



**ZIMBABWE  
INSTITUTE**  
*Innovative Thinking for  
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**A Community-Based Approach to Sustainable Development: The Role of Civil Society in Rebuilding Zimbabwe.**

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## **Introduction**

Zimbabwe's years of economic mismanagement and political instability, especially in the last decade of the Zimbabwe Crisis, have had catastrophic effects on the national economy, much of which has left many of its once-vibrant sectors and industries significantly depleted (Kamidza 2009: 6). The formation of the GNU has since brought some stability to the economy, particularly through the implementation of the Short Term Emergency Recovery Programme that helped reduce rapid inflation levels as well as ensure the provision of basic commodities (though largely imported) that were scarce before. However, despite these improvements, many vital sectors such as health and education are still functioning well below their optimum capacity (Nkomo 2011). As a result, Zimbabwe continues to hang in the balance and the current government is struggling to develop sustainable policy alternatives to address the problems and challenges of the past.

For the country to move forward, Zimbabweans will need to harness their collective energy to rebuild Zimbabwe. Because of its close links to the people and the communities, Zimbabwe's civil society, in particular, has an important role in mobilising communities for the sustainable economic reconstruction and development of the country. Currently, Zimbabwe's civil society sector has not done much to mobilise Zimbabweans for the social and economic reconstruction of the country. There are two main reasons for this; firstly, due to their extensive focus on political advocacy at the expense of economic and social advocacy and secondly, due to the underdeveloped nature of Zimbabwean civil society resulting from years of state repression and the economic crisis that eroded the organisational capacity of civics. This paper discusses the various strategies that can be adopted by civics to mobilize communities for Zimbabwe's national reconstruction and sustainable development.<sup>1</sup>

## **Civil Society and Development: The Global Picture**

Civil society can be broadly defined as, "the realm between the household/ family and the state, populated by voluntary groups and associations, formed on the basis of shared interests, and are separate and/or largely but not necessarily completely autonomous from the state" (Boadi 2006: 2). At its very best, civil society should function as 'a self-help entity, which facilitates economic development and wealth creation through the mobilization of group involvement based on common shared interests' (Boadi 2006: 3). In her study of immigrant planters on the cocoa and oil palm industry in Southern Ghana and South West Nigeria, Polly Hill shows how civil society can play an important role in the economic development of a country (Hill cited in Boadi 2006: 3). According to her, the immigrant workers' organizations played an important midwifery role in the initial stage of the development of the cocoa and oil palm industry by assisting the state to manage the production and marketing of the crops. Through initially performing these 'midwifery roles', immigrant workers organizations were able to complement and or supplement state-led efforts towards economic development, while the lack of these civil society groups' participation many years later led to the gross economic mismanagement of resources by the state (Boadi 2006: 3).

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The case of Pune, a city in India where government worked with civil society to address the sanitation needs of the city's lower-income earners, also demonstrates the pivotal role that civil society can play in addressing the socio-economic needs of a country. "Two fifths of Pune's 2.8 million inhabitants live in over 500 slums. Although various local government bodies are meant to provide and maintain public toilets in these settlements, provision is insufficient. The quality of toilet construction was often poor and the design inappropriate, with limited water supplies and no access to drainage. The toilets frequently went uncleaned and fell into disuse, the space around them used for open defecation and garbage dumping.

In 1999, Pune's Municipal Commissioner sought to improve the situation by inviting NGOs to make bids for toilet construction and maintenance. One NGO, the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC), had a long partnership with the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan and became a principal contractor. This alliance designed and costed the project, the city provided the capital costs and the communities developed the capacity for management and maintenance. A total of 114 toilet blocks were built, including 2,000 adult and 500 children's seats.

