BASELINE SURVEY REPORT

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE.

WITH SUPPORT FROM

"Amplifying The Voices of Girls and Young Women in Governance"
supported by: AWDF

Baseline Survey: *'Amplifying the voices of girls and young women in governance'*

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This acknowledgement would not be complete if we failed to acknowledge the input and efforts of the entire AWDF Team for considering supporting this project financially. Their support remains key and vital in advancing the rights of girls and young women in Zimbabwe.

ACRONYMS

AU	**African Union**
AWDF	**African Women's Development Fund**
AYC	**African Youth Charter**
CEDAW	**Convention on the Elimination and Discrimination Against Women**
CRC	**Convention on the Rights of the Child**
FGD	**Focus Group Discussion**
SDGs	**Sustainable Development Goals**
KIIs	**Key Informant Interviews**
RNCYPT	**Regional Network of the Children and Young People Trust**

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Executive Summary

The Amplifying the Voices of Girls and Young Women in Governance project is a ten month African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) funded initiative that is implemented by Regional Network of the Children and Young People Trust (RNCYPT). The project began in December 2015, and the baseline study was conducted in January-February 2016, by means of Questionnaire and focus groups discussions; and covered targeted project areas that are Chinhoyi, Chitungwiza, Kadoma, Mvurwi and Raffingora.

Administration of questionnaire and facilitation of focus group discussions was done by RNCYPT project staff in most cases, although some local partner staff were used as enumerators. The survey reached a final total 311 children, young people and adults in Local City and Town Governance Institutions, Junior Councils and Child and Young People Led Groups.

The baseline survey investigated the number of girls and young women involved in local governance processes versus the number of boys and young men and went further to investigate the number of girls and young women who occupy executive positions in local governance structures such as Junior Councils. The baseline survey investigated the trend of girls and young women's involvement in Junior Councils and Child led groups that facilitate their participation in governance. The survey looked at barriers that hinder effective participation of girls and young women in local governance process and established some of the reasons that cause men to exclude girls and young women when they make decisions. The baseline looked at actions by boys, young men and adult men that block and disempowers girls and young women to participate effectively in governance processes.

The results of this first measurement are described in this baseline report which aims to provide a comprehensive and accurate picture of the situation across the five project areas namely Chinhoyi, Chitungwiza, Kadoma, Mvurwi and Raffingora. The report provides rich insight on the level of participation, barriers that inhibit girls and young women from participating effectively in governance. This baseline survey will serve as a reference point against which future progress and achievements across the project in terms of outcomes will be measured. It is important to note that most findings of the baseline survey are consistent with the assumptions in the project proposal document that girls and young women's participation remains low and often tokenistic.

1.0 Introduction/Project Overview

"Amplifying the Voices of Girls and Young Women in Governance" is a ten-month $26 000 AWDF-funded program including RNCYPT co-fund, implementing an integrated children and young people based approach and strengthening the local governance-based response to the marginalization of girls and young women in governance in 5 districts in Zimbabwe. As the primary implementers of the project, RNCYPT has the overall responsibility for technical and programmatic leadership and co-ordination. District implementation is shared with and supported by partner local authorities, schools and traditional leadership at grass root levels.

The project seeks to ensure that girls and young women participate and influence governance processes at local and national level ensuring that their rights are respected. The project is targeting girls and young women in small towns, rural and resettlement areas. The project focuses on strengthening the capacity of local government structures to encourage and value the participation of girls and young women in various programmes at local level. The key activities of the project include capacitating girls and young women to participate in governance processes, support the inclusion of girls in local governance structures and facilitate the engagement of girls and young women in policy and budget analysis. Moreover, the project is targeting journalists so that they play a key role in disseminating information on the needs of girls and young women.

To achieve this aim, the project activities focus on four objectives:

- To create opportunities for girls and young women to participate in the governance of their rights and empower them to participate in the development of their communities.

- To strengthen the capacity of local government institutions to deliver services and respond to the demands of girls and young women

- To strengthen the capacity of the media to influence policy makers to consider the plight of girls, youth and women in small towns, rural and resettlement areas.

- To strengthen the capacity of the local government structures to encourage/ value the participation of girls and young women in their programmes and be able to respond to their needs.

1.1 Rationale to the study

Customarily girls and young women have faced criticism against any newfound freedoms and they have always been forced back into the kitchen and fields yet they have an important role to play in governance. Girls and young women have persistently called for recognition as active agents in reconstruction of society structures. Zimbabwe has endeavored to include young women in government institutions through constitutional regulations such as the reversed seats quotas within parliament and other affirmative action requirements. Conversely, girls and young women remain among the marginalized groups, hence, minimal or no participation at all in governance.

In many of the cases reviewed, space and ability for girls and young women to participate in initiatives were often constrained by barriers in the household, arising as a result of pre-existing domestic and care roles, discriminatory social norms regarding girls' mobility, and the perceived appropriateness of their involvement in political issues. If girls and young women are able to overcome household level constraints to participation, they may face additional stigmatization and power differences at the community and governance level. Yet, in spite of the many benefits of fully engaging girls and young women in governance, girls and young women still face significant barriers to entering governance structures and shape the decisions and policies that influence their lives. Often, the barriers to girls and young women's participation are social, economic or structural.

According to the 2012 Population Census, the youth population (age 10-30) constitute about 43, 5% of the total population of 13,771,721. Female youths outnumber male ones, thus they have a significant role to play in governance processes. Girls and young women should be empowered to make decisions on matters that affect them by empowering them with free space, free participation and freedom of choice. Girls and young women are among the most vulnerable groups, as a result of this, they have been regarded mostly as victims undermining and ignoring their role in the promotion of good governance.

