

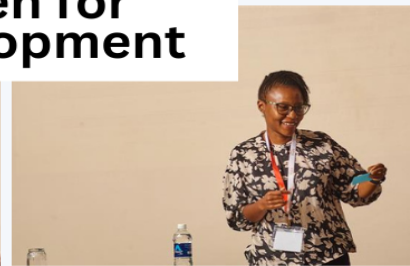


Building a Concerted Movement of Youths and Women for Democracy and Development Initiative

Policy and Advocacy Lab and Project Closeout Meeting Report



Building a Concerted Movement of Youths and Women for Democracy and Development



10 December 2024

Harare

1. Introduction and Background

The Centre for Civic Engagement for 11 months has been running an initiative focused on Building a Concerted Movement of Youths and Women for Democracy and Development, whose aim was to nurture women's and youths' activism and advocacy capacities as well as help in building sustainable and visible organisations/platforms of youth and women who focus on inclusive democracy. We started with 16 participants from various backgrounds working in the areas of democracy, women and youth empowerment, development and technology, and women's rights. The program was split into the following components: the incubation of youth/women-led platforms and organisations; improving the advocacy capacities of participants through online and face-to-face training on civic engagement and developing an advocacy strategy together with communities through the three (3) step policy advocacy lab process, which also was a platform to help foster more inclusive community dialogue on what which is a key component to advancing more inclusive democracy and development in Zimbabwe.

The workshop held on the 10th of December 2024 was part of the process to complete the final two steps of the policy advocacy lab and to also formally closing out the project and hand out certificates of completion to participants.

1.1 Recap of Stage 1 of the Policy Advocacy Lab – Naming the Problem

The first stage of the PAL was the naming of the public problem that participants together with their communities would want to address as a group. They chose lack of access to education as the problem affecting their various communities.

Participants and their communities then moved on to gathering and clustering concerns they had about the lack of access to education. This process involved getting into communities and asking questions like 'how the problem affects the individual and the community at large', and 'what could be the cause of this problem in the first place?' The impacts of the lack of access to education gathered from different communities ranged from livelihoods and social security, economic challenges and missed opportunities, and lack of quality education to the increase in societal misconceptions around the value/importance of education. The communities engaged by participants also identified some of the causes of lack of access to education and these were clustered into the following groups - an underfunded public education system, uneven resource

allocation/distribution between rural and urban schools, weak/poor infrastructure, and social and cultural inequalities.

During Stage 1 the massive scale of the problem illustrated in the timeline developed to show the history and scale of the problem highlighted that addressing the problem required a diverse number of stakeholders. The stakeholders were categorised into two distinct groups of state and non-state actors including the community itself, and participants argued that they are at the centre of any action that needs to be taken to address their concerns.

2. Worksop Proceedings

2.1 Welcome and Recap of What Has Been Done in the Lab

Matron welcomed the participants to the meeting. Participants were asked to introduce the next person sitting next to them and tell the group what one thing they were passionate about in their work area. This helped to see the diversity of the people in the room and the areas they were working on. It also showed how the group has grown to know each other, interact, and manifest strong movements. A recap of the policy advocacy lab process conducted online paved the way for a background to discuss the actual business of the day which was the finalisation of the lab process and mapping the way forward.

2.2 Stage 2 - Creating a Framework and Possible Solutions

During the discussion, Eddah highlighted the importance of multiple actors in development. They all have a role or responsibility to play. The participants were divided into two groups and tasked with clustering the solutions to previously identified problems.

The participants engaged in a collaborative activity to organize and categorize the solutions identified in the previous exercise. This process involved clustering the solutions and aligning them with the responsible actors. The solutions were systematically classified into three main categories: National Government, Local Government, and Community.

By categorizing the solutions and assigning them to the appropriate levels of responsibility, the participants aimed to create a clear and actionable roadmap. This approach ensures that each stakeholder understands their role and can contribute effectively to the collective effort of addressing the identified challenges affecting the education sector.

