

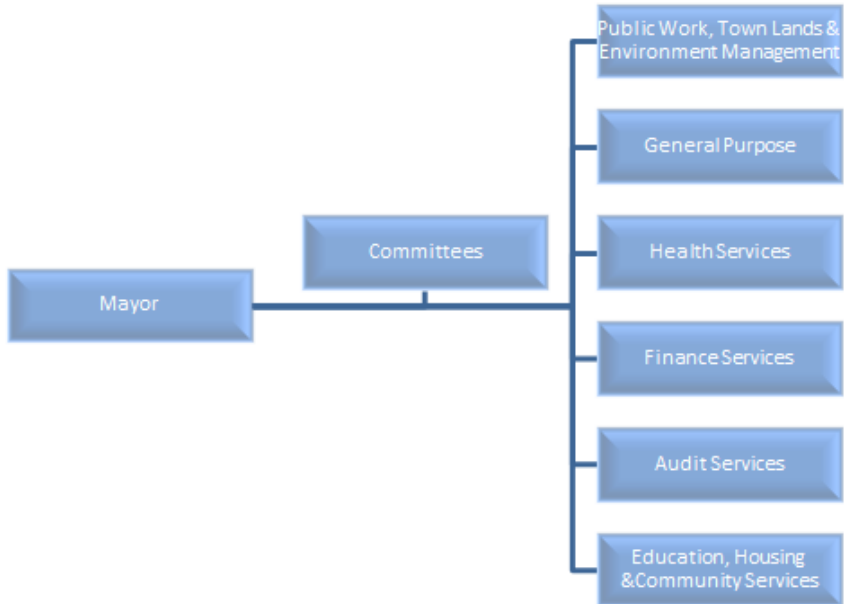
## **CHAPTER 4: DIMENSIONS AND EVIDENCE OF GENDER, HOUSING AND POVERTY IN CHITUNGWIZA**

The research findings air the voices of the 50 households comprising both men and women interviewed from wards 1, 2, 3 4, 5 and 6 in Chitungwiza and the Director of housing from the Ministry of Local Government and Housing, the Director of women and Ministry of Gender and Community Development and Chitungwiza Municipality. The chapter presents the research findings, analyses the data and discusses the findings of the research.

Information obtained through document review revealed many critical aspects. Chitungwiza is one of the largest high-density suburbs in Zimbabwe which came to existence in the 1970s. The Town is situated 30km south of Harare City Centre, was planned in the spirit of apartheid with houses of varying sizes and quality, but all of them small in size. At independence in 1980, Chitungwiza had a population of 125 000 inhabitants and little more than 20000 housing units in the town and most of them small core houses made of cement, bricks and asbestos roofs. However, all houses had electricity, sanitary amenities and water supply though they were at low capacity, catering mostly for the men who lived in the town. Presently Chitungwiza now has a population of 356 840 and has a severe shortage of housing and poor social service delivery. In 1981 Chitungwiza attained an independent municipal status and expansion of the town was rapid owing to the increase in rural to urban migration. New areas were opened up for the construction of houses and core houses for low-income earners. Residents were offered rent-to- buy contracts but very few could afford purchasing them.

Though divided into suburbs, Chitungwiza has a total of 25 wards, with 25 ward councillors of which 5 are female and 20 are men. The

Council has various committees and organs which are responsible for the administration and operations in terms of the municipality and the housing needs of the residents. The Town Council of Chitungwiza organisational structure is as illustrated in Fig. 4.1 below:



**Fig. 4.1** Chitungwiza Town Council Organisational Chart (*Chitungwiza Town Council website, 2016*)

About 32% of households in Chitungwiza are occupied by the owner/purchaser while 1% is in tied household accommodation. Lodgers account for 56% of people who live in Chitungwiza. 96% of Chitungwiza's houses are modern type dwellings and 81% of these houses have electricity. 84% of the households have water on the premises and about 10% fetch their water from a distance within 500m, while 2% have this facility more than 500m from their households. 91% of Chitungwiza households use flush toilets and 1% of the households

do not have a toilet. 85% of Chitungwiza households use electricity as a source of energy (Zimbabwe Census Report 2012).

In 2005, a report by United Nations special envoy on human settlement issues, Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, found out that in an ad hoc programme called Operation “Murambatsvina that the government had embarked on to clean up the city” and bring back order to the capital city triggered displacements, demolitions and even loss of lives, among other imbalances, as a humanitarian crisis.

