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[1] Zambia Population and Demographic Projections, 2011-2035.

2.1   There is lack of social & political party support from the respective political parties which creates elements of discrimination and ultimately disinterest from the womenfolk.

2.2   The adoption process was found to be corrupt unfortunately leading into several women being victims of sexual demands from the opposite sex at various stages of this procedure within the political parties (both ruling and opposition).

2.3   The inadequate qualification among the women due to the amended Constitution Act of 2016 that includes a clause on the need for anyone aspiring to stand as a candidate for political office to have a minimum qualification of a Grade 12 School Certificate or its equivalent disadvantaged several women who had expressed interest but did not possess the required educational qualifications.

2.4   Several women who aspire for local government positions lack self-confidence as they do not have self-esteem.

2.5   Cultural factors were found to be inhibitors for women participation given the societal expectations of a woman's role as prescribed by the traditional assumptions, norms and values.

2.6   The lack of financial resources is one of the major reasons why fewer women than men stand for elections in local government. Generally, men with more financial resources are favored for nomination, adoption, and elections.

2.7   Some non-gender sensitive people have abused social media against the women and hence increased cyber bullying and harassment.

2.8   The political environment is not favorable for women because there is a lot of violence and intimidation before, during and after the adoption and election period.

3. Recommendations

3.1   Given the various challenging cultural factors, it will be prudent to design and package a sensitization model to reach out to the communities and local community structures using the traditional leadership structures as well as the church.

3.2   It will be prudent to identify women associations that can provide this kind of support, or the respective political parties should consider establishing some resource base to be used to back up the women.

3.3   It will be practical to engage key stakeholders such as churches, traditional leaders, civil society organizations and political parties to provide a comprehensive sensitization package that will touch all local structures in the communities.

3.4   Develop a gender equality code of conduct for political parties and requiring them to field a specified minimum number of women candidates.

3.5   Engage Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) to revise nomination fees to make them more affordable for increased women participation in the local government elections.

3.6   Engage Political Parties to develop policies that create a conducive environment for political aspirations designed to prevent violence, especially against women, clearly spelling out affirmative actions to be taken for offenders.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Context of Women Participation in Local Government Elections

Women all over the world are victims of gender inequality and social injustice. Domestic violence, rape, physical, sexual, psychological, economic abuse, illiteracy, lower salaries, poor reproductive health, child marriages, trafficking of girls, all these are just but a few of the problems women face today. To combat such widespread social problems, social workers work to promote gender equality where women are empowered to defend their rights. "Gender equality is not only a basic human right, but its achievement has enormous socio-economic ramifications. Empowering women fuels thriving economies, spurring productivity and growth" (UNIFEM, 2015). Goal three of United Nations Millennium Development Goals is "to promote gender equality and to empower women". Largely, it is noted that the discriminations and inequalities against women might be eradicated by women's participation in political systems. "Women's participation in democracy through politics is without doubt an important step towards social equality, economic development and national and international peace." (World Economic Forum, 2021)

The participation of women in macro level decision making is essential to ensure that policy making considers women's perspectives and experiences and is thus gender just. As Shvedova (2017) argues, the exclusion of women from decision-making bodies limits the possibilities for entrenching the principles of democracy in a society, hindering economic development, and discouraging the attainment of gender equality. If men monopolize the political process of passing laws which affect society at large, the decision-making process does not always balance the interests of the male and female populations. As noted in the Millennium Development Goals, women's equal participation with men in power and decision-making processes is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life and is at the core of gender equality and women's empowerment. Women must be active participants in determining development agendas.

Globally, the rate of female representation stands at about 16 per cent. According to research by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), the low statistics can be attributed to the current prevailing social and economic regimes as well as existing political structures (Odame, 2020). Strengthening women's participation in all spheres of life has become a major issue in the discourse of economic and social development in the last decade. Virtually, every international and bilateral development agency has proclaimed policies to integrate women's interests into economic and social processes (Kelly, 2019). Improvement in women's political status and representation at all levels of decision-making is also seen as fundamental for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and sustainable development in all areas of life (United Nations Women 2020). However, the fight against

gender inequality is far from being over because women have continued to face many obstacles. Singh (2011) noted that Women all over the world are victims of gender inequality.

It is important to note that various countries are taking decisive steps towards reducing the gender equality gap. Specifically, countries still understand areas that need to be focused on if the world is to deliver not only social-economic development but inclusive development with both males and females at the heart of the development. To do this, there is need to understand the situation better in terms of awareness by women to take part in governance matters to determine the leadership aspirations of women as well as identify some myths and misconceptions that influence women's participation in governance. Due to the multi-dimensional nature of gender inequality, it is not logical to assume that two countries would have the same barriers to women participation in governance. The challenges that developing countries face cannot be the same challenges developing countries like Zambia are facing.

According to the first Women's Political Participation (WPP) Africa Barometer of 2021 as shown in Figure 1 below, women constitute 24 per cent of the 12,113 parliamentarians in Africa. It is evident that only 21 per cent of women in Africa participate in local government with southern African participating below the continental average of 20 per cent. The figure further shows that North-western Africa has the lowest percentage of women representation in local government relative to South-western African. Despite this disparity, the statistics of women involvement in politics are astonishingly low when compared to other continents like Europe and America.

Figure 1: Women's political participation in Africa: key indicators 2021

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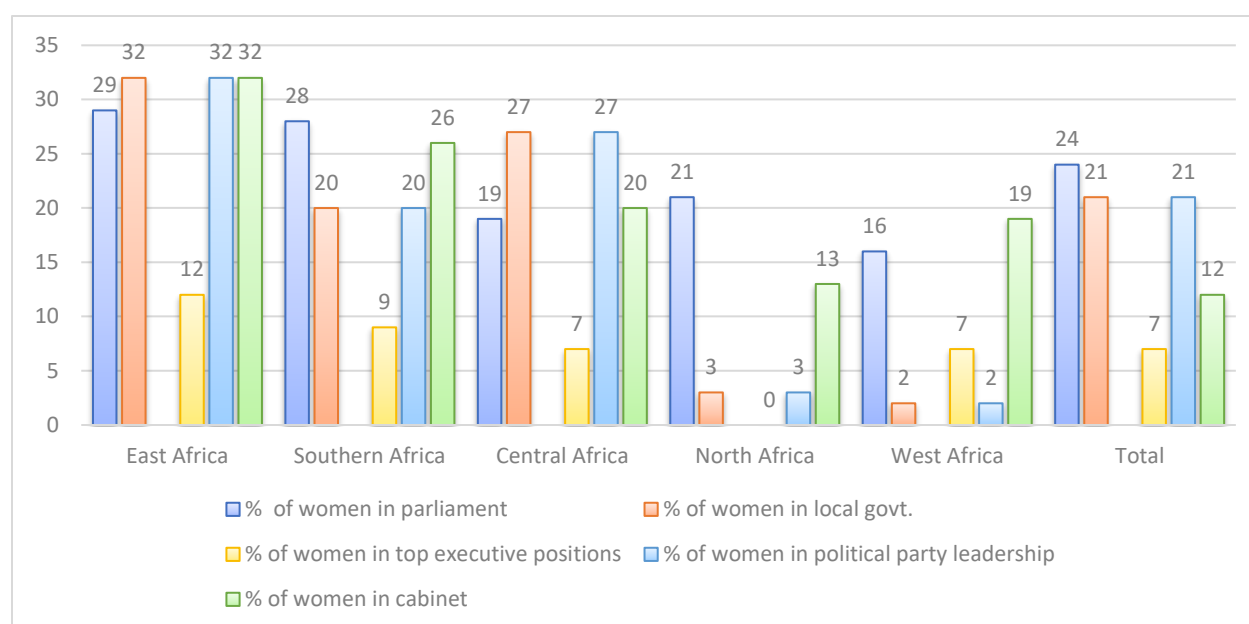
The disparities are also evident within the continent. This report takes a closer look at Zambia which is one of the sub-Saharan African countries. Zambia is a country with a population estimated at 18 million[2]. The country's population comprises females at 50.3 per cent slightly more than the males at 49.7 per cent. Across all regions rural/urban and province, female population is marginally higher than male population. However, women continue to be relegated to only a few seats at both local government and national parliamentary level.