The progress on efforts towards gender equality in Zimbabwe has been a mixed bag, most success being on the strengthening of a legal framework i.e. ***Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) Section 80***, through a gender responsive constitution. However, there remains a challenge of linking practice at domestic and public level with the constitutional guarantees. When it comes to governance, the representation of women is a problematic element where girls and young women remain marginalized, they are still largely underrepresented in governance structures, and spaces remaining largely male dominated.

As noted in the CRC (Article 12), Sustainable Development Goal (SDG[1]) Goal Number 4 and CEDAW principles, women's empowerment and equal participation with men in power and decision making is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life, and at the core of gender equality and women's empowerment. Girls and young women around the world at every socio-political level see themselves under-represented in governance and far removed from decision making levels. Girls and young women's exclusion 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 boys and young men monopolize the governance process, passing laws which affect society at large, the decision making process does not always balance the interests of the male and female populations.

Therefore, the primary aim of the baseline survey was to investigate and assess the level of participation of girls and young women in governance, forming a benchmark against which progress and impact of the project will be assessed and providing a baseline for monitoring and evaluating the extent to which the project has increased participation of girls and young women in governance and having their voices heard and considered. In addition, the baseline data was collected to inform project implementation and also as a first step in evaluating RNCYPT's achievement of these objectives over time. The baseline survey was conducted in five selected districts in the three focus provinces prior to project initiation. A mixed methods design was used to collect baseline evaluation data, including a participatory-based survey, key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs was conducted in each of the study districts. Only the findings from the questionnaire responses and focus group discussions out of the survey will be presented in this report. The process for conducting this baseline survey highlighted a number of issues related to assessing the participation of girls and young women in governance structures. The baseline was intended to measure change throughout the duration of the project.

At the end of the project, findings from the baseline survey will be compared with end-of-project data. Thus, this report presents findings from the baseline survey only.

1.2 Methods

The baseline survey employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods in order to meet its terms of reference. Two data collection techniques were employed, these included questionnaires and focus group discussions with boys and young men, girls and young women, local government authorities and community members. The questionnaires were administered to children and young people from Junior Councils and Child Led Groups in the age group 15-24 years; the total number of the children who filled out the questionnaires was 281, with 143 being girls and young women and 138 being boys and young men. Total number of adults was 30; 21 women and 9 men. A total of 5 focus group discussions were conducted; one in each project area with an overall of 311(164 girls, young women and women 147 boys, young men and men) participants who were engaged and participated. The data derived from both the techniques was analysed and this analysis provides the balance of this report's content. Qualitative and quantitative data related to outcome indicators is summarised for each project area in this report.

Baseline data was collected from all the three project provinces or areas that is one rural (Raffingora), one peri-urban (Mvurwi) and three urban districts (Chitungwiza, Chinhoyi and Kadoma) were purposively selected from each province as had been proposed by the project implementers. Figure 1 displays the geographic distribution of these provinces and districts.

Figure 1: Data collection locations

The overall purpose of the survey was to gain an understanding of the situation that many girls and young women find themselves in with regards to participating in governance processes at both local and national levels. This survey was designed to obtain a broad view of the political, social and economic concerns and issues facing many girls and young women today in the project areas. Specifically, this study was designed to:

I.   Conduct a needs analysis through a participatory process, sought to create opportunities for girls and young women to participate in the governance and empower them to be involved in the development of their communities.

II.   To gather relevant baseline data for key project indicators to enable the analysis of increased capacity of local government institutions to deliver services and respond to the demands of girls and young women.

III.   Provide baseline data from which to measure and evaluate change over life of the project;

IV.   Elicit accurate data and identify current trends and patterns of participation of girls and young women in governance.

A structured questionnaire was administered to the Senior Council Executives, Junior Councilors and members of child led groups in each study district to obtain information on

access to services, participation forums, perceptions and opinions of local authorities, children and young people. In this case, children/girls were defined as relating to persons below the age of eighteen (18) whilst young people referred to those between the ages of fifteen (15) and twenty-four (24) who were actively involved in the baseline study. The senior council executive is in reference to all adults responsible for making or executing decisions on behalf of the local government. In this survey, random methods were not applied as their results could be potentially ineffective in informing the upcoming project activities but the data collectors or interviewers guided the participants and informants throughout the process as per the Terms of Reference for the baseline survey.

1.3 THE SURVEY

In order to undertake this baseline survey, over 300 children and adults participated from all the five districts, 61 more than the targeted number. The key informants included children and young people from the Junior Councils and Child Led Groups as well as Senior Council officials.

Table 1: Total reach of the baseline survey

Location	Number of Participants
Chinhoyi	65
Chitungwiza	53
Kadoma	82
Mvurwi	68
Raffingora	43
TOTAL	**311**

The above table shows the total number of interviewees or informants per area.