In part, Tibaijuka’s report read: “Operation Restore Order, while purporting to target illegal dwellings and structures and to clamp down on alleged illicit activities, was carried out in an indiscriminate and unjustified manner, with indifference to human suffering, and, in repeated cases, with disregard to several provisions of national and international legal frameworks... The humanitarian consequences of Operation Restore Order are enormous. It will take several years before the people and society can recover.” This was a beginning of a housing crisis which affected both men and women. However, nine years later, the dormitory town of Chitungwiza is facing another predicament which calls to mind sad reminiscences brought about by Operation *Murambatsvina*. The Chitungwiza Town Council wanted to restore order following the frantic allocation of residential stands by money hungry land barons. Not for the first time, the nation’s poor are faced with a possibility of being thrown into the open in a development that threatens to render thousands of women and children homeless and vulnerable, thereby accelerating the gender disparities in the Local town’s housing delivery system.

Over and above not only the recent demolitions have been a problem to the residents of Chitungwiza. At a meeting held on 1 November 2015 by the Chitungwiza Residents Trust (CHITREST) the following concerns were raised:

- Chitungwiza Municipality does not have a clear housing policy, hence the chaotic allocation of residential stands;
- Lack of urgency in resolving land problems due to rapid urbanization by the government for example the Nyatsime Housing Project; Poor management and abuse of the Chitungwiza housing waiting list, hence some home seekers have been on the waiting list for more than 10 years. Chitungwiza generally lies on a wetland due to its geographic location, hence most Commercial infrastructure such as the Old Mutual Chitungwiza town Centre, Seke teachers College, United Family International church, Chitungwiza Police Station and Citimed Hospital just to mention are built on wetlands; Increase in rural-urban migration leading to a rise in demand for residential stands in urban and peri-urban areas. Poor urban planning, governance and management

Plate 1 below shows the Chitungwiza Manyame Park area which is an extension of the St Mary's area and generally provides an overview of what Chitungwiza has become over the past years, since Zimbabwe's Independence in 1980.



**Plate 1** - Chitungwiza Manyame Park Area (*Fieldwork, 2016*)

According to the Parliamentary Debate Hansard of 15 October 2015, at Public Hearing in Chitungwiza at the Unit L Community Hall in which the participants included Businesswomen's Association, Association of Nyatsime Housing Scheme, the Elders 'Council and other residents of Chitungwiza, the written submissions of residents alleged that corrupt practices by both City Council employees and councillors had marred the administration and operation of the Council. It was alleged was on the issue of water services delivery about which it was reported that despite the absence of water for long periods, residents continued to receive high water bills varying from \$20-\$400 (Zimbabwe Parliamentary Debate, Hansard, 15 October 2015). Residents bemoaned the fact that all water bills were based on estimates underlined by an assumption that all residents were receiving water yet some areas had not received water for a long time.

The Chitungwiza Residents and Ratepayers Association submitted that there was total disregard of by-laws by the local authority with the blame falling on to the Engineering department, against which allegations were made to the effect that new housing developments were being undertaken on prohibited sites such as those over services infrastructure including those under ZESA power lines and over sewer and water pipes. The allocation of infill stands is alleged to be riddled with corruption and was being done haphazardly.

The residents of Chitungwiza lamented that the waiting list had become meaningless as the local authority was deliberately ignoring it. It is alleged that, people who had properties as far as Borrowdale and were not on the waiting list were getting first preference in the allocation of stands whilst those paying fees to keep on the waiting list were not getting any stands (CHITREST Report, 2015). According to the CHITREST Report, 2015, it is further stated that, residents expressed concern at the lack of provision for street lighting in new housing development schemes and the non-functioning of the existing

tower lights in the town. Plate 2 below depicts the existing street lighting situation in Chitungwiza which is mainly in the form of tower lights.



**Plate 2** – Existing Non-functioning Tower lights in Chitungwiza (*Field Work, 2016*)

This, however, has resulted in rampant criminal activities which have also been fuelled by the tall grass that has not been cut by the local authority during and after the rain season. Not only is lighting and issue but the road in which the light provides light is like a torn lace, thus the road network in the town is in a deplorable state. However, the Local authority reported that the Zimbabwe National Roads Authority had disbursed 40 tonnes of cold premix for resealing the potholes hence road repairs were underway for the major road network in the town.