In many places, the inhabitants were involved in the design and construction of these toilets. Some women community leaders took on contracts and managed the whole construction process, supported by engineers and architects from SPARC. Unlike the previous models, they were bright and well-ventilated, with better-quality construction (which also made cleaning and maintenance easier). They had large storage tanks to ensure there was enough water for users to wash after defecation and to keep the toilets clean. Each toilet block had separate entrances and facilities for men and women. A block of specially designed children's toilets was included and in many blocks there were also toilets designed for easier use by the elderly and the disabled. Running costs were lower thanks to the inclusion of a room where the caretakers and their families could live. Even with these innovations, the cost of the toilet blocks was 5 percent less than the municipal corporation's costing.

This programme was also noteworthy in its transparency and accountability, with constant communication between government and community, weekly stakeholder meetings, and all aspects of costing and financing made public, thus curbing petty corruption. Similar programmes are now being developed in other cities" (Patel and Mitlin 2001, Burra 2000 and Sparc 2001 cited in UN Habitat Report 2003 : 179).

There are several key lessons for civil society initiative in development and reconstruction that can be gleaned from Pune. The first one is about the significance of Strategic Partnerships (with like-minded institutions and key stakeholders) in development. In the case of Pune, the NGO made use of a long-standing partnership with another stakeholder- National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan, which became a principal contractor of the development project.

The second is about essentiality of community participation and involvement in all development initiatives, whether spearheaded by state or non-state actors. Pune inhabitants were involved in the design and construction of the community toilets. The NGO had clearly done an in-depth internal SWOT analysis as it had drawn on its main strengths- the skills and expertise among the community inhabitants, particularly

women community leaders who managed the construction process, supported by engineers and architects from SPARC. Community ownership of the developmental project is crucial to its success and sustainability as communities often run with what they are committed to. Community involvement also helped to reduce production costs in the long-run as communities took ownership of the project and played their part by bringing whatever skills they had to the fore.

Third, transparency and accountability are essential for effective development. Keeping the public informed through constant communication between the government and the community and holding weekly stakeholder meetings all helped ensure that all aspects of costing and financing were made public. This not only helped to curb corruption but it also built trust among the community and motivated them to get involved even more.

Furthermore, lessons from Ghana's experience with the development of its community and water strategy show that community involvement and initiative was pivotal to the developmental process. The government's upfront engagement with civil society brought to attention the needs of the community, which were effectively relayed (through constructive engagement) to the Ghanaian government. Communities were also responsible for planning, operating and monitoring their water systems (Mackay and Gariba 2000: 9).

Partnerships and collaboration between civil society and key stakeholders is also essential for the success of development. In the Ghanaian case, this involved collaboration between the government, the private sector and civil society (Mackay and Gariba 200: 9). This allowed for the formation of sub-contracting agreements by civil society to private corporations facilitating the effective partnership for the provision of essential goods and services-, which the state was failing to adequately provide for Ghanaian citizens.

Civil society can also monitor state policies and provide a 'safety blanket' for communities and groups of individuals who may be left vulnerable in the backlash of flawed state policies ((Kamidza 2009: 6; Ghaus-Pasha 2005: 10). In Zimbabwe years of flawed economic macroeconomic policies employed by the state since 2003 have failed to alleviate the economic deterioration the country has undergone. These include the National Economic Revival Programme (NERP) (2003)- targeted at stimulating national output, productivity and foreign currency earning capacity, macroeconomic stability and a reduction in inflation. There was also the Macroeconomic Policy Framework (2005-2006), whose policy interventions and programmes targeted every economic sector; the National Economic Development Priority Programme (NERDPP) (2006), which sought to mobilize foreign currency in 3-6 months and the Zimbabwe Economic Development Strategy (ZEDS) (2007), which sought to consolidate the country's economic development strategies (Kamidza 2009: 2-3).

More recently, the Zimbabwe government introduced the controversial Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act which stipulate that locals must own at least 51% of any firm that has a turnover of at least US\$1million'. The policy has been criticized for not only lacking clarity and coherency but also stifling investment into the country that has only just recently begun to demonstrate tremendous potential for

growth and recovery by registering ‘a very high growth rate of 9%, low inflation of about 3% and showing enormous signs of potential’ (Chanakira 2011). Civil society’s role in such cases is not only to embark on advocacy initiatives aimed at highlighting the flaws in bad government policies but also to provide the state with alternative policy solutions developed through innovative policy-action research.