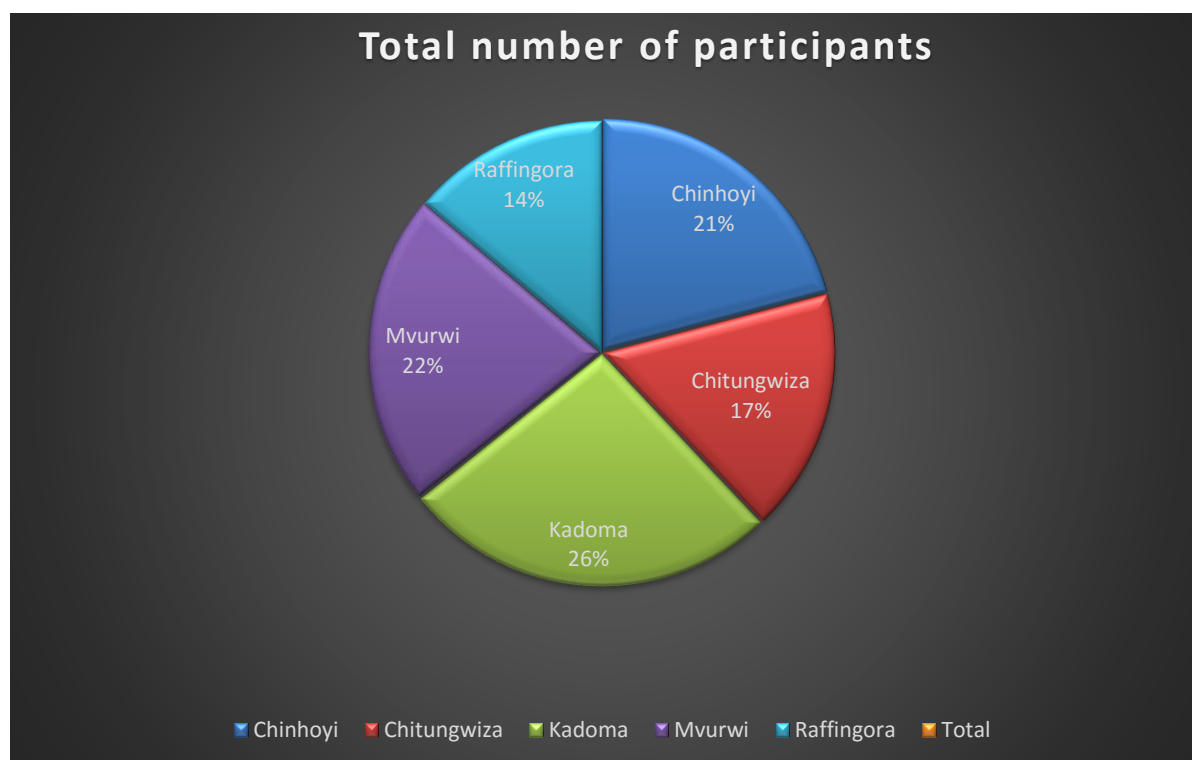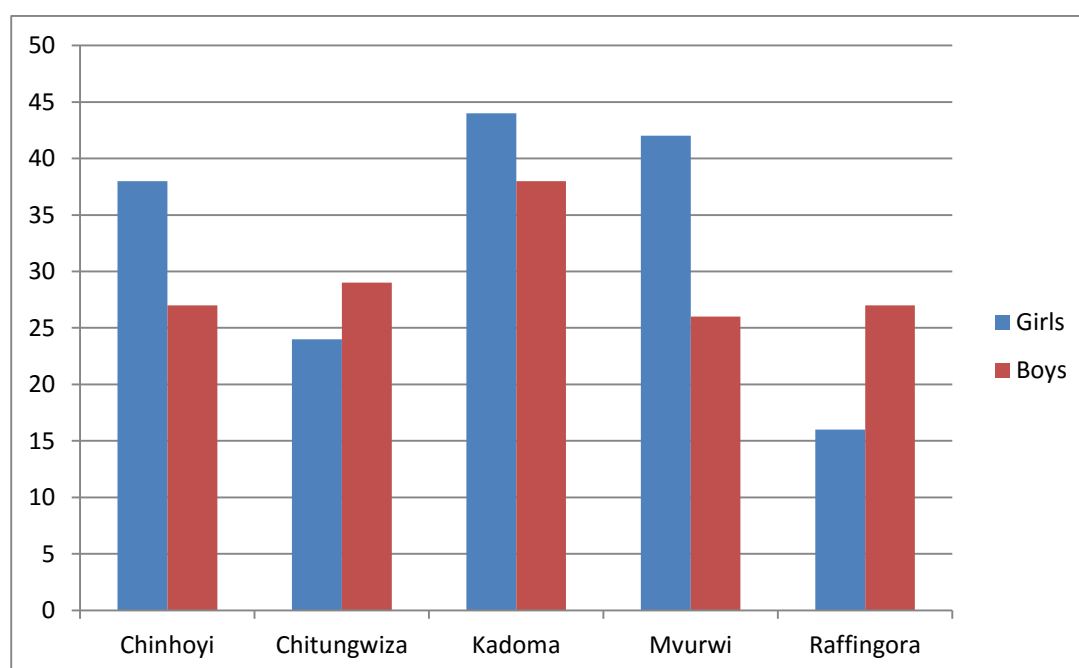**Figure 2: Showing the ratio of participants/informants per area**

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the children and adults who participated in the baseline survey

Location	Number of children and adult participants	Females	Males
Chinhoyi	65	38	27
Chitungwiza	53	24	29
Kadoma	82	44	38
Mvurwi	68	42	26
Raffingora	43	16	27
Total	**311**	**164**	**147**

The above table shows the characteristics of the children, young people and adults who participated in the baseline survey showing their location and sex; the age range being 15-24 years+.

Figure 3: Illustrating the demographic characteristics of key informants and participants

The data collectors of the baseline took approximately 90 minutes to 120 minutes to administer. Questions were asked in English or the local language (Shona) depending on participant preference while those who could not read or write well, received personal support from the trained data collection team.