According to a report by Southern African Development Community published in 2015, Zambia ranks as low as 11th out of fifteen countries surveyed among Southern African Development Community (SADC) members in the areas of women's participation in politics. In terms of political empowerment as a global gender gap indicator, Zambia ranks 102nd out of 145 countries. While the net enrollment rate for girls in primary education is like that for boys where the dropout ratio for girls increases as they advance to higher grades especially at the seventh grade and thereafter mainly due to falling pregnant. Since 78 per cent of women are engaged in agriculture, women constitute an important labour force for agriculture where their role is often to assist men in family farming or production for home consumption due to firstly their little access to production equipment and land ownership compared to men. Secondly their prominent role in household work and child rearing outside the agricultural sector, many women are employed in the informal sector.

Despite the country being a signatory to several international and regional instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women (AU Protocol) as well as the Southern African Development Committee (SADC) Protocol on Gender, Zambia has not made good progress regarding women participation in governance matters (Ministry of Gender, 2020). The 2011 and 2016 General Elections clearly point to the fact that the situation of women in terms of being elected to office has not changed much over the years. Statistics show that in the previous Parliament of 2011, out of the 158 parliamentary seats, only twenty-four (24) seats (15%), and further eight-six (86) seats (6%) out of 1,422 at local government level were held by women. The 2016 elections only went up to 9 per cent female representation at the local government level and 17 per cent in Parliament. This is contrary to the country's Vision 2030 which emphasizes the need for a strong and dynamic middle-income industrial nation that provides opportunities for improving the wellbeing of all, embodying values of socio-economic justice, underpinned by the principles of gender responsive sustainable development (Zamstats, 2018).

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[2] Zambia Population and Demographic Projections, 2011-2035.

The overall number and percentage of women elected as women Mayors in the last election is 15 out of 116 representing 13 per cent. Worth highlighting here is an impressive higher proportion of female Mayors, three out of five representing 60 per cent of females among City Council City or Town Mayors as shown in the table 1 below.

To address the challenge highlighted above, Zambia has embarked on a decentralization process whose main aim is to place the local governance authority at the center of all development processes and to improve community participation and inclusivity. In line with this focus, the local authorities will be central in making key decisions on how the development agenda of each district will be structured. Local governance authorities will also play a critical role in ensuring that resource allocations as well as key management decisions consider district specific development priorities. Hence local government structures will become a key focus for the promotion of having more women in various decision-making positions (Manandhar, 2021).

The statistics, however, continue to pose a serious concern. For example, the number of women elected to municipal office stands at only 140 out of the 1,858 member which only represents 8 per cent of the women participation. Table 1 below shows the disaggregation of municipal office positions by gender. It is clear from the Table that more needs to be done if gender equality is to be realized in Zambia. The number and percentage of women elected to municipal office stands at 140 out of 1,858, representing 8 per cent as presented in the Table below.

Table 1: Number and percentage of elected Mayor/Councilors and Municipal officers in the last election

	Male		Female		Total
	Number	**Percent**	**Number**	**Percent**	
Councilors	**1,718**	**92%**	**140**	**8%**	**1,858**
Municipal Mayor/ Councilors	**101**	**87%**	**15**	**13%**	**116**

Further information is available on the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) website
https://zambiaelections2021.org.zm/

The Carter Center (2020) reports that out of the 156 elected members of parliament (MP) elected on 12 August 2021, only twenty are women. Participation generally was restricted by the imposition of significant candidacy fees, a minimum education requirement that disproportionately affected women and the lack of a regulatory framework to ensure

inclusion and participation by women, youths, and persons with disabilities in line with regional standards (Carter Center, 2020).

At local government level, the situation was not any different. To start with very few women applied to stand as candidates in the various political parties. Among the reasons why this is so because of the amended Constitution Act of 2016 that included a clause that anyone aspiring to stand as a candidate for political office needed to have a minimum qualification of a Grade 12 School Certificate or its equivalent. Before the amended constitution, 2006 and 2011 general elections, Zambia had more female representation in elections as compared to the female representation in the 2021 elections. The amended constitution disadvantaged several women who had expressed interest and had been trained in some instances to stand as candidates but did not possess the required educational qualifications. There were also reports that the adoption processes within political parties was characterized with corruption, confusions due to some merging up to strengthen their chances, lack of finances by most female candidates especially for local government positions and the existence of electoral violence (Ministry of Gender, 2021). These factors discouraged most women from proceeding with their attempts to vie for adoptions thereby resulting in very few women being adopted as outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Local Government Councilors adopted by Political Parties for 2016 Elections

Political party	Total	Women	Men	Percent	
				Women	Men
PF	1,561	145	1,416	9	91
UNIP	53	7	46	13	87
MMD	114	21	93	18	82
UPND	1,556	98	1,458	6	94
FDD	674	94	580	14	86

Source: LGAZ, 2017

The information in the Table above shows that the two largest parties namely the Patriotic Front (PF) and the United Party for National Development (UPND) adopted fewer women at local government level with only 9 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively. Conversely, the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy adopted the most women at local government level in the August 2016 elections. A female headed political party the Foundation for Democratic Development (FDD) was the party with the second highest percentage of women adopted at 14 per cent of the total number of those that were

adopted. This shows that with more women headed political parties, more women can be adopted to participate in the local governance affairs of the nation.

The overall trend of women political representation in Zambia is of concern with the country failing to meet the continental and international benchmarks laid out in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) and the South African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on and Development. Although women make up 50.5 per cent of Zambia's population as well as most voters, they remain systematically underrepresented in politics. The various reasons among others include weakness in the legal framework to compel political parties to include more women and the poor economic status of women campaigning for a political seat is an expensive undertaking that only few women with access to financial resources can take on (Ministry of Gender status report, 2019)

Despite this overall pattern of marginalization, women's parliamentary representation has increased incrementally since the early 1990s when the country reverted to multiparty democracy after twenty-seven years of a one-party state rule. During the first democratic elections held in 1991, women won 7 per cent of the seats; this percentage increased to 14 per cent in 2006 and 17 per cent in 2016.

Table 3: Trends in Women's Representation in Parliament, Local Government & National Government

Period	Women in Local Govt	Total Seats in Local Government	Women in Parliament	Total Parliamentary Seats	Women in Cabinet	Total Cabinet Positions
2016-2021	140	1,858	21	156	5	24
2021-2026	126	1,624	26	256	9	22

Source: European Democracy Hub, 2021

By 2016, women also held 40 per cent of positions in the executive cabinet. Yet women's political representation once again decreased following the most recent August 2021 elections with women now holding 13 per cent of parliamentary seats and 21 per cent of cabinet positions. Women's representation in local government has remained steady at 8 per cent. This most recent decrease in women's political representation was driven by several factors including violence ahead of the national polls and the challenges that candidates in rural areas faced to verify their academic credentials were needed to run for political office. In Zambia, violence has often increased in the past ahead of crucial elections that led to a change of government as what happened in both 2011 and 2021. In

both years, women's political representation decreased (Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission annual report 2019)

1.3   Research Purpose

This Research Report on "*Identifying Barriers to Women Running for Local Government Elections*" was carried out in five of the ten provinces of Zambia to highlight the obstacles or inhibitors that the women face in their pursuit to aspire for local government leadership. The research was fully guided by the terms of reference (ToR's) developed by Local Government Association of Zambia (LGAZ). The specific areas included determining the leadership aspirations in the study areas among women as well as identifying myths and misconceptions influencing women's participation in local government elections.

It is envisaged that the findings will provide opportunities for LGAZ team, to embrace the views of the interviewees and the relevant stakeholders in the envisioned promotion of women leadership at all levels of governance. It is common knowledge in this dispensation that basically governance is how society or groups within society organise to make decisions. According to the World Bank 2018, it is the way in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. Therefore, participation in governance at any level is critical because it influences how power is distributed and used; determining who has decision-making power, how other players make their voices heard, and how accountability is given. Equal participation of women and men in governance and decision-making is key to achieving sustainable development.

Participation in Local Government shows that out of a total of 1,624 selected councillors; only 7.7 per cent were women, while 92.3 per cent were men. The data is based on the previous elections, held in 2016. This poor performance in terms of enhancing women's participation at the local government level has led to Zambia being ranked in the bottom four (i.e., in the fourth lowest position) among SADC countries, whose progress in this regard is seriously concerning.

In addressing this, The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has signed a contribution agreement with Global Affairs Canada (GAC) for a six-year (2021-2027) project entitled Partnerships for Municipal Innovation – Women in Local Leadership (PMI-WILL). PMI-WILL intends to contribute to improved quality of life for women and girls and enhance enjoyment of their rights, those from marginalized groups in Zambia.