Table 1: Clustering the Solutions and Who Can Lead Implementation

National Government	Community	Local Government
Optimization of the already available resources to ensure that they are spent efficiently	Implement after school learning programs	Strengthen gender equity trainings targeting traditional leaders.
Separation of powers between parliament and government.	Community led advocacy to influence an inclusive education curriculum.	Separation of powers between parliament and government.
Improve infrastructure in schools, including building new ones.	Inclusive learning spaces for children living with disabilities	Improve on accountability and transparency.
Improve monitoring and evaluation frameworks for educational policies.	Improve monitoring and evaluation frameworks for educational policies.	Improve monitoring and evaluation frameworks
Increase the number and professional development programs for teachers that focus on upskilling and innovative teaching methods.	Improve accountability and transparency.	Optimization of the already available resources to ensure that they are spent efficiently
Review the education curriculum. For example, the need to ground CALA to local contexts especially the digital aspects which is leaving a lot of rural students behind.	Appoint independent oversight bodies.	Review of the curriculum to be more inclusive.
Provide specialized training for teachers in official languages to ensure effective communication and teaching, especially in multilingual contexts.		
Enact and enforce strict laws that protect children’s right to education, ensuring that no child is denied this fundamental right		
Regulate the privatization of education		
A corporate social responsibility law to address the issue of limited funding.		

2.3 Key Discussions Around Implementation of Solutions

Participants highlighted that while amongst the three actors/groups, there were definite leads for the implementation of the suggested solutions – even policy solutions – all categories of stakeholders had to be involved and engaged. Some of the issues highlighted were:

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** This process should involve all actors to ensure accountability and transparency.
- **Community Involvement:** Emphasize the role of the community in addressing their educational challenges. The community should be the starting point for all initiatives.
- **Government Consultation:** The government should consult communities before reviewing educational curricula to ensure they meet local needs.
- **Alignment with Industry:** The education sector must align with industry demands to ensure students are prepared for the workforce.
- **Diversify Funding:** Explore local philanthropy and other funding sources to go beyond the current 20% allocation of the Dakar declaration.
- **Transparency in Allocation:** Provide clarity on how the 20% funding is allocated and ensure it is used effectively.

- **Follow-up on Civic Engagements:** Ensure that civic engagements are followed up to confirm that funds are received and utilized properly.

3. Developing an Advocacy Plan

The facilitator outlined the nine (9) steps that could be used to develop an advocacy plan to run an advocacy campaign to influence policy. The nine steps were:

1. Developing Advocacy Goals
2. Developing Advocacy Objectives
3. Identifying Your Audiences
4. Building Advocacy Partnerships
5. Messages and Media
6. Taking Action
7. Identifying Resources and Gaps
8. Evaluating Your Advocacy
9. Taking Your First Steps

Note: For full details of the presentation slides, on the 9 steps go to:

<https://incubation.sivoinstitute.net/policy-advocacy-lab-and-close-out-session/>

3.1 Group Work Around Developing an Advocacy Plan

Steps 1 and 2: What is your Advocacy Ask

- The efficient use of resources (yes the 20% threshold has been met as per the Dakar Declaration but will it be spent well on improving infrastructure and quality of teacher training?)
- Distribution to be in a human design centred, also based on needs for equitable distribution
- Investing in local research to know who is affected the most

Long-term Goal

- Less reliance on development partners and more reliance on local resources to drive change

Group Work

Problem: Addressing the Lack of Sustainable Funding for Public Education

Objective: Enhance access to quality education.

Approach:

1. **Conduct a Baseline Survey:** Gather data to identify current challenges and develop data-driven solutions.
2. **Map Stakeholders:** Identify and document stakeholders and their areas of focus.

3. **Engage Stakeholders:** Collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including government bodies and community organizations.
4. **Draft a Position Paper:** Develop a comprehensive position paper outlining the proposed solutions and strategies.
5. **Establish an Independent Education Fund:** Create a fund dedicated to supporting sustainable education initiatives independent from the initial 20% allocation.
6. **Monitor and Evaluate:** Continuously monitor and evaluate the implementation process to ensure effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.

Step 3: Mapping of Key Stakeholders

The participants were assigned the task of identifying and mapping relevant stakeholders involved in the development of their strategy. They were encouraged to be as specific as possible in their identification process.

Table 2: Key Stakeholders that need to be targeted

Group 1- Budget Allocation	Group 2 – Improving financing for education
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education	Ministry of Finance
Ministry of Finance and Development	Ministry of Education
Ministry of Secondary and Tertiary Education	Ministry of Industry and Commerce
	Parliamentarians' committees on education
	Pressure points, research, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, social and traditional media,

Step 4; Building alliances and Partnerships

Eddah presented the importance of building partnerships

- See others as allies and not competitors
- The space is competitive due to limited funding

Step 5: Creating an Effective Advocacy Message

- The message should be clear – what is the advocacy ask?