At the completion of the day of interviewing, the supervising interviewer within each district and her/his team reviewed the completed questionnaires and discussed questions and concerns about the day's interviews. Queries were addressed using field notes. To assure data quality, the supervising interviewer performed random monitoring on the survey proceedings to confirm that the interviews were being carried out as reported.

1.4 Informed and Media Consent

Participants in the interviews were consented prior to the interviews. Assent was sought from the participants through the focal persons in the survey. All the participants consented through signing the informed and media consent forms which would allow them to participate in the survey and have their photos captured during the survey.

1.5 Implementation

Survey data was collected by the internal staff of RNCYPT, field coordinators and its district lead partners. The interviewers conducted the survey on the basis of demonstrated capacity in community and governance-structure based survey administration experience, fluency in English and the relevant local languages.

Interviewers were trained on the study protocol and data collection instruments and helped to pre-test the instruments. Training was led by the Senior Management Team and an External Research Expert on a voluntary basis. The 2-day interviewer training covered the following:

1) The ethics of research confidentiality and obtaining voluntary informed consent
2) Discussion of the protocol
3) Discussion of the relevant cultural contexts for data collectors
4) Review of the team member roles
5) Review of the study instruments (qualitative and quantitative) and informed consent procedures
6) Pre-testing the data collection and analysis instruments and process internally.

RNCYPT head office staff and volunteers led the data collection activities in each district and the team leaders provided overall supervision before, during and after data collection while the Programs Director provided guidance to the teams. The Field Co-ordinators supervised the community engagement process, contacting all stakeholders involved in the study.

1.6 Data Management

After survey forms were reviewed, they were maintained in a locked box in each district under the responsibility of the supervisor of the data collectors. All forms were then brought to Harare (RNCYPT Main Office) for data entry and storage after the data collection was completed in each project district.

All forms and field notes will be stored for five years after the end of the study and shredded or burned at the end of the storage period.

Microsoft Excel was used to create screens for data entry and verification for high accuracy data capture and management. After entry, reports were generated using SPSS Statistics v 17.0 for basic logic, range, and missing data checks. After all data were entered and cleaned, the

data were locked for analysis under the supervision of the RNCYPT Operations, Human Resources and IT Director.

1.7 Data analysis

Data from the baseline survey were analyzed using SPSS v17 and other tools. Means, ranges, standard deviations and percentages were calculated for continuous variables while frequencies and percentages were calculated for categorical variables. Results are presented as they related to each survey objective. Amplifying the voices of girls and young women's Needs Assessment Baseline Assessment Survey Results, February 2016.

1.8 Key Definitions

1.8.1 What is governance?

There is no singular definition of governance as the dimensions and interpretations of governance vary across inter-governmental and donor organisations. 'Governance' refers to the processes through which a state exercises power and the relationships between the state and citizens. The state has the responsibility to perform a core set of duties that allow society to function and exist. In doing so, it forges a relationship with its citizens (Plan UK, 2012).

1.8.2 Democratization and Democratic Governance

A key characteristic of well-functioning states all over the world, Africa inclusive, is democratic. Strong elements of democracy are people's participation in governance through regular elections and a vibrant civil society. If the new efforts at re-democratization in Africa are to lead to genuine democracy there is a need to create a democratic culture, a culture that is receptive to political competition through popular participation not just in elections but also in decision making. In a democratic culture, the spirit of open and public dialogue is critical. Democratic governance requires an open government and easy access by citizens to the government.

1.9 Policies governing the participation of girls and young women

The AU process on Agenda 2063 is premised on transparency, openness and participatory with all stakeholders; including citizens having the opportunity to participate and provide inputs into the various processes at various levels. Some of the recommendations brought forward at the AU summit held in 2015 for African governments; on ensuring the emerging leadership of Africa's young women and girls towards agenda 2063 were: to achieve equal participation and representation of women and young girls at all levels of Africa's political leadership and decision making structures, including in government,

judicial and security institutions, and private institutions, with the aim of ensuring women occupy at least half of elected public offices at all levels and half of management positions in the public and private sector. Consider implementing quota systems to help achieve these aims, as well as establishing gender mechanisms and offices in all government Ministries and institutions. Also, strengthen and ensure the active participation of young women in all governance structures and processes, including those related to conflict prevention and resolution, reconciliation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, justice and security sector reform, elections management, constitutional reforms, countering terrorism and violent extremism, and post conflict reconstruction and development.

The constitutions in each of the countries in Africa guarantee a range of rights. While these are not sufficient to guarantee effective participation in local governance, they are a necessary precondition for enabling free and effective participation. The constitutions in Africa are also in some senses the result of citizens' participation. However, despite all this girls and young women remain marginalized when it comes to participating in governance structures. Furthermore, the existence of constitutional guarantees is not always sufficient to ensure effective participation.

The African Youth Charter Article 23 (b) on Girls and Young women states that all State parties guarantee that girls and young women are able to take part effectively, actively and equally with boys at all levels of social, educational, economic, political, cultural, civic life and leadership as well as scientific endeavours and Article 23 (c): all states must *"Institute programmes to make girls and young women aware of their rights and of opportunities to participate as equal members of society"*.

2.0 Key Findings of the Survey

This section presents data on girls and young women's participation in governance; zeroing on the obstacles they face when it comes to participating in governance structures, their representation in governance, representation in executive governance positions and budget and allocation of resources to girls and young women's issues. Data is presented using the thematic approach and analysed in relation to the findings indicating the participation of girls and young women in governance structures.

2.1 Obstacles to girls and young women's participation in governance

Girls and young women themselves are not a homogeneous group; there are major differences between them based on class, race, ethnicity, cultural background and education. The exclusion

of girls and young 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, passing laws which affect society at large, the decision making process does not always balance the interests of the male and female populations.