Residents reported that there was a shortage of vending facilities which many households, due to unemployment, needed for livelihood and income. The residents reported that instead the local authority had resorted to waging running battles with vendors instead of

building more proper vending places. However, instead of using council tractors to build facilities for vendors, they were being used for ferrying confiscated vendor wares which they would divide among themselves. The residents expressed concern on the lack of appreciation of the government's policy on women's economic empowerment and the appreciation of the informal sector as a tool to economic transformation.

Another concern by the residents of Chitungwiza was that of the lack of public amenities such as toilets. Although public toilets had been built at most public places such as shopping centres these had been closed without any explanation to the residents. However, as a result the public no longer has convenience facilities when nature calls and this poses a grave health hazard for the residents.



**Plate 3 - Unlawful Dumpsites in Chitungwiza** (*Fieldwork, 2016*)

As illustrated in the above plate 3, the non-existence of refuse collection services had resulted in unlawful dumping of garbage. Residents who live near these dumpsites complained of the heavy stench, flies and breeding of rodents which are vectors, hence an alarm on the imminent health problems. Residents reported that they had purchased fuel, spare, parts and other vehicle accessories to assist the

local authority to improve refuse collection but to no avail since the town council would just repair and use the trucks for their personal gains and use. Furthermore the Town Council reported that it had insufficient funds to purchase plastic bins for household use and door to door refuse collection.

The Zimbabwe Women in Construction organisation implored the Chitungwiza Town Council to revisit its procurement policy and align it with the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment government policy. They requested the Town Council to implement affirmative action in its sourcing of both materials and services to ensure that women also accessed housing and land and the materials needed for building. They argued that there was no reason for the council to outsource materials and services from outside providers when there were competent local women-owned companies who provided the same services (CHITREST Report, 2015).

One Council Official, who was a key informant in the study, lamented the housing challenges in Chitungwiza. The Council Official said that “The Council has plans to provide more land for housing though it is a challenge that the town plan of Chitungwiza now had limited land and needs to acquire land for expansion from other Rural District Councils such as Manyame and Goromonzi hence the non-availability of land is a process”. He also lamented the demolition of houses in Chitungwiza due to illegal selling of land by unscrupulous land barons such, who swindled most of the residents of their hard-earned money. The council official also stated that there was poor provision of services due to the fact that the Municipality had almost no funds and that their personnel’s salaries were in arrears. He went on to state that there was progress being made but since there was lack of funding in the housing sector and the municipality as a whole it was a challenge to speed up the housing initiatives to ensure that every tenant on the waiting list was allocated a residential stand. Little effort was being made in the housing sector in terms of women empowerment. The Council however, has four strategies to initiate housing in Chitungwiza and these entailed initiating their own housing through cooperatives in which more men participated than women. The challenge of the formation of these housing cooperatives was that they



would end up allocating residential stands on land that belonged to the Manyame Rural District Council.

*Mai Rudo*, a housewife, and a resident of Chitungwiza's Unit 'J,' lamented the fact that very few women were involved in the community development committees in her ward. She stated that the lack of women participation in housing interventions was because of lack of education and the highly patriarchal society influenced by culture and the economy. *Mai Rudo* stated,

*"Kune maco-operative arimo muward medu. Mukomiti dzacho munemadzimai vaviri chete, madzimai aya vanenge vakangonyarara mumisangano yacho havataure nekutya varume"*

(There are housing cooperatives in our ward. In their committee, there are two women only, but these women do not contribute to discussions, and just sit in quietly at meetings. They feel intimidated by the men).

Similar to *Mai Rudo's* sentiments, *Mai Moyo* reported that women's access to decision-making within the household and community is restricted, reducing their ability to influence processes and resource allocation. *Mai Tanyaradzwa* a tenant in Zengeza 1, who is a bona fide lodger on the waiting list was duped by a housing cooperative and had given up hope of acquiring a stand and let alone a house. *Mai Tanyaradzwa* said if she was able to own a house or at least acquire a residential stand she would have security of tenure for herself and her children.