According to Boadi (2006: 4), ‘by providing a non-state basis for economic development, civil society helps to foster the dispersal and decentralization of economic power from the state’. Civics are the providers of alternative policy options for governments and state actors, particularly when none are forthcoming from the state itself.

### **Zimbabwe’s Civil Society: An Overview**

Zimbabwe has diverse civil society groups which include faith-based organizations (Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe- EFZ, Council of Churches); women’s groups (Women and men Of Zimbabwe Arise- WOZA, Zimbabwe Women’s Lawyers Association- ZWLA); student and youth groups; human rights and governance groups (Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, Bulawayo Agenda, Institute for a Democratic Alternative for Zimbabwe (IDAZIM); civic education groups (ZEC, ZESN); professional and media organizations (Media Institute of Southern Africa –MISA, Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe- MMPZ, Media Alliance of Zimbabwe- MAZ) and trade union groups (ZCTU) as well as Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

Though civil society should theoretically remain non-partisan, in reality Zimbabwean civics have demonstrated some partisan behavior. Civic groups have remained divided and fragmented along political, ideological and tribal lines causing them to be disorganized and ineffective (Magaisa 2009). Zimbabwean CSOs have become an extension or product of the extremely polarized environment they operate in and have demonstrated much polarity in their relations with one another (Otti and Katema 2011: 47). Uncoordinated efforts and the failure to unite against common societal ills, such as poverty and the general lack of national development, have weakened both the individual and collective efforts of Zimbabwean CSOs by reducing their capacity and effectiveness in being agents of economic and social transformation for the nation.

Since the beginning of the Zimbabwe’s political and economic crises from the mid-1990s, and its escalation in the late 1990s, there has been an overwhelming prioritization of political rights over economic and social rights among Zimbabwean civil society organisations. Much of civic activity has taken the form of political advocacy, with more focus on aspects such as the documentation and reporting of human rights abuses by the state, the exertion of political rights and calls for an end to violence and state repression ( Saki and Katema 2011: 44-76; Ncube 2010). Since the formation of the inclusive government (Global Political Agreement), civic activity has focused more on political transitional issues, such as the power sharing, power transfer, transitional justice, peace building and constitutional reform. Little attention has been paid to issues of poverty alleviation, workers and consumer’s rights, community empowerment, economic justice, class inequalities, economic reconstruction and social transformation. Most civics have in fact found themselves

in an internal conflict between adequately balancing the two (the political and socio-economic) realms (Saki and Katema 2011: 46- ).

Zimbabwean civics' failure to focus on issues of national development and reconstruction in their programming is partly due to the constraints imposed by their funding structures and models. The years of conflict, economic mismanagement and corruption in Zimbabwe have resulted in widespread poverty and economic decline (World Bank 2011). This has resulted in a greater national reliance on foreign aid for many sectors of society, including civil society. At the moment, Zimbabwean CSO activities have become not only heavily dependent on external donors but also donor-driven (Ncube 2010: 201). Donor-driven development projects are problematic as they are not only often short-term in focus (thus perpetuating an unhealthy donor dependency cycle) but they can often fail to meet the real needs of the communities they aim to help as they often lack grassroots participation and insights and are often based on the interests of the donors at a particular time and not so much what is actually taking place on the ground (Ncube 2010: 200). International donor interest within Zimbabwe, over the years, has been on the political situation and much of the funding availed to Zimbabwean CSOs has been for political advocacy rather than for social and economic advocacy (Ncube 2011).