Girls and young women who want to enter governance structures find that the political, public, cultural and social environment is often unfriendly or even hostile to them. Even a quick glance at the current composition of political decision makers in any region provides evidence that girls and young women still face numerous obstacles in articulating and shaping their own interests. It surfaced in the findings that girls and young women face a number of obstacles when it comes to participating in governance structures. These are sub categorised into following headings: patriarchy, socialisation, and lack of confidence, persistent under-representation of girls and young women in governance and the view of girls and young women in relation to their participation in governance.

2.1.1 Patriarchy

The ideology that "girls and young women do not 'belong' in governance structures continues to permeate many societies and cultures. This ideology may manifest itself in social attitudes, or institutionalized discrimination both of which severely limit the ability and indeed the desire of girls and young women to participate in governance at any level. Patriarchy was cited by most girls and young women as the root of many other barriers restricting their participation in governance, by entrenching traditional gender roles, and limiting their professional, financial, and political opportunities. Patriarchy further underscores many of the other barriers which may significantly hinder not only girls and young women's opportunity to participate, but equally their capacity. It manifests itself implicitly in the way girls and young women are underrepresented in terms of their participation in governance structures.

2.1.2 Socialisation

Socialisation was mentioned by most girls and young women as a problematic element. Societies are on the whole based on roles divided according to sex which relegates girls and young women to the private sphere. From a young age, young girls are socialised and trained for household tasks, how to take care of their young brothers and sisters; they are prepared to

demonstrate calmness, patience, obedience, home loving habits among others. Because gender roles are socially determined, gender role ideology does not only create duality of femininity and masculinity, it also places them in hierarchal fashion in which female sex is generally valued less than male sex because of their socially ascribed roles in reproductive sphere. The gender status quo is maintained through low resource allocation to girls and young women's human development by the state, society and the family. This is reflected in the social indicators which reflect varying degrees of gender disparities in governance. Girls and young women also find it hard to participate in governance due to limited time available to them because of their roles in the private spheres. With their primary roles competing domestic responsibilities and care work, they are left with little time to participate in governance. These concepts are not helpful as they make governance by default an 'exclusive preserve' for men.
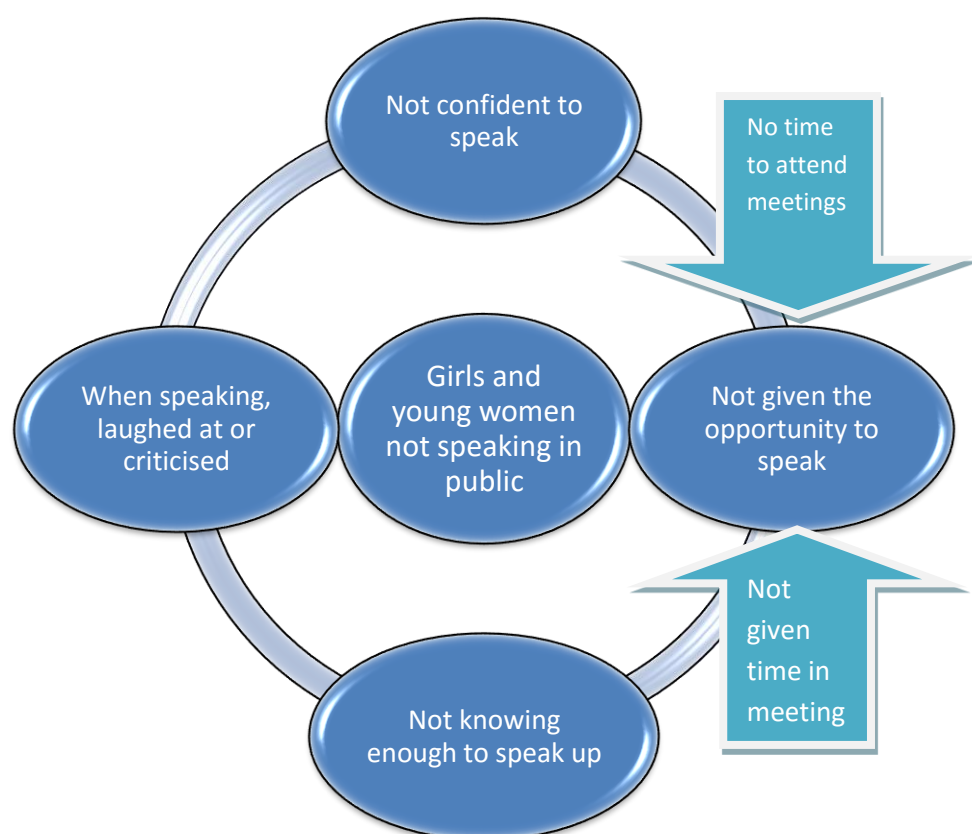
2.1.3 Fear and Stigma

It surfaced from the survey that girls and young women often spend much of their time fighting to secure their right to participation, severely crippling their capacity to fully contribute in governance. While girls and young women may successfully secure their place in governance, they face incredible obstacles as they exercise their newfound participatory right. The experiences of girls and young women in governance are diverse, but the common factor remains the stigmatization with which they have often met. On several topics, the responses from girls and young women were inconsistent with those of the boys and young men. Boys and young men perceived their actions as encouraging girls and young women who experienced this as intimidation. Boys and young men responded that they gave girls and young women opportunities, but that they are too shy, scared or don't know enough to speak up. Girls and young women responded that they were not given the time, and often laughed at or criticised for 'saying the wrong thing'. The findings of the study reveal that although women are present in governance structures, they are rarely involved in a decision-making capacity.