The Councillor forward 6 in Zengeza 5, Chitungwiza, noted that gender equality was a key variable in housing initiatives since many women were not empowered, socially and economically. The Chitungwiza Town Council Official echoed the same sentiments reiterating that, the municipality had four strategies for housing initiatives as follows:

- Employer Assisted Housing Schemes

- Housing Co-operatives
- Pay Schemes and
- Private Partnerships

He explained that, not many women could join/engage in employer-assisted housing schemes since most of them were not formally employed and are involved in the informal sector. This was also becoming a challenge for men since some of them had recently lost their jobs and were also now joining the informal sector.



**Plate 4** – Mapinduzi Housing Cooperative Offices in Chitungwiza  
(*Field Work, 2016*)

In the case of housing cooperatives as illustrated by plate 4 above, the Council official observed that in the housing co-operatives, very few women participated in housing- cooperative leadership. He went on to state that most men took up leadership posts in co-operatives whilst women were reluctant to be involved or participate, even if they were more affected and vulnerable to housing poverty than men. For example, in Mapinduzi Housing Cooperative (picture above) the

Cooperatives Executive Committee had only one woman, hence underrepresentation of women in the housing initiatives.

The pay scheme is also a challenge for most women since most of them are low-income earners hence affordability was a challenge too. Chitungwiza residents lamented the harsh economic conditions and the loss of jobs which has affected their livelihoods. Mai Mushonga, a housewife and lodger with three children, lamented that the odds had not been in her favour,

*“Takanga takachengeta kamari kedu kuti titengewo stand, asi gore rakapera baba vakaerekana vapilwa 3months notisi kubasa kwavo, basa richibwa rapera. Kamari ikako takatobva tatokashandisa kuti tirame nekutanga musika”*

We had saved money to buy a residential stand last year, but unfortunately my husband was given 3 months’ notice at work and lost his job. The money that we had saved, we used it to start a vegetable market and upkeep for the family.

Mai Mushonga lamented that she no longer had any way to start since she had no money to pay towards housing schemes hence would remain a tenant a while longer than she had fathomed.

The council official stated that private partnerships were very expensive for most residents since they involved the council engaging private developers to service/develop land to ensure availability of services and accessibility by building roads, sewer and power installation of the new residence. These private developers then sell the land that would have been developed to home seekers. He further stated that, most of these developers’ companies are owned and run by men, since most women hardly venture into such capital-intensive business. Mai Saru a Business woman who owns a wholesale shop at Zengeza 2 extension explains:

*“Ini handikwanisi kana kutanga kambani yeku developer mastands nekuti mari yacho handina ende handiiwani. Kuti ndinopiliwa chikwereti nebhangwa havandipi nekuti chekubatisa chacho handina. Mastands acho anodhura kana kutenga land*

*yacho. Michina inodiwa kushandisa handikwanise kuitenga futi kana kuidriver kwacho"*

(I cannot even begin to start thinking about starting a company to develop land because I don't have the money and cannot find it. Even if I try to go to the bank to get a loan, they will not give me since I don't have collateral. The land is expensive and the machinery needed to develop the land I cannot afford it, let alone operate it.)

The Council Official stated that, the council had 25 wards and of the 25 ward Councillors, 6 were women and 19 men. The 6 women were involved in various committees as follows: 2 councillors were in the Education, Housing and Community Services Committee, 1 in the Finance Committee, 1 in the General Purpose Committee, 1 in the Public Works, Town, Lands and Environmental Management Committee and 1 was a Vice Chairperson in the Health Services Committee. This underrepresentation of women in the council's various committees choked the success of gender equality in housing initiatives in Chitungwiza hence the continued housing poverty for most women in the Town.

The study found that though there had been milestones in mainstreaming gender equality at the household level and that most community development and housing interventions were dominated by men, for example, the community development committees. The study also found that the Chitungwiza Town Council itself did not have a gender policy but relied mostly on the National Gender Policy. However, there was evidence that the council tried to include women in all its interventions. Women were involved in committees but did not participate much in the housing intervention programmes due to economic reasons and were reluctant to contribute ideas, though they were the most affected. Women's expectations related to social and community issues while men's expectations related to greater opportunities for income generation.