1.4   Rationale for the Research

The research was conducted to identify barriers inhibiting women participation in local government elections with the view of improving their leadership and governance at local

authority level. According to studies conducted[3], Zambia has the lowest proportion of seats held by women at both local authority and national parliament levels in Sub Saharan Africa; the regional average being at just below 25%. This is even though women account for over half the population of Zambia and yet this is not proportionately reflected in the statistics of women holding public office. It was therefore important to critically identify the inhibiting factors for the women local government elections participation. In as much as many women associations or groups, such as the Zambia National Women's Lobby (ZNWL) have advocated for empowerment of women in politics for enhanced leadership and decision-making, a lot more still needs to be done, and hence this research.

The research endeavoured to identify the various barriers or challenges including the myths and misconceptions influencing women's participation in local government elections. The study also assessed perceptions relating to attitudes of women councillors or leaders in the targeted areas. It is envisioned that the findings of the research will ultimately be used to develop interventions that will increase women running for local government elections. Some studies that have been carried out do indicate that generally increasing the number of women on local authorities will contribute to increased responsiveness to women's needs and greater investment in social programs leading to poverty reduction especially when they are provided with capacity building interventions[4].

1.5   Overall Goal of the Research

The overall goal of this research was to identify barriers to women running for local government elections.

The research provided a qualitative assessment about the situation of women's political representation at local governance level with a view to suggesting evidence-based policies and examples of successful practice that can be shared by all. To achieve this aim, the research looked at factors which hinder and which support women's participation in the political process.

1.6   Specific Objectives

The ability of women to take full advantage of their human rights and to participate fully in political life depends on the societal and legal situation in their country. In societies where women are generally unequal – legally, economically, and culturally – they are more likely to be at a disadvantage in taking part in the electoral process and getting elected[5]. This research had the following specific objectives:

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[3] https://www.britishcouncil.org/partner/international-development/news-and-events/march-2018/Women-are-perceived-that-they-should-be-at-home

[4] https://ngocc.org.zm/

[5] . Krook M.L. and Norris P. (2014), "Beyond quotas: strategies to promote gender equality in elected office", Political Studies 62, 1, pp. 2-20.

- To determine leadership aspirations of men and women in the targeted districts
- To assess policy and legal framework influencing the participation of women in Zambia
- To identify social, cultural, and economical factors influencing the participation of women in politics
- To identify environmental factors influencing the participation of women in targeted areas
- To recommend possible measures of increasing women running for local government elections.

The research therefore set out to examine the key factors, barriers or positive interventions that hinder or support women's participation at different points in their progress to become an elected representative at national (legislative) level or at local (administrative) level in the respective districts of the selected provinces. These were inclusive of *psychological, social, cultural, economic* and but not limited to *legal factors*. To further address the respective specific objectives, the research considered measuring women's place in society by information on the economic, social, and cultural situations and also consideration of the political context, particularly how the political parties in the country act as barriers or supporters to women standing as candidates and ultimately getting elected. The legislative framework and the electoral systems that detail women's rights and how far they are realized were assessed

2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

Barriers to Women's Participation in Local Government Election
Women continue to face a lot of challenges regarding their participation in local governance elections in Zambia. This literature review presents some of the pertinent social cultural issues, legal and policy implications as well as institutional challenges. According to the World Bank (2017), key barriers to women's political participation include the structure of the current legal framework, a political culture embedded with patriarchal values and norms that are unsupportive to female candidates and a lack of personal wealth or access to resources to fund campaigns.

2.1. Policy and Legal frameworks:
While the legal and policy frameworks have been adequately articulated, there has been inadequate attention paid to capacity-building, financial resources, and inclusive implementation approaches to enable implementing officers to mainstream gender in their programming and programme implementation. There is also a general lack of appreciation of the importance of gender issues by people working in the public and private sectors, which translates to a reluctance to properly implement gender

mainstreaming strategies and participate in gender and development programmes (Ministry of Gender status report 2019).

The Mixed Member Proportional Representation which is a mixed electoral system in which voters get two votes: one to decide the representative for their single-seat constituency, and one for a political party recommends for thirty-five seats to be reserved for women in the Legislature (Temitope,2018). Proportional Representation (PR) characterizes electoral systems by which divisions in an electorate are reflected proportionately in the elected body. If 30 per cent of the electorate support a particular political party, then roughly 30 per cent of seats will be won by that party. This implies that if 50 per cent female candidates and 50 per cent male candidates are well distributed on a party list and 30 per cent seats are won in an election, 15 per cent elected officials will be female and 15 per cent will be men. The essence of such systems is that all votes contribute to the result, not just the plurality of them. Proportional representation requires the use of multiple-member voting districts also called super-districts; it is not possible by using single-member districts alone (Olaitan & Temitope, 2015).

A study by Katongo (2017) found out that in Zambia on the other hand, for the past fifty-two years of independence has been using first-past the-post also known as the single member plurality, simple majority voting or plurality voting. Under FPTP, voting takes place in single constituencies that select single Members of Parliaments. The candidates with the most votes win the elections and any other votes go to waste or simply amount to nothing.

2.2. Institutional arrangements:

According to the European Democracy Hub (2021), the male political leadership lacks commitment to implementing Zambia's progressive constitutional provisions on inclusive governance. Within political parties, older men mostly from the dominant ethnic regions, dominate decision making structures. Although some of the main political parties are developing gender equality plans, women's exclusion has continued because the plans are yet to be adopted and implemented by the respective political parties. For example, Zambian parties have failed to implement mandatory quotas for women for the two main political parties the PF and the UPND which have announced a goal of ensuring 40 per cent female representation in key internal structures but have failed to realize this goal in practice (Katongo, 2017).

The electoral procedures managed by the electoral management body, the police and the department responsible for issuing national identity and voter cards also disadvantage women. For instance, the police sometimes fail to curtail election-related violence, especially violence committed by ruling party cadres. This creates a fearful environment for women voters just before and during the elections. Long distances to polling stations, poor election infrastructure especially for the physically challenged citizens, the rushed

distribution of national identity cards and lack of civic education further impede women's ability to vote on election day (Godfrey & RuthHenckes, 2021).

Despite Zambia 's democratic advancement from a one party to a multi-party governance system, the country still lags as compared to many of her neighbors with regards to female representation in legislature. Despite the formation of the Women's Lobby in 1991, the creation of the Ministry of Gender and Child Development, the commission to ensure and spearhead women's representation at all levels of decision-making and other spheres of life as well as the signing to commit itself to the attainment of SADC and United Nation Millennium Goals of Gender Representation, Zambia still has a long way to go before it can achieve gender equality in its legislative representation (European Democracy Hub, 2021).

2.3. Social Cultural Norms

Zambia's patriarchal society represents a major structural barrier, traditionally assigning more power and resources to men than women. The resulting inequalities affect women's access to education, job opportunities, and career progression which directly impact the skills and resources needed for political mobilization especially in a country where politics are heavily monetized. According to Barnes and Burchard in their book, Engendered Politics 2019, state that, patriarchal norms also lead women voters to discriminate against women candidates in elections; in general, female candidates are often insulted and ridiculed.

In Zambia, there exists a deep-rooted concept of an unequal gender relationship in which men are superior to women. Women are subject to prejudices that marginalize them and allow them to reach certain points or goals. However, after that, these roles, or prejudices over power them because it may be thousands against one and it gets tougher to rise to key decision-making positions which are traditionally dominated by men. But, in a male dominated society, men do not want to give power to women, they just do not want to (Mohanty *et al.,* 2004: 20).

2.4. Individual barriers

As Barnes (2019) argues, "In some countries, women perceive politics as a "dirty" game. This has jarred women's confidence in their ability to confront political processes. In fact, such a perception is prevalent worldwide. Unfortunately, this perception reflects the reality in many countries and although the reasons for this differ, there are some common trends." Corruption is one such trend, which has inevitably resulted in the creation of favorable conditions and opportunities for the existence of the most negative manifestation of organized crime. These factors combine to scare women and provoke their fears of losing members of their families, all of which militates against their political involvement or their running for elected bodies (IDEA, 2015).

Lack of economic resources is one of the biggest obstacles that prevent women's participation in politics. Most women are financially dependent on their male partners or relatives to enter politics which poses hurdles for women to participate in politics in most developing nations like Zambia (Shvedova, 2018). Voter's expectations are that politicians will provide gifts in form of cash, food, transport, items of clothing, etc. and politicians' willingness to engage competitively to meet these expectations result in significant informal campaign costs. Both women and youths, particularly, struggled to overcome this barrier (Ministry of Gender, 2020).