Both girls and boys in the five project areas were asked if girls and young women were able to speak out and express their views in 'public' discussions. Boys and young men responded that they give girls and young women opportunities, but that they are too shy, scared or don't know enough to speak up. Girls and young women responded that they were not given the time, and often laughed at or criticised for 'saying the wrong thing. Girls and young women frequently responded that they do not have the opportunity to effectively participate, with experiences of being put-down if they tried. They responded that boys and young men do not ask them to be

involved, indicating that discrimination and stigmatisation of women remain powerful barriers to girls and young women actively participating. Girls and young women were identified as having the least opportunity to participate in developmental and governance meetings. When the baseline survey was conducted in some parts of the project areas girls and young women were unlikely to attend and even less likely to actively engage, creating a barrier to engaging in the project and learning.

Figure 4: Showing barriers to women's speaking up at public meetings

The above chart is an illustration of why girls and young women do not participate in public meetings.

Almost all boys and young men described girls and young women as lazy; they don't talk for fear of being wrong, can't resolve problems and just sit and shake their heads, shy and not having the courage to speak up. As illustrated by the chart, girls and young women's participation in governance is low. Boys and young men arguably pointed out that, girls and young women are often too shy to talk even when they are supported and encouraged so that they have the courage to speak up. It also emerged from the survey that when girls and young women attend meetings they don't really talk. One respondent accordingly explains:

> *"During meetings there are a lot of girls and young women but they don't talk, they just listen. The reason is that they're shy and nervous, they don't have the intelligence to discuss matters and they're worried about getting things wrong".*

Based on the findings from the baseline, girls and young women are involved in governance only to the extent that they are mandated, but this does not mean that they are involved in or able to influence decision making.

2.1.4 Lack of Confidence

Lack of confidence is one of the main reasons for girls and young women's under-representation in governance. With confidence and determination girls and young women can reach the highest levels in governance structures. That is why girls and young women should believe in themselves and should do away with the widespread perception that men have to be their leaders. Girls and young women are equal to and have the same potential as boys and young men, but only if they can fight for their rights. As noted from the survey, girls and young women are very good campaigners and organizers, but fear sometimes prevents them from contesting for leadership positions and from participating in governance.

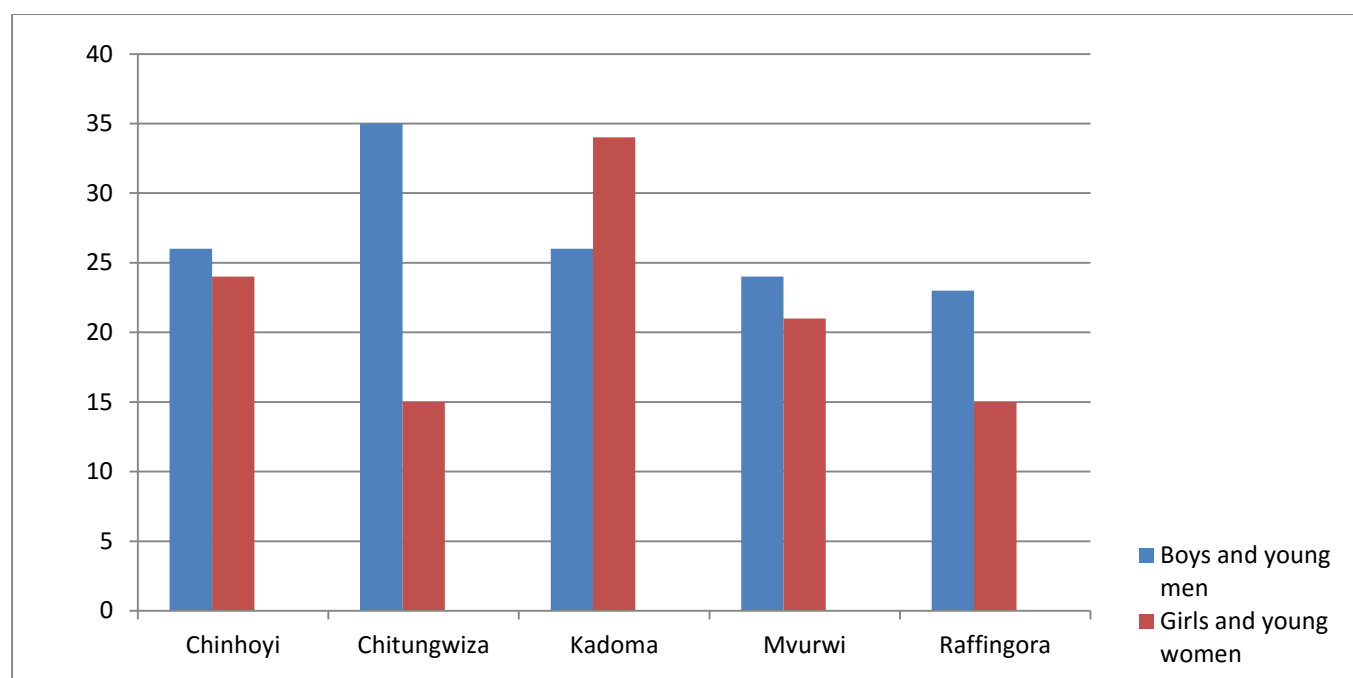**Figure 5:** *Reasons for lack of confidence amongst girls and young women*

Figure 5: illustrating reasons for lack of confidence amongst girls and young women.