Some of the participants viewed the role of housing in the sustainability of women's enterprises as a crucial need, which they however, did not have easy access to. A male resident argued that most of the women in his community were involved in small home businesses such as sewing, cooking, vegetable marketing and knitting, dressmaking, crocheting, cane work and retail trading. However, despite the low financial returns, women's enterprises provide important sources of household income, even in male-headed households. Women-headed enterprises are frequently located in the home, and these "cottage industries" tend to be overlooked by agencies because they are in the informal sector, which is diffuse and difficult to reach (Clancy 2006). Most people in Chitungwiza use their homes as industries although it may be difficult for those who are tenants since they must rent other premises elsewhere to do their business. VaChifamba was quoted as saying:

*"Dambudziko rekuti tiwane dzimba huru nderekuda kwehurombo"*

(The major problem we face when trying have access to houses is poverty).

Rudo agreed with VaChifamba about the problems of poverty stricken community as she also stated that,

*"Kana uchida kutenga stand, ve Kanzuru vanoti tinoda \$3000.00. Isu hatiende kubasa kana kutengesa zvisvinu saka mari yacho hatina kvekuiwana."*

(If you want to buy a residential stand the Council would like a payment of USD\$3000.00 and since we are not employed and do not have stable sources of income we cannot afford this).

Rudo reported that it was difficult for them to acquire residential stands, let alone a house since it was unaffordable and very expensive for most people in the community. This was a consequence of most people in the community being poor and, therefore unable to afford either residential stands or houses. Mai Chido's sentiments on access

to housing as a key variable to women empowerment was that if the town expands they would have a wider and larger market share for her wares. Mai Chido stated,

*“Rukesheni rukakura isu tinotengesera cobra, tinozowana kokutengesera kunyowani plus nzvimbo yokutengesera inenge uakakura. Zvinova zvinoita kuti tiwane mari yakatiwande pamwe tingakwanisa kuzotengawo mastands nekuwana mari yekuzobhadhara maschool fees avana nokutenga chikafu”*

(If the residential area expands, those of us who sell cobra will have a larger area in which to do business, so our sales and earnings will increase and that way we will be able to buy our own residential stands and pay school fees for our children in addition to being able to bring some food home.)

Mai Chido went on to state that if she earned more she could raise enough money to buy a residential stand for herself and her 3 children, but emphasised that she needed to sell first and earn more money. VaGari who is a toilet cleaner merchant also echoed the same sentiments as Mai Chido. He reported that he needed to be economically empowered first so that he would also be able to afford a residential stand/house.

In a very interesting case, Mai Chimoyo, a widow who lives in Zengeza 3, noted that access to a permanent home would help her be empowered as a woman, since after the death of her husband she had been evicted by her in-laws from the house she had acquired with him.

Mai Chimoyo said,

*“Ndakafirwa nemurume mugore ra1996, vana vakanga vachiri vadiki kwazvo. Mukoma wemurume wangu akangoti panyaradzo yababa, mainini mochirongedza twenyu, mochitoenda kumusha kwaChivi, pano taakutoisa maroja anokubatsirai pamari yevana yezvikoro nechikafu”.*

(My husband died in 1996, a time when my children were still very young. My late husband's elder brother evicted me from the house and ordered me to go to the village in Chivi. He said that they were going

to rent out the house so that I could earn money for the children's school fees and upkeep.)

Mai Chimoyo revealed that since leaving the house, she had not received a single cent from the tenants. Her brother-in-law collected the rent, but did not give her anything for the upkeep of the children or for their school fees. Mai Chimoyo *thus* became a tenant from being an owner. According to her, she still hopes to acquire her own house one day, although she is struggling to raise her children.

The study found that participants, especially women, strongly felt that gender was a key variable to their empowerment, socially, economically and technologically. As noted by Clancy (2006) in almost every developing country, most of informal sector enterprises are owned and operated by women, thereby making women the largest proportion of the work force. Most women in the community were involved in various projects such as sewing, catering, brick moulding, vegetable marketing, knitting, dressmaking, crocheting, and retail trading, hence the need for access to housing to improve their businesses. The study also found that property grabbing was still rampant in urban areas and that there was little knowledge of the law or relevant policy in the community. However, the study also found that the community identified poverty, unemployment and a weak economy as a challenge to women's empowerment and access to housing and improving their livelihoods.