Since the formation of the inclusive government, most international organisations operating in Zimbabwe have continued to emphasise humanitarian assistance rather than development assistance because of their own concern about the political uncertainties around the lifespan of the GPA government and the prospects for political reform and democratisation under the same government. Under the humanitarian plus programme for Zimbabwe, many development assistance organisations are providing 'life saving social protection and humanitarian assistance to Zimbabweans until economic policies and governance improve' and they are in a position to contribute to recovery (Muzondidya 2010b). This approach by most Overseas Development Agencies operating in Zimbabwe has resulted in limited funding for social and economic advocacy activities.

### **The Case for Increased Social and Economic Advocacy among Zimbabwean Civics**

Zimbabwean civics have indeed been involved in social and economic advocacy over the years. A number of civil society initiatives in the 1980s and 90s were largely responsible for spearheading development at the local level through community mobilisation processes. Community Based Organisations in Mhakwe ward of Chimanimani District, for instance, successfully mobilized rural communities in the ward for sustainable community development. Civil society development initiatives in this district were based on the Zooming Model, developed by the W K Kellogg Foundation following a realization that after many years of supporting rural communities in Africa- they still remained largely poor and in need of more development assistance. The programme was aimed at mobilizing community involvement and participation around self-driven sustainable development for social and economic transformation within impoverished rural communities. The model was based on a knowledge-management system, which involved drawing on the already existent community knowledge and networks as well as "selecting, distilling and deploying explicit and tacit knowledge to create unique value that could be used to

achieve a competitive advantage or solve community problems” (Dhewa 2008). It involved letting community members identify the key areas of development needed within their respective communities and the critical intervention strategies they thought would help their area. The project proved highly successful as it managed to help villagers deal with many of their identified challenges. The challenges included support in accessing clean water, support to orphans and vulnerable children, income generating projects for the unemployed and the need for irrigation schemes for farmers (Dhewa 2008).

Since the formation of the GPA government in February 2009, a steadily growing number of civics inside and outside have gradually turned towards spearheading national reconstruction efforts. A few examples of efforts that are being taken at national rebuilding include diaspora initiatives by civic groups, such as the Development Foundation of Zimbabwe (DFZ)- a group based in South Africa. The purpose of this organization is to ‘provide a platform for constructive engagement between the Diaspora and fellow Zimbabweans in business, government, civil society and the general public’. The DFZ works at both health and educational sector reform and development, and seeks to mobilize Zimbabweans in and outside of the country to participate in national rebuilding through skills and resource transfer (DFZ 2011, Hakata 2011). The organization has partnered with like-minded organizations mainly Trust Africa, the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation, Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Interface, Global Zimbabwe Forum and The Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA). The DFZ held its inaugural conference in Victoria Falls in December 2010. Attended by close to 150 Zimbabweans from the diaspora and from inside the country, including representatives of business, trade unions, civics, government officials and Zimbabwean professionals, the conference was aimed at discussing the creation of an institutional framework that will help the Zimbabwean diaspora contribute to the country’s development (Muzondidya 2011).

The Council for Reconstruction of Zimbabwe is another Diaspora effort based in New York City, which ‘serves the humanitarian and development needs of Zimbabwe by leveraging the expertise and resources of the Zimbabwean Diaspora, other global citizens and institutions for the health, education and economic wellbeing of all Zimbabweans’ (Council for Reconstruction of Zimbabwe 2011).

On the local front, there have been some worthwhile civil society based initiatives aimed at national rebuilding particularly focusing on the revival of the health sector and the promotion of awareness and advocacy around HIV and AIDS diseases. These include, loose coalition bodies such as Zimbabwe Activists on HIV and AIDS (ZAHA), Southern African Treatment Access Movement (SATAMo), Pan- and International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC). Many of these bodies have gone beyond simply engaging in community awareness on health and poverty issues but have expanded their mandate to include community awareness on issues of climate change (which has drastic effects on food security) and how to care for the environment (World Pulse 2009).