Religion is one of the arenas where women's inferiority to men has long been used to exclude women from aspects of political life. The exclusion of women from religious institutions and leadership may have a negative impact on women's status in society and limit their opportunities in politics and public life. In most religions, power and authority is believed to divinely belong to men hence subjugating women (Kunovich et.al.2017). Women are also seen to be their own enemies in their own political advancement and empowerment, especially when they internalize these long held anachronistic assumptions and the perception that politics is a "dirty game", thus a preserved game for men (Douglas, 2014).

Women also continue to face prejudices as leaders because there is a cultural assumption that leadership is a masculine trait. Women are considered subordinate to men both in the family and in the society, especially in most rural areas. Many women are reluctant to run for political office. If they do seek office, they fail to attract sufficient party and electoral support to win. Political life is organized by male norms, values, lifestyle and working patterns (Norris *et al.,* 2008).

3.0 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

3.1   Overall approach:
The research team largely used qualitative approach. The research team took into consideration the need to include and ensure the participation of several women, inclusive of those who lost the local government positions and the currently serving women councillors and some key stakeholders in the provision of information related to the challenges or barriers that the women face in running for the local government elections. The team examined to what extent the women have been inhibited in the process of adoption from their respective political parties up to the final stage of adoption to stand for local government elections. The team used a participatory method for the purposively selected targets especially the focus group discussions to identify the potential barriers or challenges that the women have faced in running for the local government elections.

3.2   Research Design

The research design is basically a roadmap to achieving the intended objectives of a research. The design for this research employed more of qualitative tools. Both primary and secondary data collection techniques were used to analyse the research objectives systematically and critically. The use of a variety or mixed methods provided multiple lines of evidence in accurately assessing the status quo of the women as related to their ability to run for local government elections.

3.3   Methods of the Research

The consultant used interactive and participatory data collection methods using the following methods:

(i)   **Literature Review (Desk Study)**:

To have a clear understanding of the current status quo, related to the challenges that the women are exposed to in running for these local government elections, the research team reviewed the relevant documents related to the study. The consulting team reviewed the relevant documents to identify past and present interventions, initiatives, or programs with a focus to increase the participation of women and marginalized persons as elected officials in local governance in Zambia. Further review of the PMI-WILL project documents, case studies, research papers, project reports, good practice articles and success stories in print, electronic and video formats from previous programs.

(ii)   **In- depth Personal Interviews (Key Informant Interviews):**

These involved asking specific questions aimed at getting information relevant to the assessment which addressed the barriers of challenges faced by the women. This was used to triangulate with other sources of information. Under this method the research team identified key actors useful to the research. Purposively selected women and other stakeholders in town councils, municipalities and city councils were interviewed. The KII's delved into identifying and understanding the myths and misconceptions influencing women's participation in local government elections as well as assessed perceptions relating to attitudes of women councilors or leaders in the targeted areas.

(iii)   **Focus Group Discussions:**

Using this method, the research team discussed with the women and even men that were relevant to the research directly or indirectly. The FGD was used to collect data from community members on their awareness of local government elections, myths & misconceptions as well as cultural, social, attitudinal, and economic issues.

(iv)   **Spot Check Observations**

During the fieldwork, the consulting team took note of its observations in the respective areas. Major areas of focus for the observation included composition of structures or committees (female/male ratio), management structures (roles), key decision makers and but not limited to general women influence in the community activities.

3.4 Primary data collection

Primary data was collected through field visits from selected sites through purposely selected Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with the identified stakeholders using the interview guides. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were also used for small groups of selected audiences in the respective sites in the districts.

3.5 Sample Size

Qualitative data collection is typically a smaller sample size than quantitative analyses but should be sufficient to obtain adequate data that describes the phenomenon of interest and address the research questions. Ultimately the goal is to attain saturation by obtaining diverse views from a carefully selected sample size. Data was therefore collected through the in-depth interviews (key informant interviews) and focus group discussions. One hundred and fourteen (114.8%) and 119,7% response percentage was achieved for the Focus Group Discussion and Key Informant Interviews (KII) respectively.

Table 4: Total number of respondents reached by each method

Data Collection Tool	Sample Size Target	Actual size sampled	Response Percentage
KIIs	66	79	119.7%
FGDs	88	101	114.8%
Total	154	180	

A total of fifteen (15) focus group discussions were conducted and seventy-nine (79) in-depth interviews. Focus Group Discussions were an average of eight (8) respondents for the respective target audiences in the selected districts whilst the key informant interviews were done for chairpersons or members of department or organization in each district. Table 5 below shows the number of respondents reached by each method.

Table 5: The districts sampled in the respective provinces

S/N	Province	Town Council	Municipal	City Council
1	Eastern	Petauke, Lusangazi		Chipata
2	Lusaka	Kafue	Chongwe	Lusaka
3	Northern	Lunte	Kasama	
4	Southern	Sinazongwe, Pemba		Livingstone
5	Western	Kaoma	Mongu	

3.6   Data Analysis

The consultant used the standard ways of data compilation, variable generation, computation, and aggregation to analyse the data. Qualitative analyses were carried out transcribing from the recordings that were done. The unit of analysis varied depending on the type of data provided. Further, qualitative data derived from focus group discussions and key informant interviews was sorted for analysis and disaggregated for comparison's sake for the different geographical settings. Data collected from key stakeholders such as women's networks, Women Rights Organisations (WROs), political parties, traditional and religious leaders, and key allies, including men was validated especially through a 2-day workshop that held after the fieldwork is done to provide preliminary findings.

4.0   FINDINGS

The research was designed to identify issues under the following thematic areas: Policy and Legal Framework, Institutional arrangements, Social, cultural, and Individual barriers.

4.1. Policy and Legal Framework

According to the key informant interview with staff at Ministry of Gender, it was discovered that there is no specific policy that encourages women to participate in local government elections, what the country has is just a Gender policy, but some of the notable challenges are that the government cannot hold anyone accountable of not implementing the gender policy as expected and so institutions or organizations and communities out there sometimes do not feel obliged to do as the national gender policy is asking of them. It has been more of who is heading what institution and what they believe in, so they are not obliged, and the government cannot hold them accountable.

Some respondents said that the election law should be clear, comprehensive, and transparent. It should ensure that no element of the electoral process disadvantages women either directly or indirectly, for example, election laws requiring candidates to post large monetary deposits can work against women. Literacy or education requirements may give men an unfair advantage over women and laws of creating a few polling stations can lead to long lines and discourage voting by women with small children. In contrast, gender-sensitive election laws can create an environment in which these and other problems may be avoided and may even include special positive measures to ensure that women are elected to office. It is important to ensure conformity between the election law and any other national laws on non-discrimination or the equality of women and men.

In addition to the above it was discovered during the focus group discussions that, election laws often authorize election management bodies to issue legally binding regulations, consistent with the law, on voter registration, campaigning, voting, vote counting, complaint procedures and other issues. These regulations are extremely

important if not carefully drafted, the regulations, like the law itself, may indirectly disadvantage women. When election management bodies are sensitive to gender considerations, regulations that facilitate women's participation may be issued.

Many other laws can have a bearing on women's participation in the electoral process. Since political parties play an enormous role in selecting candidates and setting the political agenda for election campaigns, national laws on political parties are often central to women's participation. Women will enjoy greater opportunities if a country's laws stipulate that the internal functioning of political parties must be transparent and democratic than if party operations are highly centralized and controlled by a few party leaders. Campaign finance laws can assist or disadvantage women, depending on their provisions and laws relating to freedom of expression, assembly, and association, as well as laws on personal status, the family, citizenship, and other such issues can also influence women's political participation.

4.2. Institutional Arrangements.

the respondents indicated that the process to be adopted as a candidate for their respective parties is even worsened by the cumbersome political process which does not clearly provide a pathway for a female aspirant to successfully ascend to a position of leadership. The lack of support from their political parties creates elements of discrimination and ultimately disinterest from the womenfolk.

It was found out from the respondents during the discussions that the process of adoption has its own hurdles especially for a woman. This lack of political will from the party structures easily pushes the women out of the race as they feel intimidated and as good as unwanted. The study further found that political parties do not play an active role in supporting women's engagement in local politics as their interests is to adopt candidates with the capacity to deliver victory regardless of the gender.