One participant stated that it was the business of the father as the head of the family to ensure that there was shelter for the family. VaBanda from Unit 'A', Seke Township said,

*"ini somusoro wemba ndini ndinosungirwa kutsvaka mari yekutenga stand kana imba nekusarudza yakanaka kana kuti inotengeka, nekuti ndini ndinoshandira mhuri.*

(Since I am the head of the family I am obliged to look for money to buy a residential stand/house or even to choose the type of house to purchase because I am the one who works and provides for the family).

VaChimudzi did not agree with Mr. Banda because his belief was that it was the business of both the father and the mother to look for a suitable, affordable and habitable home. VaChimudzi noted that,

*“Baba naamai vanosungirwa kutsvaga imba kana stand inotengeka, kana kugarika. Ini ndinotobatsirana nemudzimai wangu kutsvaga imba kana tichinge tapihwa notice pamba patinogara uye tirikutobatsirana kutsvaka mari yekutengawo stand yedu”*

(Both husband and wife must make decisions about the type of house or residential stand that is affordable and habitable. In my household my wife and I help each other look for a house in cases when we are given notice to vacate the house we are renting. We are also helping each other to raise money to buy a residential stand for our family).

However, most community members interviewed regarded the decision-making in respect of what type of house was to be acquired as something mostly done by men, since they were the ones economically empowered. By contrast, women spend much of their time at home and generally do not make any decisions about the acquisition of a house/residential stand. This is because they do not have the financial means to contribute to the buying/renting of the house. Mai Nyasha, a single mother in Unit ‘J’, had this to say:

*“Ini handisarudzi imba yekuroja nekuti mari yandinenge ndapihwa naBaba’Nyasha ndoinondiudza kuti ndotsvaga imba yakaitasei. Ndikapihwa USD\$30.00 zvinoreva kuti ndaakutsvaga imba pasina magetsi.”*

(I don’t choose a house to rent. The money that Nyasha’s father provides me determines what type of an accommodation I look for. If he provides me USD\$30.00, it means that I must look for a house in an area where there is no electricity.)



*Conversely, Mai Sorobhi, a single mother and veteran cross-border trader argued that since she was the head of her household and has always been the one working for her family, she had managed to acquire a residential stand and build a house on it on her own terms and in ways suitable for her family. She went on to say,*

*“Ini ndave nemakore makumi maviri ndichienda kunotengesa kujubheki kuti ndiriritire mhuri yangu. Mukushanda imomo ndakakwanisawo kutenga stand yangu ndikaivaka ndega zvinoenderanawo nemhuri yangu nekuwana kwangu. Ndakasarudza ndoga imba yandaida, nekuiti wekumbobvunza ndanga ndisina.*

(I have been a cross-border trader for 20 years to look after my family. Whilst doing my trade I was able to buy a stand and build a house suitable for my family and my income. I chose my house on my own since I had no one within the family to consult.)

Men are aware of the desperate struggle women experience in their efforts to acquire shelter for their families; however, this awareness has not resulted in any support for women due to strong cultural barriers and domestic violence. Mai Hossea lamented that she had managed to work and raise money to buy a stand but her husband had taken the money and squandered it with his friends and other women. Mai Hossea from Unit ‘M’ was disgruntled by this and hence has given up hope of ever acquiring a home for her children. In a similar case, *Mai Saru* had also done some savings for a stand but to no avail since her husband had opted to buy a car than to buy the stand. She had not given up hope despite this unfortunate decision. Hence, in households where there are adult men and women, the gendered division of labour generally allocates to women the responsibility of housekeeping. However, they cannot decide on how big the house maybe for them to be able to accommodate her family.

When a house/residential stand must be purchased, men generally do the decision- making. However, participants in the focus group, agreed that there was a crisis of housing in the community and that the

crisis needed attention from both men and women, hence the need for both parties to make the decisions on what type of housing to seek and secure. The participants had similar sentiments on the issue of gender and decision-making as shown below:

*“Mazuvaano hakusisina murume kana mukadzi, nhamo yakatidzidzisa kuti murume kana mukadzi vanogona kuita zvinhu zvoifambe mumba, saka taakungobatsirana.”*

(These days there is no man or woman. Experience has taught us that both can make things happen in a home. So we are now just helping each other).

The study found that there were cases in which both men and women made decisions on the type of house/ residential stand to be acquired by the household despite the prevalence of a patriarchal culture and society of the community. The study also found that women were becoming family breadwinners and that men were sometimes dependent on them as stated by the participants. Women and men were also working together to ensure the sustainability of their households and roles were being shared.