Zimbabwe has taken its place in joining the rest of the world in commemorating the International Volunteer Day that happens on the 5th December of every year. However, Zimbabwe has placed a significant edge on its take of this volunteer day by adapting its theme to ‘Volunteering for our Planet- Rebuilding Zimbabwe’ (World

Pulse 2009). This initiative aims to mobilize a greater number of volunteers in the fight for better health systems, greater rights, environmental protection and many other issues encompassing Zimbabwe's socio-economic woes such as improving access to public service delivery for the poor and most vulnerable among many others. Some fruits that have come out of these initiatives have been the national medical association (ZIMA) and Eyes for Africa-, which take time from their private practices to go to communities to deliver much-needed, specialized care (World Pulse 2009). However, such activity will need to increase more and more particularly as Zimbabwe is a nation in political transition and therefore in desperate need of sound economic policies and reform. A more heightened emphasis by civil society on economic and social advocacy will place the nation on the path of economic recovery and prosperity that it so desperately needs.

Though civil society seems to be taking some positive steps in participating in national rebuilding efforts, there is much more that still needs to be done by Zimbabwean civics for them to be an effective agency for development and reconstruction. There is in fact a pressing, urgent need for Zimbabwean civil society advocacy to pay more attention to social and economic advocacy.

First, Zimbabweans are living in a highly vulnerable economic climate that requires sustained efforts from both state and non-state actors to address. Since the years of structural adjustment, from the beginning of the 1990s onwards, and the deepening of the political and economic crises in the post-2000 period, most Zimbabweans, especially workers and peasants, have been experiencing massive economic hardships. Between 2000 and 2001, for instance, close to a 100,000 workers were retrenched. In addition, 1,100 companies shut down (Kambawa 2002). A study by the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries revealed that at least 1.7 million people were sustaining their livelihood through the informal sector in November 2000, indicating that the informal sector had become Zimbabwe's biggest employer (Kumbawa 2002). Zimbabwe has since then continued to be a nation that has a very high unemployment rate, estimated at 95% by 2009 (CIA World Factbook 2011). CSOs thus need to mobilize communities towards self-help projects and to help individuals with training on some skills, like business management.

Second, Zimbabwe is currently experiencing challenges of poverty and food insecurity such that most vulnerable groups, namely the poor and unemployed, require the assistance of both state and non-state actors to deal with their challenges. The added effects of climate change and natural disasters like droughts and floods have heightened the food insecurity in the country (Report on the Climate Change Roundtable 2009:11, Matarira, Makadho and Sangarwe 2004:5). The changes in rainfall patterns are causing a massive drop in crop yields in the country's agricultural sector, and this has serious implications on both national food security and the country's agro-based economy as a whole (Mano and Nhemachena, 2007).

The burden of climate change has been particularly felt by poor peasants who are dependent on agriculture for both their food security and general livelihood (The Herald, 22 May 2008). Some long-term challenges for food security in Zimbabwe that will need to be addressed sooner rather than later include; increasing production and productivity which will entail devising sustainable farming and livelihood systems for the dry lands, are providing temporary safety nets in years of poor harvests for those



who depend in large part on the farm economy (Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa 2004: 28). Humanitarian organizations and civil society need to collectively find ways to assist people to deal with their multiple vulnerabilities by moving from humanitarian assistance to development assistance. Zimbabwean civil society and its development partners will thus require to invest more in community development projects, such as gardening, cooperatives, business and skills training, that will help community members effectively deal with their vulnerabilities (Muzondidya 2010). Civics, especially CBOs, need to be the conduits through which farmers could be equipped with the tools and knowledge needed to increase food, livestock and cash crop production.

Third, Zimbabwe has continued to experience massive problems in public service provision, and civil society needs to invest heavily in both social and economic advocacy and practical intervention strategies to ensure that the educational and health rights of ordinary Zimbabweans are realised. Much of the country's public infrastructure facilities, such as roads, railways and bridges, have virtually collapsed (Kamidza 2009: 3). In addition, many Zimbabwean suburbs continue to experience massive water and electricity shortages, poor waste management and sanitation facilities (Kamidza 2009: 3). The decay in the health sector in particular has significantly reduced the life expectancy rate of Zimbabweans from 61 years in the 1990s to 36.9 years in 2009. The government in 2010 committed only 4.1% of total GDP expenditure on public health (UNDP 2010, UNICEF 2011, Kamidza 2009: 3).