The assessment found that the adoption process has a lot of hurdles which are detrimental and deemed as corrupt. It was further deduced from the study that a lot of intimidation is experienced by both the men and the women which sometimes leads into violence and sexual harassment by men within the political party system. Unfortunately, a number of women have been victims of sexual demands from the opposite sex at various stages of the adoption process within the political parties (both ruling and opposition). For a woman candidate to 'buy' her way to a point of standing, it was heard during the discussions, that a lot of finances are required which most women have a challenge comparable to the men. Most men are known to 'bulldoze' their way to adoption through mainly a corruptible approach.

As it has already been alluded to earlier that political parties hardly adopt women for elective positions, it was gratifying however to see in the last tripartite election that the two strongest parties both had female running mates to their respective presidents. This was a pointer that the voters, who are the majority voters, would perceive such a party as

having their interests at heart. The respondents indicated that it would be good if such were replicated at local government level as it would promote women participation.

4.3. Social and Cultural Barriers

The research found that the women who aspire for local government elections lack adequate moral, financial, and social support from both men and fellow women. It is amazing to note that the female aspirants do not usually have adequate support from fellow women in some parts of the wards dotted around the country despite the women being in the majority in the country.

According to the research findings, cultural barriers were prominently cited as inhibitors for women running for local government elections. In all the focus group discussions and key informant interviews, the respondents attributed this to societal expectations of a woman's role as prescribed by the traditional assumptions, norms, and values. The upbringing of the girl child was also highly contributing to lower self-esteem of a woman in adult hood taking away confidence levels. Generally, in Zambia, there exists a deep-rooted concept of an unequal gender relationship in which men are superior to women. This biased view regarding gender equality originates from not only traditional cultural and social norms but also from the dual structure of statutory law and customary law. Rights, which are supposed to be protected under statutory law, are not necessarily observed and women endure unfair treatment in terms of child marriage, unequal distribution of power, etc. It was unearthed in the research that the patriarchal society still dominates the thinking structure of majority of the people, and this makes it difficult for the woman to take up the challenging task of running for elections, campaigning, doing community work to gain popularity, and moving about with male party members to learn the etiquette of politics. It may in many cases still be looked down upon a woman to try to attempt any of the above.

The research results indicate that a boy child is preferred to access education than a girl child. This has influenced most girls reaching Grade 12 which is one of the pre-requisite requirements to contest for local government elections. The girl child has also suffered being married off by the parents especially in the rural areas where the dropout rate is very high and hence failing to reach Grade 12. Furthermore, respondents indicated that it is more acceptable for a man to be away from his family than a woman; women have multiple responsibilities in comparison to men and are expected to be more concerned with family life. The expectations and roles of motherhood, in a heterosexual nuclear household, are therefore still major restraints.

Multiple job responsibilities were seen as barriers stated by interview and focus group participants. For example, the respondents voiced that people attack women in different ways, such as clothing for women, and in another way, participants explained that women face contending expectations regarding their behavior - such as being diminutive. Many argued that women often suppress their leadership because they are judged as being bossy

- rather than a positive quality - such as being assertive, however, unequal power relations between men and women contribute to fewer women being elected to local government elections.

The socialization process and the culture norms, beliefs and values resulted in stereo typing of men and women into certain categories which act as facilitators or deterrents for men and women to be in leadership roles or be in the public arena and be effective participants. Women unfortunately tend to be portrayed in the negative. They are called names as prostitutes and husband snatchers, women cannot be leaders, so most of the people vote for men. This is detrimental to women who aspire to hold public offices especially considering that many eligible registered voters are women.

There are still myths and misconceptions that limit women in taking up leadership position. Some of which include;

i.   "umupini ukulanga umwanakashi limwelelamo", illustrates the low confidence society has on decisions made by women. From the cultural point of view, women are perceived to be the gender that lacks vision and cannot provide strategic direction.

ii.   "Imisu shamwanakashi tashi culuka uluputa", is one Bemba proverb that points out that women lack foresight and mainly dwell in the present situation and little concern on the future.

iii.   "Mwana nimwanalume", Meaning men or boys are the real deal.

iv.   "Nankoko tafuma pabana". Meaning that you cannot leave your children and go out doing other things or playing other roles.

4.4 Individual Barriers

4.4.1. Leadership Aspirations
Leadership aspirations among women were represented at 56% compared to men at 82%. Most of the women went into politics driven by a motivation to providing change, community building, for reasons of social justice, equitable access to social amenities as well as safe and clean drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene. For instance, one woman stated that, *"none of us went into it as a career aspiration...it was about social justice and community activism"* (KII respondent - Livingstone).

In relation to the motivations for engaging in leadership, interviewed respondents highlighted people and organizations that bolstered them throughout their political careers. Most respondents identified their family, including spouses and children, as a form of support. Having a supportive family was often identified as essential to participants' success. Having a strong reputation through community contribution and grassroots connections was also mentioned by about half of the interview participants as a factor in success. Support from the public was the second most cited support – with

many participants arguing that previous engagement activities led to an increase in community support when they decided to run. Mentors and other political candidates were also recognized as supplying participants with support; female candidates and other women in politics were discussed by the respondents. As one respondent stated, "*I'm sitting here today because a woman took the time and saw potential and removed barriers for me*" (Respondent in Kaoma). Participants further acknowledged organizations as forms of support, with a sizeable percentage identifying some women association as having provided support. Figure 3 below shows a snap view of the four main sources of support for the female leaders who made it and others who attempted.

Figure 2: Percentage of identified forms of support for the women running for Local Government Elections
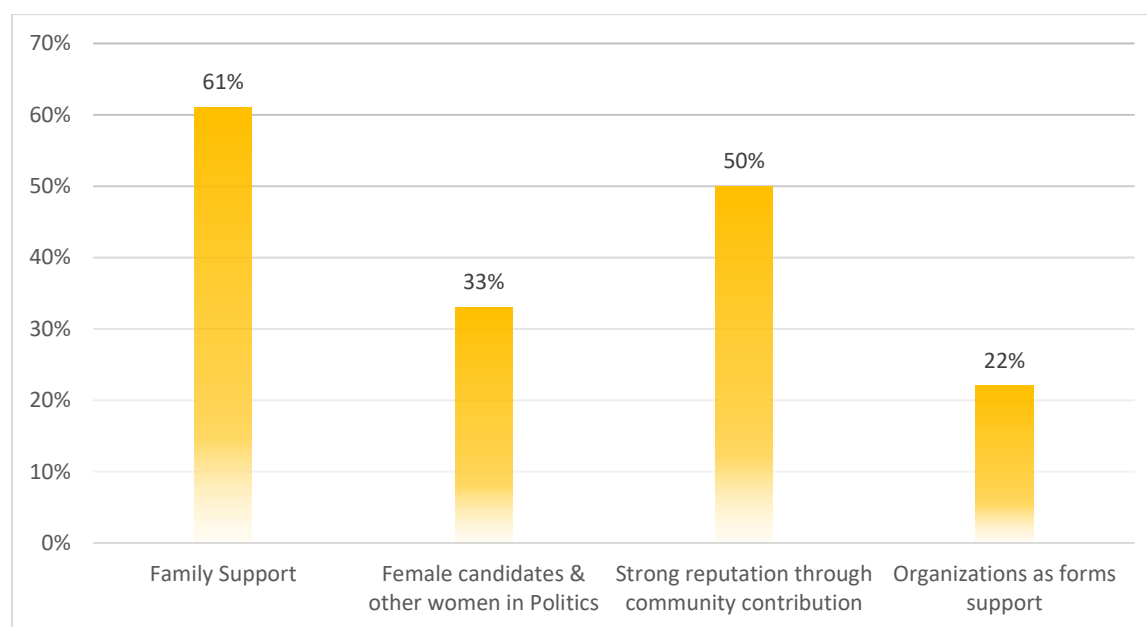
A focus group discussion held with female Mayors, Council Chairpersons and Councilors shared their experiences regarding the processes and challenges they faced to get to the current leadership positions that they are holding. Some of the key factors that motivated them to run for these offices included: the urge to change the narrative that women should not be confined in the kitchen, the urge to ensure that challenges faced by women such as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) be sorted out and also the issue of education for the girl child is highly promoted and also to participate in decision-making and also to change the negative perception.