Step 6: How best can you get the message delivered? What are your options for action?

Quiet diplomacy

1. One can leverage informal meetings with decision-makers to pitch their ideas and concerns
2. Testimony – present before boards or parliamentary committees or even bring members of the community to testify on their experiences on why the policy is important.

Public campaign strategies

1. Writing and publishing reports to the public the messaging in the reports should be clearer for public consumption.
2. Leveraging social media campaigns can help to reach a bigger audience.

Step 7 Identifying Resource Gaps

1. The gap analysis takes into consideration what already exists (looking internally and externally) this also includes research on what is missing and who is needed to fill the gaps. It also takes into consideration what action is needed to reach the desired goal. This mapping exercise will ensure that there is a solid plan to fill in the gaps and produce something more satisfying.

Step 8 Evaluating your Advocacy

1. The most important question to ask at this stage is why evaluate the advocacy? This enables the advocacy to be effective and to identify the reasons behind it. It also allows for speculation on who the potential allies are and what actions are needed as stepping stones in delivering the advocacy.

Step 9 Taking your first steps

In the **next month**: Achieve internal consensus on the advocacy plan.

- Develop a comprehensive 'to-do' list.
- Assign clear responsibilities for each task.
- Establish a work calendar for the year.
- Motivate and excite the team

In the **next 3 months**:

- Transform the strategy plan into an action plan
- Understand the political landscape
- Engage allies
- Initiate research

In the **next 6 months**:

- Advocate for a concrete proposal.
- Complete all basic research and develop materials
- Meet with key decision-makers and expand beyond allies

Reflections from the participants

1. **Simplicity and Clarity for the 9 Steps:** In the meeting, participants emphasized the importance of ensuring that the nine steps outlined in our process are both simple and clear. This approach helps prevent confusion and ensures that all team members can easily understand and follow the steps.
2. **Quiet Diplomacy:** The concept of quiet diplomacy was appreciated during the discussions. Quiet diplomacy involves leveraging informal setups and behind-the-

scenes negotiations to achieve desired outcomes without the need for public or organized efforts.

- 3. Developing the Goals and Objectives:** A crucial part of the meeting was focused on developing clear and achievable goals and objectives. Setting well-defined goals provides a roadmap for the team, guiding their efforts and ensuring everyone is working towards the same end.

Question and Answer

One of the participants asked Dr Murisa about his thoughts on compulsory Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a means of gathering complementary funding for education. In his response he gave the participants four (4) main points to put into consideration while seeking to address the limited funding challenge in education.

- 1. Lack of Trust:** Lack of trust is a significant issue that can undermine efforts to secure and effectively utilize funding for education. When stakeholders, including donors, parents, and educators, do not trust the entities responsible for managing educational funds, it can lead to reduced financial support and cooperation. Building trust requires transparency in financial management, consistent communication, and demonstrated accountability. Regular audits, public reporting of fund usage, and community engagement can help rebuild and maintain trust.
- 2. Governance of the Fund:** Effective governance of educational funds is crucial to ensure that resources are allocated and used efficiently. This involves establishing clear guidelines and structures for fund management, even while working within the government framework. Instead of excluding government involvement, it's essential to implement robust checks and balances, such as independent oversight bodies, to monitor fund usage and reduce the risk of corruption and mismanagement. However, governance of this fund cannot take place without the government as one of the key stakeholders.
- 3. Improved Accountability:** Accountability in managing resources is vital for ensuring that educational funds are used for their intended purposes. This can be achieved by establishing transparent financial reporting systems, conducting regular audits, and setting up mechanisms for stakeholders to report misuse of funds. By holding officials

and institutions accountable, the education sector can maximize the impact of available resources and build credibility among donors and the community.