The participants stated that they preferred small affordable residential stands to buying houses since they were low-income earners. Mai Nowero reported that she had done savings but could only afford a 200m<sup>2</sup> stand and so could not buy an already built house since it was unaffordable for her. VaGari reported that since he had not yet managed to save enough for a residential stand he would continue renting. He went on to state that he had preferred to build a house in his home village in Zimuto in case the economy bites and he won't be able to afford rent in town. VaGari lamented that renting had no security of tenure since landlords will just give you notice of eviction at any time despite real estate laws. Most participants agreed with one of them who said,

*"Mazuvaano maLandlord vaakungoita zvavanoda. Unongofuma wakanzi ndakupai notice tsvagai kokuenda. Dzimweni dzenguva ukatadza kubhadhara rent unowana zvinhu zvavapanze."*

(These days landlords just do as they like. You wake up and you have a notice of eviction and they tell you to look for elsewhere to go. Sometimes if you fail to pay your rentals, they will throw out your things.)

Most of the participants reported that they had joined cooperatives, mostly in Harare South where there was expansion of the city through housing cooperatives. Mai Mangodo from Unit 'O' Seke Township observed:

*"Ini ndakajoina co-operative KuHarare South nekuti kunoku mastands acho anonetsa kuvana. Ndakawana stand kucooperative ikoko asi takanzi timbomira kuvaka. Ikozvino ndinoroja 2 rooms asi vana vakura saka zvaakunetsa. Tinongonamatirawo kuti zvestand yacho zvinobuda nekuti mari irikunetsa"*

(I joined a cooperative in Harare South because it is difficult for us to acquire a stand here in Chitungwiza. I got a stand there but we were told not to build. At the moment I am a lodger renting 2 rooms, but my children are now growing and it's becoming a problem. I pray that it will work out since money is a problem.

Most women who could not afford to rent houses in the old Chitungwiza townships moved to Nyatsime, a new settlement over which the council was in dispute with the Manyame Rural District Council and Ministry of Lands, Marondera Province. Houses in Nyatsime were cheaper to rent since there were no services such as water and electricity. Another new settlement is the Mahalapye in Unit M, O, and P in Seke where rentals are as low as \$10 but with no services. Mai Murape resorted to renting one room whilst her children stayed in the village with her parents. She worked and sent money and food to the village and clearly stated that she did not dream of buying a house or residential stand since she could not afford either of the two. The residents mourned the poor habitability of houses in St,

Mary's and Unit D which are the oldest Townships in Chitungwiza. Residents in the Mangoromera area of St. Mary's reported that most of the houses were no longer habitable as stated by Mr. *Phiri*, who said,

*"Hapana imba yemuno mumangoromera isina dombo pamsoro. Dzimba dzacho dzaa dzekudhara uye dzakavakiwa nguva yaSmith yekuti dzaigara mhuri diki. Manje mazuvaano pamba imwe neimwe inenge iine mhuri kana shanu kana gumi zvichienderana nekukura kwayo. Hazvigariki zvakadai."*

(There is no house in our area that does not have stones on the roof to secure the sheets. The Houses are old and were built for small families during the era of the Smith regime. These days the households are overcrowded, at each house there will be residing 5 to 10 families and this is not habitable

Residents in Unit D, N and F echoed the sentiments expressed by Mr. *Phiri* that the townships were now overcrowded, and the houses were no longer habitable due to poor service delivery by the city council. Most households are resorting to weaning off their children as soon as they are old enough to work for themselves to earn a living. Most residents stated that they make their grown-up children go and rent elsewhere to reduce overcrowding in their households.

Despite decongesting the townships, Nyatsime residents lamented that although they now had houses their residences were still not easily accessible since they had to drop off at Zengeza 3 bus terminus and try to get alternative transport to their residences. In some cases, they had to walk to Nyatsime an action that exposed them to possible danger, especially after dark. As illustrated in the Plate 5 below, walking to Nyatsime at night means walking through wooded areas.