It was brought to the fore that there are quite several women who aspire for local government positions however, they lack ambition and confidence. A male ward councilor, who is deputy mayor, stated that,

"Females can be seen lacking self-confidence, and this causes problems for their active participation. Many of them are afraid to talk and expressed doubt if they would even

be listened to. Women are not only discriminated by gender, but also on basis of coming from remote villages, and more over various castes. This leads to weak self-confidence which makes them hesitant before assuming higher positions/…/women lack ambition for a political career and that is true. One must drag capable women to come and contest elections at times. It is like they would rather live a normal life. It is another thing that they lack awareness, education and rightful skills and training about the pros and cons of such political participation, it is not their fault really, it is the systems, I had a huge rally and not even a single woman spoke."[6]

A female ward councilor highlighted that, *"some of us have seen that some political party's ideologies are discriminatory towards women as they are not gender sensitive"*. The research found out that the political parties theoretically proclaim gender equality which they do not practice but instead, women in these party's experience discrimination. One of the female respondents who has attempted to be a councilor had this to say, *"there is no universal attitude of men towards women within the party, everyone brings to the party his or her own tradition and culture and own value systems, which are often patriarchal and feudal. This may be an individual level problem. But at the same time the party does not try to change the attitude of both men and women who come to the party or make them more gender sensitive"*. Moreover, women politicians point out that even within the political parties, women are rarely found in leadership positions. It is very difficult for a woman to participate effectively." A female councilor in western province went on to say, "it would be great if political parties would be mandated to have a 50:50 percent representation and not even a 60:40 percent representation in local government. The consensus in the various discussion forums during the research is that women make good leaders, given an opportunity.

It was also reviewed that women have high intentions of participating for local government leadership but are limited by inadequate support to create an enabling environment devoid of discrimination and intimidation. The process for a woman can be tedious in view of the steps she has to manage.

A snapshot of a woman who has made up her mind to stand for local government election is that she must prepare her husband, and her children, and her family for their acceptance. Once she has overcome or gone through this stage, she then applies to be considered. At this early stage, the research team was informed that the male aspirants against whom she is applying fabricate demeaning stories about their female contestant such as tagging one as a prostitute. And after all this, when her name goes to the party bosses, they do not select her name because they fear losing that seat. The selection and nomination process within political parties is also biased against women in that "male characteristics" are emphasized and often become the criteria in selecting candidates.

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[6] Key Informant Interviewee Deputy Mayor, 01/04/22

The idea of participation in local government elections is open to everyone. However, the research findings were that the political arena is predominantly men's domain. This is despite the higher population of the women compared to the men. Women are aware that they are eligible to stand for local government elections. However, the awareness levels in Lusaka were quite high both among men and women represented at 98%, while in Eastern province the awareness level for men was at (95%) while among women, it was at 88%).

During key informant interviews and Focus Group Discussions, the research team discovered that participants were very much aware of the local government elections, in terms of when they are held and that they are conducted by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ). They went on to say that local government elections can be held as by - elections when the serving councilor dies or resigns. According to the participants, grade 12 certificates, National Registration Cards, zero criminal records, Zambian citizens who are 18 years and above are the requirements needed for one to be nominated as local government candidates. They further said anyone meeting the above requirements can participate in local government elections. Unfortunately, the key informants and women who participated in the FGD's meetings shared that women usually experience difficulties in the adoption and financing for local government elections.

Education and issues of social justice, including poverty, were other factors that were raised. Political interest was also a significant motivator; in particular, they spoke of representation and the importance of having a voice.

4.4.2. Economic Factors

Despite the increase in the number of women in paid employment, the additional work burden prevents them from having time to engage in politics. The respondents indicated that the Electoral Commission of Zambia has equally not helped matters as they continue to charge huge amounts for nominations which mostly favor men more than women. According to the key informants and FGD participants, lack of financial resources is one of the major reasons why fewer women than men stand for elections in local government. Generally, men with more financial resources are favored for nomination, adoption, and elections. One of the female aspirants, in southern province who lost in her party primary adoption process highlighted that the financial challenges were so prominent in the previous local government elections for adoption, nomination and campaign.

The findings established that women's participation in politics is further constrained by poverty, lack of education, and access to information. It must be recognized that it is difficult for women to participate in political life when their major concern is survival, and they have no choice but to spend much of their time trying to fulfill the basic needs of families. In addition to that however, some women may have full-time jobs as wives and mothers as well as other full-time careers (e.g., as teachers, lawyers, doctors). It goes without saying that becoming a councilor in these conditions might then be considered a

third full-time job. Feminist theories stress the inequality of the distribution of resources such as financial resources, time and information. It is an agreeable statement that the distribution of economic resources is unequal to the disadvantage of women. Like mentioned above, women are not provided with adequate resources like money and time to attend meetings, hold meetings, travel for community work and campaign trails. Women from rural Zambia must give up a day's activities, probably, in the field to attend one meeting, and this affects their participation. If adopted, most of the wards are vast and there is always need for logistical movements which require adequate financial resources.

In most cases, women must prove their financial muscle at party level for them to be adopted as most political parties offer little or nothing at all in terms of financial support to aspiring candidates. Besides that, "the adoption process is so corrupt that you may need to pay a chain of people for you to be adopted as a potential candidate."

Challenges of funding and access to potential donors, were also acknowledged by the respondents as key factors. For instance, the women associations or advocacy groups are not spread out in the whole country and hence only benefitting those that are in proximity to them. It was reported that in some areas, women's lobby group did very well in capacity building of the women and provided both logistical and moral support in their candidatures. As a result of this, this ward in Kaoma produced 6 councilors out of 18 (33%) which is a very positive indicator and this goes to show that with adequate support, the percentage of women participation in local governance can surely be increased significantly.

"In terms of finances what I would want to tell you is that for the party, the party like on my side paid for me. Of course, they did not pay for me everything, but they paid the amount required at Electoral Commission of Zambia." (Female councilor, 01/04/22)

Remuneration was also an issue for women, stating that "it is a part-time job, with full time hours, but not full time pay" (KII respondent). The inadequate allowance of local government leaders, and the long hours the job entails, was a barrier for running for these leadership positions.

5.0. Other Cross-cutting Issues that Hinder Women Participation in Local Government Elections.

5.1. Psychological Factors

The study garnered that psychological barrier experienced by women who are generally stereotyped as a 'weaker vessel' have drawn away the motivation to push for leadership. This has consequently led to women self-effacing, withdrawing and feeling like an imposter. In some discussions, psychological barriers discussed included a lack of self-esteem, a fear of rejection, and less credibility in a male-dominated environment.

Social media and internet were also among the barriers for women participation. Some non-gender sensitive people have abused social media against the women and hence increased cyber bullying and harassment. It was unearthed from one of the female councilors that she experienced social media harassment during her campaign period which were demeaning and had some negative psychological impact on her. Unfortunately, there is no opportunity to defend oneself on whatever comments made.

The issue of Gender Discrimination was found to be distinctively pronounced where a woman is generally perceived to be incapable to provide leadership. The issue of equal rights has been globally discussed and many agreements have been signed on the same. However, the findings of the research study do show that the reality in the Zambian context is the issue of unequal rights. The respondents submitted that cases of sexual harassment, rape, abuse and violence acts were very high in the political arena ultimately causing a lot of fear in the womenfolk who could have intentions to run for local governance leadership.

5.2. Traditional assumptions and beliefs

The respondents to the research indicated that traditional norms, beliefs, and assumptions such as that a woman cannot stand before men were cited among the other factors as been key in inhibiting women participating in local government election. It was said that women are weak and hence cannot make strong or firm decisions. The perception of looking at a girl child as someone who can easily be married as opposed to furthering her education has caused the menfolk to look down on the opposite sex. This was found more prominent in the rural areas compared to the urban areas. The woman is traditionally seen to be one that should take care of the family as opposed to getting engaged in the political arena. It has hence been said that those women that vie for political leadership are prostitutes. This perception has led to women shying away from politics from fear of been labeled as prostitutes which is a negative tag.

5.3. Religious beliefs

The research team gathered from the interviews that some churches do not allow a woman to be a leader who can stand before the men and hence the idea of a woman becoming a politician was a fairytale and far-fetched. This finding is more pronounced in the rural communities where it was said that;

"a woman cannot speak before men and so would we allow a woman to be a political leader?"[7] (Headman, 31/03/22)

Such sentiments have caused disinterest among women in running for these local government leadership. The focus group discussions analyzed some critical assertions

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[7] Citation from a rural Headman during a Focus Group Discussion

drawn from the general perceptions frequently talked about. The responses indicated that 79.5% were of the strong view that women are under-represented in local government elections in Zambia while 53.8% strongly disagreed that men generally make better political leaders. Fifty-nine (59%) of the respondents further submitted that it would be better for the country if there were more women in local government than is the case now. On whether the women should be returned to their societal roles, it was evident, by percentage of 66.7 response strongly disagreeing whilst the issue of equal rights between the men and women is still somewhat a thorny subject given the practicality of the same. It is still being viewed that the women are still highly disadvantaged despite the documentations and treaties on the same.