2.1.5 Persistent under-representation of girls and young women in governance

Girls and young women remain underrepresented in decision making, at local as well as national level. Leadership positions are subject to stiff competition and tend to favour those already in power. Girls and young women's aspirations to be involved in governance structures signal a reduction in their chances of keeping or acquiring these coveted positions for male leadership positions in governance structures. Furthermore, given the gendered roles in the societies, which relegate girls and young women to the private sphere, boys and young men are hesitant to put girls and young women up front for fear of not achieving expected objectives and sometimes they are rarely taken into consideration.

The internalization of principles which relegate girls and young women to second place and limit them to the deprived sphere, lead girls and young women to perceive political activity as being the favoured domain of boys and young men. Some thus end up being disinterested in governance issues. Others are persuaded that boys and young men's predominance in governance is related to their physical and psychological attributes, and so choose to engage themselves in governance while imitating the behaviour of boys and young men, further reinforcing a certain gender based stereotyping in governance and thus discouraging other girls and young women from taking part in these activities.

Fig 6: Girls and young women's representation in the Junior Council and Child Led Groups

The above graph illustrates the current composition of girls, young women, boys and young men in the Junior Councils and Child Led Groups
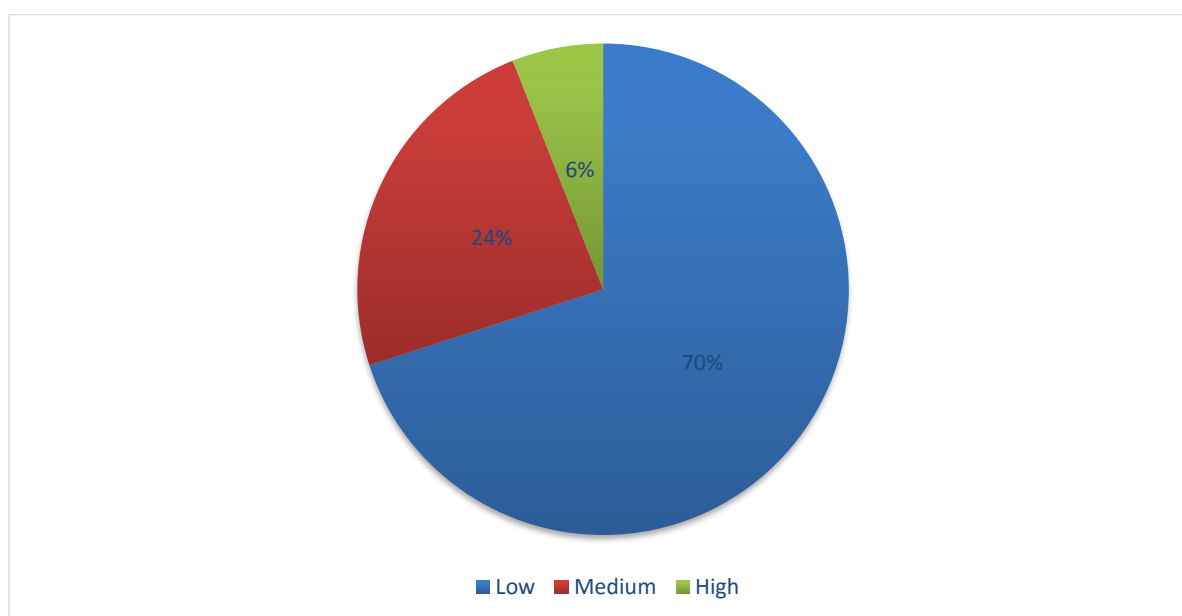
2.2 The view of girls and young women in relation to their participation in governance

The research found out that girls and young women see their role in governance as limited and undermined yet they can do so much in terms of governance. Girls and young women feel they are not taken seriously and their role continues to be swept under the carpet. However, girls and young women feel they can make positive contributions in society as a result of their role in governance. The underlying assumption is that if girls and young women effectively and meaningfully participate in governance structures they will help in designing sustainable strategies that are inclusive in realising women's rights. As such, girls and young women should be included in the governance cycle. Girls and young women should not rely only on gender based roles to participate in governance structures but should be empowered to demand and hold more public and official places at the centre; mainstreaming decision making at local and national level from a young age such it becomes a culture.

The mass media deserve to be called the fourth branch of power because of their influence on public opinion and public consciousness. The media in any society have at least two roles: as a reporter of current events; and as an informer of public opinion, thereby fostering different

points of view. Often, the media tends to minimize coverage of events and organizations of interest to girls and young women. The media does not adequately inform the public about the rights and roles of girls and young women in society; nor do they usually engage in measures to promote or improve girls and young women's positions. Most of the nation's media have yet to deal with the fact that girls and young women, as a rule, are the first to be affected by political, social and economic changes and reforms taking place in a country.