Generally, public service delivery has deteriorated due to the economic crisis, mismanagement of resources and corruption. Many public hospitals are now understaffed, and do not have enough medical resources to function coherently, as a result private hospitals have been overstretched over the years. Furthermore, the educational sector, which once boasted high performance levels within the region, has also deteriorated significantly due to the economic crisis. Education standards have significantly declined and are in need of serious reform and infrastructure.

Focusing more on issues of political rights and democracy, Zimbabwe's civil society has largely failed to take up issues to do with the social and economic rights of the citizens. Nor have the civics, as alternative sources of people's power, managed to come up with alternative frameworks for addressing the social and economic plight of the poor. To illustrate, the transitional government has struggled to execute its mandate and to deal with its inherited political, economic and social challenges because of lack of effective policies. The ability of government departments to spearhead development and transformation has remained limited by both material and human resource constraints. First, government departments have remained underfunded and have not been able to set aside money for policy research. Second, many government departments no longer have the capacity to develop or implement policies because of the brain drain from government at the height of the Zimbabwe Crisis. The lack of capacity to develop and implement policies in the current government extends even to some departments under the control of the MDC formations, which never had the opportunity to develop their policy capacity before joining the coalition government.

The weaknesses in the policy development aspects of the transitional government have negatively affected its ability to develop innovative strategies to deal with the

legacies of the crisis and its capacity to develop the country economically (Zimbabwe Institute 2010). There is therefore need for non-state actors to find ways of helping the state to develop policies that can move the country out of its current political and economic quagmire. Yet, very few Zimbabwean civil society organizations have taken up the challenge to develop or to help the state come up with alternative policy frameworks that can help the country to overcome its current social and economic challenges. Economic policy making decisions have remained largely in the hands of the state and political parties.

Zimbabwean civics have also failed to adequately monitor the implementation of state policies and the general economic management of the country. The suppression of civic activity by the state and the hostile working relationship between the Zimbabwe state and civics has indeed forced civil society out of the public space for many years. Years of repression by the state have suppressed civic activity and forced much of it underground (Ncube 2010; Muzondidya & Nyathi-Ndlovu 2010; Saki and Katema 2011). But, Zimbabwean civics, like most civil society organizations across the African continent, have not adequately exploited the little space that has remained available to monitor state implementation of governmental policies and developmental projects (Moyo, etal 2007)

The inability by Zimbabwean civics to stand up for the rights of vulnerable groups as well as create alternative spaces for the social upliftment of the poor has been more glaring in their encounters with private capital. Most firms, except for a few like Econet, which has significantly invested in a national scholarship fund and Delta, which has historically supported national sporting tournaments for schools and has been assisting Harare City Council to clear garbage in the city, have continued to abdicate their corporate responsibility to their operational environment (The Herald, 9 March 2010). In some rural areas, poor mining practices by huge corporate companies have led to toxic waste and heavy metal pollution leakage (IFAD 2007). This has resulted in health hazards to rural communities (within which much of this mining takes place) and devastation on the environment. The absence of government legislation enforcing corporate social and environmental responsibility, as is the case in most developed countries, has made it easier for both local and international companies to avoid their corporate responsibilities. In addition, Zimbabwean business culture, with its legacy of monopolies, does not encourage broad-based giving or social responsibility among companies competing for a share of the market (Maphosa 1997).