**Table 6: Perceptions of Women's political participation in local government elections**

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree
Men generally make better political leaders than women	15.4%	15.4%	**53.8%**	15.4%
Women are under-represented in local government elections in Zambia	**79.5%**	2.6%	15.9%	2.0%
It would be better for the country if there were more women in local government	**59.0%**	12.8%	15.4%	12.8%
In Zambia today men and women have equal rights	**46.4%**	15.4%	27.9%	10.3%
Women should return to their traditional roles in society	17.9%	5.1%	**66.7%**	10.3%

6.0   Demographic Profile of Respondents

Out of the sampled size, 64% of the respondents were female while 36% were male, figure 2. The highest number of respondents was found to be between 25 to 49 years old at 32% while the ages between 36 to 49 years were the second highest at 30%. The age group between 19 to 24 years was at 13% while the respondents above 56 years were at 10%. The respondents between 15 to 18 years 9% of the total number of the respondents, with the least number of the target audience being 7% for ages between 50 to 55 years.

The participation of the females in the interviews project was remarkable and inspiring given that the women were more than willing to provide data regarding issues that concerned barriers to run for local government elections.
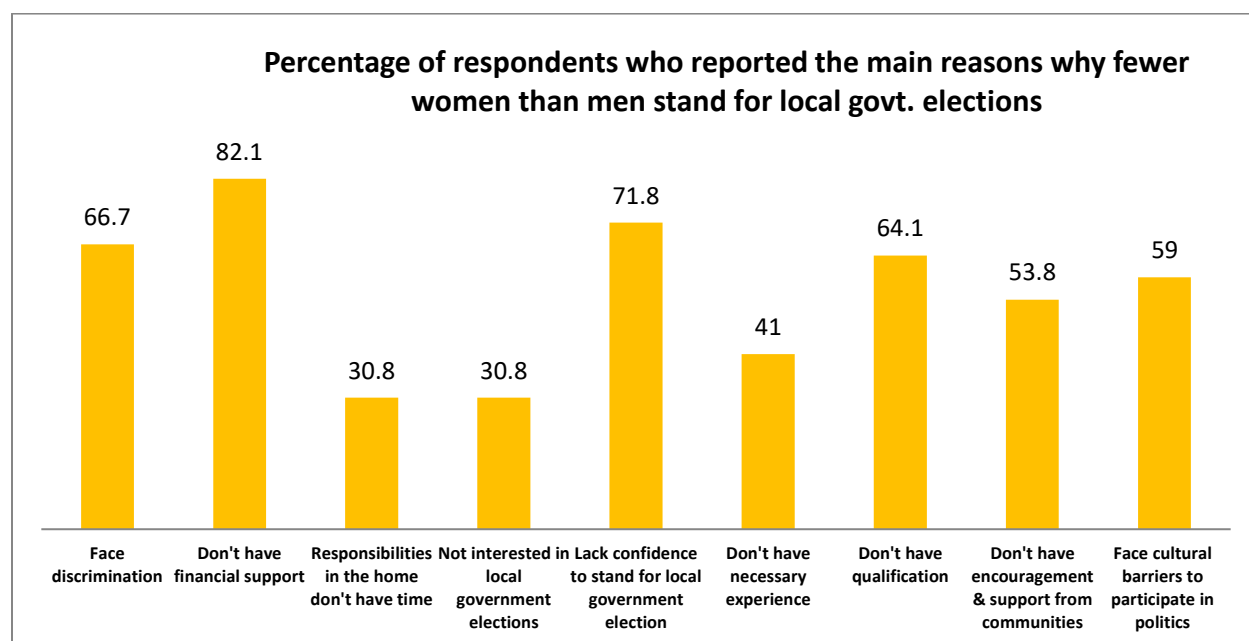
Figure 3: Percentage of Respondents

Gender

64% 36%

■ Male
■ Female
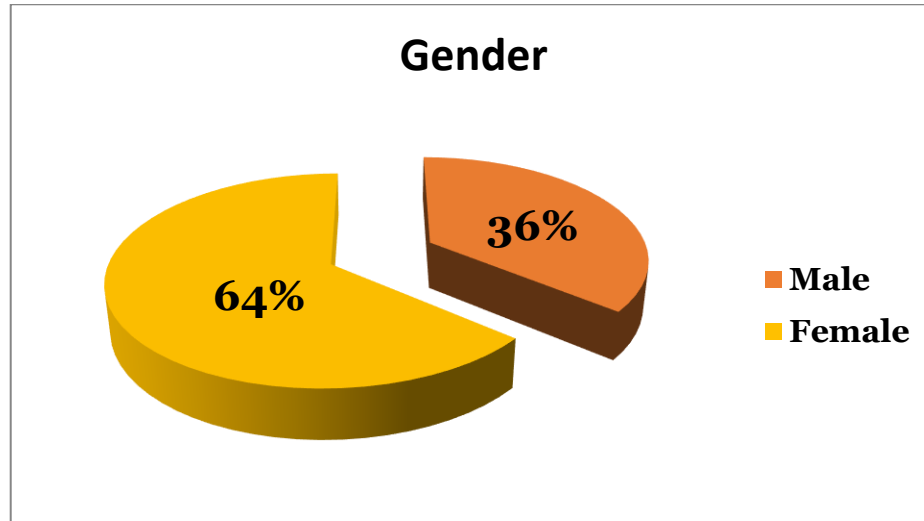
6.1. Rating of possible reasons why fewer women than men stand for local government elections

Respondents were given a list of possible reasons why fewer women than men stand for local government elections. Respondents were asked to classify them as a major reason, minor reason or not a reason for there being fewer women than men standing for election. Below are the results as shown in figure 4.

The study found out that 82.1% gave lack of financial support as the major reason why they were not able to stand for local government elections, 71.8% lack confidence and 66.7% face discrimination. The issue of inadequate qualification was a response of 64.1%, while 59% cited cultural barriers as inhibitors and 53.8% do not simply have support from their communities. The rest given as reasons were lack of experience, 41%, not interested in local government elections, 30.8% and responsibilities at home, 30.8%.

Figure 2: Percentage of respondents with reasons why fewer women than men stand for local government elections

Percentage of respondents who reported the main reasons why fewer women than men stand for local govt. elections

Category	Value
Face discrimination	66.7
Don't have financial support	82.1
Responsibilities in the home don't have time	30.8
Not interested in local government elections	30.8
Lack confidence to stand for local government election	71.8
Don't have necessary experience	41
Don't have qualification	64.1
Don't have encouragement & support from communities	53.8
Face cultural barriers to participate in politics	59

7.0. Discussion of the Findings

One of the key lessons highlighted by local actors is that interventions to improve women's political representation must start immediately before the next electoral cycle begins. Future activities should also complement capacity-building for female aspirants and candidates with logistical and legal support, to ensure that women are not excluded due to bureaucratic or legal hurdles. It was found out where some form of support was provided, they were significant results seen in terms of the number of female councilors.

Another important lesson is to target support for women's political participation more strategically. On the one hand, every woman can play a role in Zambia's governance, and international as well as local organizations should try to engage as many women as possible, especially as voters. On the other hand, there is a need to intentionally identify and recruit already influential women leaders to join politics, given that women with previous experience in business, civil society, and other professional fields may have a greater chance of being selected as candidates and winning elections. It also matters which political party's women opt to join; their chances of election are much lower if they compete for small political parties that cannot mobilize countrywide. In the long run, however, the priority should be to push for internal political party reforms that will make it easier for all women (and other marginalized groups) to participate on an equal basis.

This calls for a sensitization package that emphasizes women's leadership, and which gives the women the confidence and space to run for local government elections.

Finally, drawing men into the movement for gender equality in politics is crucial, given that women that have successfully entered politics have often benefited from male support. This lesson was shared by respondents in implementing organizations in their conversations with the research.

8.0   CONCLUSION
The idea of participation in local government elections is open to everyone. However, the political arena is predominantly men's domain. The research team discovered that participants were very much aware of the local government elections, the procedures, and requirements as set by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ). The awareness levels were above 95% for both male and female which was good. However, the challenges faced by most women were low levels of education, issues of social justice, including poverty and the corrupt adoption process, in respective political parties.