Figure 7: *Illustrating the rate of the views of girls and young women's participation in governance.*
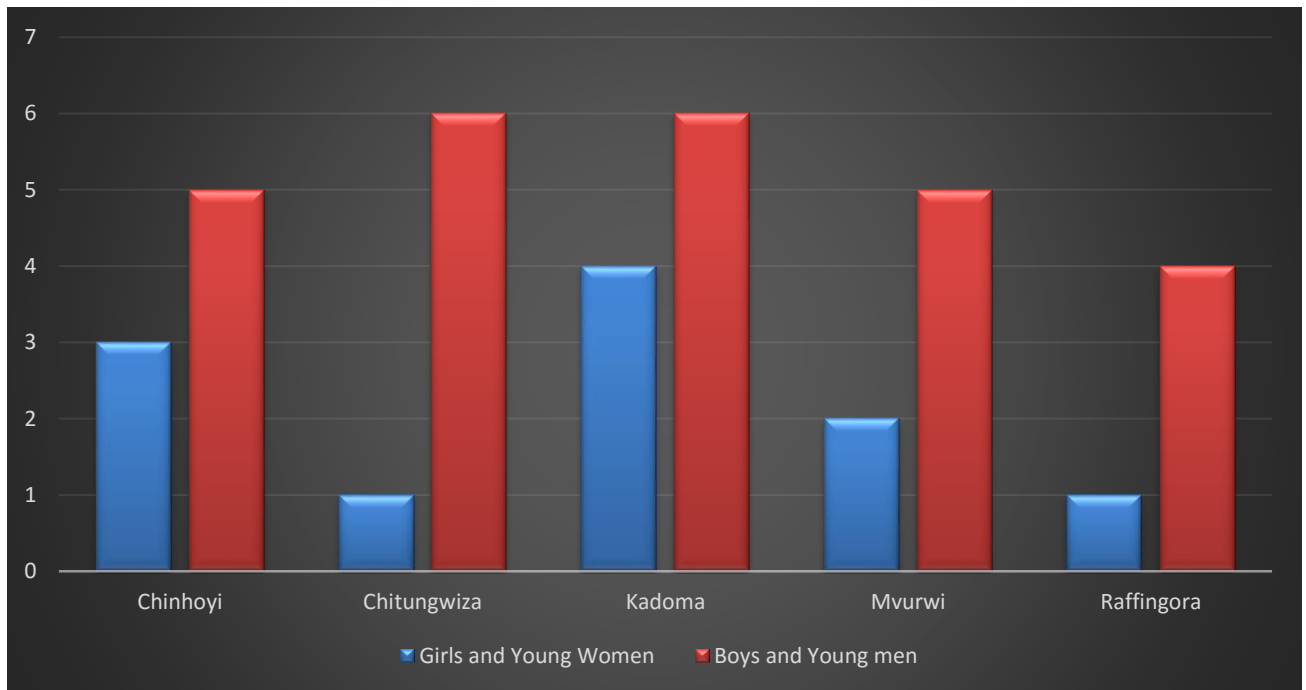

The presented pie chart shows the views of girls and young women in relation to their participation in governance. From the findings, it was clear that girls and young women's participation in governance is very low. However, some of the girls and young women were of the view that they participate but that their participation was just medium. Conversely, only a few managed to recap their participation as high.

2.3 Girls and young women's potential towards governance structures

The data collected shows girls and young women with their energies and enthusiasms do have incredible potential for governance. Girls and young women have so much responsibility and because of their feminine side they can love, are responsible and caring especially towards the other people. These capacities can be developed to reinforce the values of cooperation in the society. Girls and young women are in a better position to advocate for social change and call

for an end to patriarchy and structures limiting and hindering effective governance in Zimbabwe.

Figure 8: Showing the representation of girls and young women in executive governance posts/positions in Junior Councils

2.4 Recommendations

- Provide opportunities for girls and young women to participate by removing barriers

- The evidence presented in the findings also suggests that girls and young women need proper induction and capacity development to enhance their skills to be involved in governance structures. There are obstacles that lie in the paths of girls and young women to partake in governance. The issues that emerge here show that it is not that girls and young women are not capable of participating in governance structures but that they need a lot of support in order for them to cope with the environment they encounter.

- Early intervention through support to girls' leadership is essential to girls and young women leaders. Girls and young women's individual and collective leadership can progressively change discriminatory gender norms. Girls and young women leaders act as role models and can normalise the idea and practice of girls and young women holding power. Girls and young women acting together can shift adverse social and legal norms in their community and polity.

- Continue providing ongoing, regular training for girls and young women. Intervention through training and empowerment of girls and young women on their rights is needed to increase women's participation in governance, and on the factors that explain when and how girls and young women leaders of all types are able to advance their interests and change others' ideas and behaviour.

- Meaningful social changes, such as shifting patriarchal beliefs, norms and systems takes considerable time and require constant reinforcement and support. Starting from a young age girls and young women are taught to be passive, obedient and to defer to men. Men are taught that they must make the decisions and are naturally better placed to be leaders. Many people still do not put relevance to amplifying the voices of girls and young women in governance.

- Budget and allocation of resources to girls and young women's issues is important. If there is one indicator of a government's or any other institution's commitment to social justice, it is its allocation of budgetary resources for women. Often governments and institutions are very quick to tick on the checklist that they have signed and ratified international instruments and put policies and laws in place that promote social justice for women, but they seldom match this with the necessary budgetary allocations that actually translate the signature into transformation of women's lives.

- There is real need to continuously engage and advocate for resources allocation to girls and women's issues from within family, local authorities and national budgets so as to counteract the challenges that withhold girls and young from realizing their full potential. Notwithstanding the gains and achievements, several challenges, exist, including the current political, social and economic environment, and the brain-drain that has depleted the country's human resource base.

- Flexible programming, which enables girls and young women to focus on locally determined objectives and on what works and why, rather than on problems or deficits and where funders have a goal oriented rather than project oriented focus, and appropriate monitoring and evaluation.

- Support establishment of young women safe places at community level, where they can meet and discuss issues that concern them, build their self-confidence and capacitate each other on governance related issues. Safe places will facilitate establishment of strong women's groups that can demand access to their rights and occupation of spaces that have a direct effect on their lives.

- Provide economic empowerment for girls and young women projects. This would build financial literacy of girls and young women that facilitate them to advance their potential and become influential women in their societies.

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