- 4. Appreciating Power and Interest:** Understanding the political landscape and the interests of various stakeholders is critical for implementing effective educational reforms. In some political contexts, achieving certain goals may be challenging due to conflicting interests and power dynamics. It's important to strategically navigate these complexities, building alliances and leveraging influence to advocate for necessary changes while being realistic about what can be achieved.
- 5. Push for Increased Allocations:** Advocating for increased budget allocations for education is essential to address funding gaps. This involves lobbying government officials, engaging with policymakers, and mobilizing public support to prioritize education in the national budget. Presenting compelling evidence of the long-term benefits of investing in education can help persuade decision-makers to allocate more resources to this critical sector.
- 6. Improved Oversight of Funds:** Enhanced oversight of funds allocated to the Ministry of Education is necessary to prevent wastage and ensure efficient use of resources. Establishing independent monitoring bodies, implementing rigorous financial controls, and fostering a culture of accountability within the ministry can help ensure that funds are directed towards impactful educational initiatives.
- 7. Adopt a Low-Cost Model for Building Schools:** Implementing a low-cost model for constructing schools can help stretch limited resources further. This might involve using cost-effective building materials, innovative architectural designs, and community labour to reduce construction costs. Partnerships with local organizations and international NGOs can also provide additional funding and support for building schools in underserved areas.
- 8. Addressing Underfunding:** The reference to 20% may not necessarily be low but rather underfunded highlights the need for a comprehensive analysis of funding requirements. It's important to assess whether the allocated budget genuinely meets the educational sector's needs or if it is insufficient. Addressing underfunding involves

advocating for realistic budgeting based on thorough needs assessments and ensuring that funding levels are adequate to provide quality education for all children.

4. Closing Remarks from Dr Murisa

In closing, Dr Murisa shared with participants that advocacy and strategic development are essential components in driving change and achieving organizational goals. Participants were encouraged that as they embark on this journey, it is important to recognize that it is just the beginning. Advocacy involves effectively utilizing available resources and channels to promote and support different causes in their communities. One critical aspect of this strategy is cutting travel expenses, which often consume a significant portion of the budget. By reallocating these funds and reducing unnecessary travel, leaders can better align their priorities and ensure that resources are used more efficiently. Additionally, addressing mismatched priorities, especially in the context of travel, allows us to focus on what truly matters and make better use of our resources. This comprehensive approach to advocacy and strategy makes it possible to maximize impact and drive sustainable progress.

5. Next Steps

Participants were encouraged to continue sharing success stories, which would encourage others to continue building democracies. They were also encouraged to share stories of failure which may help you in restructuring the strategy and continue to build a strong organisation. It was emphasised that the closure of the program does not mean shutting doors and room for collaboration, engagement, and further networking.

Annexure:

Annex 1 – List of Participants

Name	Organisation/Initiative
Karen Manzera	Pro-Democracy and Human Right Activist
Evans Dakwa	All for Climate Action (AFCA)
Jacqueline Ndlovu	Girl Empowerment Trust
Rumbidzai Chizarura	Disability and Young Women Advocate
Makanaka Mavesere	Bringing Joy Love Life
Asher Mutandiro	Global Citizenship Education Zimbabwe
Sheanesu Kwenda	Vendors Initiative for Social and Economic Transformation (VISET)
Ashlee Nhliziyo	Lunia Centre for Youths
Tinashe Matika	Hwange Youth Empowerment Initiative
Unika Kombora	ZIMCODD
Tapiwanashe Hadzizi	Young African Intellectuals
Juliet Mukoki	Lawyer
Kumbirai Kahiya	Girls and Women Empowerment Network

Annex 2: Program

Time	Activity
0900hrs – 0915hrs	Welcome and Introductions Matron Muchena
0915hrs – 1000hrs	Re-cap of Policy Advocacy Lab Process So Far - Stage 1 Outputs and Master Classes Matron Muchena and Eddah Jowah
1000hrs- 1030hrs	Stage 2a - Creating a Framework Identifying possible actions to address the problem
1030hrs – 1045hrs	Tea Break
1045hrs – 1145hrs	Stage 2b. Gathering Possible Policy Actions
1145 hrs – 1300hrs	Stage 3 - Developing an Advocacy Plan and carrying out Advocacy 9 Stages of Developing a Policy Advocacy Strategy
1300hrs – 1400hrs	Lunch
1400hrs – 1500hrs	9 Stages of Developing a Policy Advocacy Strategy (cont....)
1500hrs – 1515hrs	Reflections on PAL Process
1515hrs – 1545hrs	Close out of the Building of a Concerted Movement of Women and Youth for Democracy and Development Initiative Presentation of Certificates
1545hrs – 1615hrs	End of Day Final Group Photos and Individual Photos