Leadership aspirations among women (56%) were low compared to men (82%). The fact remains that there are still women who want to take up the leadership positions. The research found that the women who aspire for local government elections lack adequate moral, financial, and social support from both men and fellow women. The lack of political will from the party structures further pushes the women out of the race as they feel intimidated and as good as unwanted. The lack of support from their political parties creates elements of discrimination and ultimately disinterest from the womenfolk.

Myths and misconceptions embedded in cultural factors barriers were prominently cited as inhibitors for women running for local government elections. In all the focus group discussions and key informant interviews, the respondents attributed this to societal expectations of a woman's role as prescribed by the traditional assumptions, norms and values. The upbringing of the girl child was also highly contributing to lower self-esteem of a woman in adult hood taking away confidence levels. Generally, in Zambia, there exists a deep-rooted concept of an unequal gender relationship in which men are superior to women. This biased view regarding gender equality originates from not only traditional cultural and social norms but also from the dual structure of statutory law and customary law. Rights, which are supposed to be protected under statutory law, are not necessarily observed and women endure unfair treatment in terms of child marriage,

All in all, the ongoing gender inequalities in equal access to run for local government elections has been propelled by the existing cultural, psychological, socioeconomic, and environmental factors that inhibit the participation of women in various leadership roles. Although barriers were identified by participants, numerous solutions were also brainstormed. These proposed solutions include policy changes, systemic and cultural

changes, as well as various programs and tools to encourage women to participate in local government elections.

9.0   RECOMMENDATIONS
The findings for the research lead to the following recommendations:

9.1   Sensitize women in the Communities to contest the local government elections

The women were found to lack self-confidence. It will be vital to provide capacity building for the community women to address issues to do with women's self-esteem to build their assertiveness and confidence levels to effectively aspire for leadership positions at all levels especially at local government. The interventions should encourage more women to participate in politics and local government elections. The packages should include information that promotes feminism at household level where the woman at home should be able to inculcate equal roles for boy child and the girl child.

9.2   Collaborate with key stakeholders with interest focus areas on women matters

A few organizations such as the Zambia National Women's Lobby are currently providing some support to the women. However, given the magnitude of work to be achieved as regards the women participation in local governance, it will be prudent to spread the net wide to engage other key stakeholders such as churches, traditional leaders, civil society organizations and political parties to provide a comprehensive sensitization package that will touch all local structures in the communities.

9.3   Engage Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) to revise nomination fees

Women participating in the local government elections have had challenges meeting the pre-requisite requirements to contest for these elections. It is therefore vital for the Electoral Commission of Zambia to consider revising the nomination fees and make them more affordable for women to participate in local government elections.

9.4   Lobby for Inclusion of Quotas in the Electoral Act

Various political parties have not created a level playing field for women participation on equal terms and hence the pronounced discrimination compounded by elements of violence. It will therefore be good to lobby the

Electoral Council of Zambia to repeal the Electoral Act before 2026 to oblige political parties to field women candidates.

9.5 **Carry out stakeholder mapping of non-governmental organizations and other women associations**

There are inadequate NGOs providing support to the women in the political realm. To identify the key interest or focus areas of organizations providing women support in whatever respective areas, the project will need to carry out some scooping activities which will help to profile the interventions provided.

9.6 **Develop Gender Equality Code of Conduct**

Develop a gender equality code of conduct for political parties which will prompt them to field a specified minimum number of women candidates in all local government elections.

9.7 **Provide Funding and Campaign support for Women Candidates**

Inadequate or lack of finances is one of the most important factors hindering women from running for office. Women candidates often need to raise funds for running their campaigns, with little or no support from political parties, both in the process of winning the nomination and in the electoral campaign.

It will be prudent to identify women associations that can provide this kind of support, or the respective political parties should consider establishing some resource base to be used to back up the women.

9.8 **Provide Political Mentoring**

The inadequate political acumen with the women was found to be a challenge largely due to lack of mentors in society and role models. It will be important to design a continuous political mentorship program to capacitate women's leadership understanding. Mentoring and training programs prepare women for political work and enhance their political skills.

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No	Gender Issues / Barriers	What can be done (Actions)	How it can be done (Strategies)	When (Timeline)	By Who (Key Responsible Persons or Institutions)
1	**Cultural Factors** ➤ Myths and perceptions ➤ Traditional norms, values & beliefs ➤ Lack of self-confidence amongst the women	✓ Engage the traditional leaders in community sensitization on traditional norms and beliefs ✓ Develop a Capacity Building Model through the traditional leadership to educate the community members on traditional values and beliefs ✓ Build some coalition with Communities, Schools, Churches, Faith-Based and Non-Governmental Organisations to be instruments of information dissemination ✓ Engage individuals & all communities in sensitization programmes ✓ To increase assertiveness & communication to support women ✓ Paradigm shift of mindset is important – changing belief system, gives knowledge about what man can do	✓ Create Men's groups to support women participation in leadership positions. ✓ Train the traditional leaders and women in general in gender equality issues on gender-based violence. to support females. ✓ Provide training to transform harmful social and gender norms ✓ To provide women with relevant knowledge and information for altitudinal and behavioral change ✓ To foster an understanding that both males and females are equal partners in leadership and sustainable human development participation.	May – August 2022	LGAZ to implement or/and Identify Consultancy to provide services

		also women can do. ✓ To inculcate social and moral values through training in order to influence youth attitudes and behaviors.			
2	**Capacity Building** ➢ Lack of social & political party support ➢ Corrupt adoption process	✓ Provide leadership awareness, knowledge and mentoring services to enhance life skills of women in preparing them to face the challenges of participation in leadership positions. ✓ Provide long-term mentorship programmes ✓ Capacity building in Gender mainstream ✓ Engage the private sector and other relevant stakeholders in designing and scaling up more participation by females.	✓ Incorporate the governance principles in the leadership training. ✓ Info structures" Disclosure System" Safe Plan ✓ Parties to criminalize sexual harassment, ✓ Sexual harassment policy ✓ Affirmative action where women are mandatory involve	May – August 2022	LGAZ to implement or/and Identify Consultancy to provide services
3	**Leadership Aspirations** ➢ Inadequate Education ➢ Lack of Self-Confidence ➢ Women lack support amongst themselves	✓ Engage Ministry of Education ✓ Provide and include life skills in school curriculum so as to build skills in negotiations, decision making and assertiveness ✓ Encourage more females to go for further academic and	✓ Develop the "I CAN" attitude ✓ Enhance the Re-entry policy for the girl child especially in the rural areas ✓ Establish quotas to accommodate more women in political participation ✓ Develop strategic partnerships with for example, NGOs with same interest focus	May – August 2022	LGAZ to implement or/and Identify Consultancy to provide services

		professional training			
		✓ Provide necessary skills to identify their strengths and passion to formulate their own vision, how to build the desired self-confidence and self-esteem. ✓ Promote and support female role models to enhance on their leadership aspirations			
4	**Economic factors** ➢ Women lack financial capacity ➢ Lack of access to potential donors	✓ Create opportunities for economic empowerment and income generation activities for women ✓ Encourage the private sector to provide business skills and empower women to access funds ✓ To equip women to write good business proposals ✓ Advocate for reduction/ eliminate nomination of fees.	✓ Conduct trainings to empower women economically ✓ This will in the long run help the youths to be self-employed and self-reliant as they will be able to generate an income to help them survive without indulging in abuse. ✓ Increase access to funds/IGA/ fundraising/capacity on business planning		
5	**Environmental factors** ➢ Violence ➢ Intimidation and abuse (media being one of the channels) ➢ Corruption Adoption process	✓ The ECZ should develop a code of conduct election procedures ✓ Engage with ECZ/ZP ✓ Positive imaging by the media ✓ Media Engagement	✓ Use reputable role models for women ✓ Knowledge on the policies and laws regarding politics should be widely disseminated ✓ Corrupt adoption should disqualify a party		All Political parties to be involved

6	**Psychological factors** ➢ Cyber bullying and harassment. ➢ Gender Discrimination ➢ Sexual harassment ➢ Lack of Institutional Policy on Gender	✓ Advocate and implement sexual harassment policy Act. ✓ Enhance implementation of sexual harassment policy and disseminate information to the community level.	✓ Create awareness of sexual harassment policy ✓ Collaborate with stakeholders in the promotion of gender equality and youth rights. ✓ Design and implement Gender Awareness for individuals and the wider community. ✓ Sensitize the public on the importance of human rights and women's participation. ✓ Establish male network and provide gender response training.		