In other countries across the globe, civil society has often served as a watchdog against such malpractices by large corporate companies by championing the cause of the underdog classes. Civil society has also ensured that communities benefit from the operation of these corporates by holding them accountable to both their physical and human environment. Civics play a crucial role in either mobilising communities to fight for their social and economic rights or fighting for the rights of individual communities. In the case of Zimbabwe, very few civil societies have taken issues of community environmental protection and community empowerment as serious advocacy issues (Muzondidya 2010). There is an imperative need for Zimbabwe's civil society to: promote advocacy campaigns meant to increase business' levels of involvement in corporate social responsibility; support groups that work to protect the poor from exploitation by business, such as residents associations and consumer

protection bodies; promote advocacy campaigns aimed at raising people's consciousness about their rights against exploitation; organise campaigns to reintroduce a culture of responsibility and accountability in business; and actively lobby government for the introduction of corporate responsibility legislation, including laws on corporate environmental responsibility (Muzondidya 2010).

### **Towards a more Enhanced Role for Civics in National Development**

Zimbabwe's civil society can play a more enhanced role in the country's development and reconstruction by embarking on a number of initiatives discussed below:

**Mobilizing communities:** After a decade of political and economic instability, including hyperinflation and infrastructural breakdown, a growing number of Zimbabweans are indeed just relieved to experience some modicum of economic and social stability that came with the formation of the GNU. However, Zimbabwe is still far from the woods and the country is still confronted by a number of major socio-economic challenges that will require collective efforts to surmount. Zimbabwean civics, by virtue of their close proximity to the communities, need to play a more active role in mobilising communities for development and reconstruction in almost the same way that community groups and their leaders mobilised communities for reconstruction after the end of the war of independence in 1980. CSOs need to help communities work together and realise that development begins at the local level rather than national level. According to Brinkerhoff, "the most commonly identified factor necessary for effective mobilization is the creation of a sense of solidarity and community identity. Community identity enables the harnessing of diverse resources and capacities, such as material resources, skills and organizational resources." (Brinkerhoff cited in Muzondidya 2011: 150).

Mobilization will also involve identifying the skills that communities and individuals possess and compiling a database to draw upon for developmental projects after matching the collected skills to the project at hand. This will deepen community involvement and participation and also provide a readily available community profile list for other interested parties or development partners to access whenever needed.

Besides taking the initiative to mobilise communities for rebuilding, CSOs need to take the initiative to mobilise funds and other resources for development projects. Most CSOs have over the years built good working relationship with development partners and are therefore in a better position to mobilise resources from development agencies on behalf of communities in need of rebuilding their schools, hospitals, clinics, libraries, rural water supply and sanitation projects. During the rebuilding of Cambodia following years of civil war, for instance, 5 local CSOs engaged the Asia Development Bank for assistance and managed to get a grant for rehabilitation of the Tonle Sap Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project. (ADB 2006: 2).

**Coordinating Development and forming Strategic Alliances and Partnerships:** One of the major problems that has negatively affected community development has been the lack of coordination of development projects. The limited or lack of adequate coordination of projects has not only resulted in the collapse of ongoing

projects but the initiation of unwanted projects that do not link up with other projects in an area or the needs of a community. Having started well, most community development projects have also collapsed due to lack of managerial skills.

As organised and established groups, CSOs and CBOs have the potential to help community development projects succeed by providing the coordinating linkages that are needed. To be effective civics will also need to coordinate community development projects with the state and development partners. This can be helped through clearly defined communication channels and flows between government and civil society and the public at all times.

Zimbabwean civics need to help communities partner with both other communities around the country and others across the globe that might be in a position to help in their development and rebuilding. Partnering with like-minded institutions and organizations both locally and abroad can significantly help reduce costs involved in development projects. The Council for Reconstruction of Zimbabwe (Diaspora Organization based in New York City) has been exemplary in this role as it is actively seeking to partner with individuals and institutions in order to collect and ship medical equipment, books and dental supplies for health institutions in Zimbabwe (DFZ 2011). Before sending the goods, the organization does its homework by identifying the needs on the ground and also determining whether the goods it wishes to donate are suitable for Zimbabwe or not. They have in the past successfully collected and transferred Dental Equipment and Medical Supplies to help train the next generation of doctors in Zimbabwe (Council for Reconstruction of Zimbabwe 2011).

**Economic and Social Advocacy:** Given the continued high levels of poverty, unemployment and economic vulnerability among the majority of Zimbabwe's population, civics will need to continue devoting more of their time towards campaigning for the rights of the poor and vulnerable groups of society. This will involve, lobbying the government on public service delivery. Civil society need to find ways of protecting ordinary Zimbabweans (Ghaus-Pasha 2005: 10) especially the most vulnerable groups who have no way of protecting and supporting themselves in this highly fragile environment. Social welfare schemes and other welfare programmes will need to be arranged to help cushion Zimbabweans from the worst effects of living in a highly volatile the economy. Secondly, civil society will need to actively challenge the state on the economic policies it is pursuing at any given time particularly when they have negative consequences for the population at large. Finding ways in helping the government to reduce the barriers to formal employment will also be necessary and another role civil society will need to take on.

An encouraging example of civil society social and economic advocacy is WOZA's recent efforts at lobbying the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) in Bulawayo, over the sector's "controversial billing system and poor service" (Madongo 2011). The NGO also lobbied for the installment of prepaid meters for residents who are allegedly being charged 'ridiculously high bills' (Madongo 2011). Though much of this NGO activity has been suppressed by the state (Madongo 2011), it is drawing attention to the economic mismanagement and corruption plaguing public service delivery and is sending out a message that this is no longer acceptable. After some in-parliament lobbying by various MPs who complained of citizens who

are being unfairly charged for inconsistent water supply, the Minister of Water Resources has also encouraged citizens not to pay bills for dry taps (Langa 2011). More, however, will need to continue to be done in this area and more civic activity on lobbying the public sector will be vital towards economic and social development in Zimbabwe.

**Assisting in Policy Formulation and Analysis:** Zimbabwe, as pointed out above, is still struggling to overcome its challenges partly due to lack of innovative policies that can overturn the tide. Civil society needs to take up the role of assisting in policy formulation and analysis by carrying out research and drawing on the diverse skills base in the country and Diaspora to come out with effective planning policies.

Based on the above analysis, the table below summarises the roles Zimbabwean civil society can play in the reconstruction and rebuilding of the nation.

ROLE	ACTIVITY
Mobilizing communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide incentives for community participation e.g. grants, scholarships etc.</li> <li>• breed a sense of national identity, ownership and national pride.</li> <li>• Creating a skills database from communities.</li> </ul>
Forming strategic alliances and partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking with like-minded institutions and stakeholders (government, businesses, Diaspora organizations)</li> <li>• Building relationships</li> </ul>
Coordinating development efforts and promoting awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve coordination mechanisms with government on state-led projects at reform.</li> <li>• Improve communication with the public on opportunities available e.g. microfinance initiatives etc.</li> </ul>

Economic and Social advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More lobbying for accessibility and availability of public goods and services.</li> <li>• Pressurizing the state on better provision of public goods and services.</li> <li>• Negotiating better rates and fees for public service provision.</li> </ul>
Assisting in policy formulation and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and Technology</li> <li>• Compiling data and reports on alternative policy ideas, plans, goals and implementation.</li> <li>• Disseminating information to key stakeholders (e.g. government)</li> </ul>
Monitoring and evaluating economic policies, management and performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring a 'safety-net' for society in the face of backlashes resulting from state policies, e.g. social welfare,</li> <li>• Being a watchdog to the state on policy-making through the media, public demonstrations etc.</li> <li>• Lobbying the state on faulty policies.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

This paper has argued that Zimbabwean civil society is currently too preoccupied with political advocacy at the expense of economic and social advocacy needed for national reconstruction and development. There is therefore a need for Zimbabwean civics to move beyond this impasse and begin to think about national reconstruction and sustainable development. To embark on this path to economic recovery and reconstruction, however, Zimbabwean civil society will need to strengthen its internal capacity base through capacity- building and improve its coordination and networking ability across a wide range of key stakeholders both domestically and abroad.

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