**Plate 5** - The road and bridge used by Nyatsime residents in Chitungwiza (*Field Work, 2016*)

Plate 5 above also shows the road and bridge which is used by Nyatsime residents to access their residence. During the rainy season the bridge is washed away so many times since it is poorly built of cement, stone and bricks without any steel reinforcement. Thus the bridge can be termed a makeshift bridge. This is discouraging to many commuter omnibus operators who then become hesitant to venture into providing transport directly to and from town due to the bad roads. Most women who are involved in business were affected by the lack of access to the residential area. Consequently, residents shun the shuttle services of small cars such as the Toyota Raum or old cars such as the Peugeot 404, whose drivers are generally not license -holders and, therefore, have no permits for the route.

The participants reported that they now relied on cooperatives for housing. Houses were cheaper in the new areas where there were no services or access but affordable rent. The people in Chitungwiza had also adjusted to the evolution of their environment, socially, economically, culturally and accordingly invented mechanisms to survive in their communities. As reported by Mr. Phiri for those with old houses they had resorted to putting stones on the roof to ensure habitability. The researcher found that most households acquired alternative housing in new areas that are expanding or risked the unity

of the family institution by sending their families to the villages whilst they worked in town. Other residents opted to build houses in their home villages since it was less costly and was security that in the event they can longer afford town life they could relocate to the village.

According to a spokesman of The Ministry of Local Government, Urban and Rural Development, following an intensive consultative process, a National Housing Policy was adopted in 2012. The policy was based on 3 elements:

- The promotion of housing development strategies to assist the poor,
- The use of a participatory approach and,
- The mobilization of the beneficiaries' own resources
- The spokesman went on to note that all housing stakeholders were expected to contribute, and especially community-based organizations, with housing co-operatives taking the lead role. The policy defined the role of each player, including the State and the local authorities, and determines strategies to put in place to achieve the set goals. The State, through the Ministry of National Housing and Social Amenities, has the overall authority and is responsible to put in place measures to facilitate the execution of other players' respective role.

The Zimbabwe National Association for Housing Cooperatives (ZINAHCO) concurred with the Ministry of Local Government, Urban and rural Development that they had made submissions into the housing policy which reviews resulted in an explicit recognition of housing co-operatives as one of the key institutions and players in the housing sector in Zimbabwe. The policy committed the whole of Section 5:5 articulating the role played by Community-Based Organisations (CBO's) in the provision of low-income housing. It has put in place clear positive and critical strategies for the operations and integration of CBOs in housing development issues in the nation. Some

of the key policy areas cited as being critical for CBO integration by the policy were as follows:

- Land allocation and security of tenure;
- Targeted subsidies;
- A 'no eviction without alternative' policy framework;
- Broadening access to credit facilities e.g. innovative products by formal sources of housing finance;
- Implementation of flexible policies e.g. incremental development;
- Proper regulation of the CBO sector; and
- National budgetary allocations for CBOs.

The Chitungwiza Town Council Official stated that guidelines had been developed with ZINAHCO and adopted by Local Authorities to clarify and strengthen the relationship between local councils and housing co-operatives with a view to reducing political influence and abuse. He went on to explain that the guidelines' goal was to create trust and establish productive working parameters. However, stakeholders were free to use the guidelines to negotiate the terms of their partnership agreement in housing delivery, which would be included in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Among other things the terms would include the price of land or stands, the payment plan, roles and obligations of parties, development conditions, allocation procedure, dispute resolution and timeframe.

Housing co-operatives are financed contributions from members, through income generated in other activities and the financial assistance from partners. Residents in Chitungwiza bemoaned the lack of transparency of these housing cooperatives citing that the initiative was a very good but that there was mismanagement of funds by the housing cooperatives, double allocation and in some cases many corruptions in the delivery of housing. The study found that many of the low-income earners were not formally employed, and co-ops

engaged in income-generating projects (IGP) to fund their development.

The Ministry of Local Government, Urban and rural Development stated that there were legal instruments for the co-operative housing sector in Zimbabwe as follows:

- a) Cooperative Societies Act, Chapter 24:05: set out the rules and regulations on forming and operating housing co-operatives;
- b) By-laws: rules and regulations that guide the conduct of the co-op members;
- c) Revised Cooperative Development Policy of 2005: to read in conjunction with the Act;
- d) Land Developers Bill: not yet adopted, but when it is, it will help in providing guidelines on how to develop the land;
- e) Labour Relations Act (1985): helps in the regulation of the secretariat's conduct;
- f) Housing Policy: provides legal framework and strategies for co-operatives to work together.

The Council official also stated that as a local council they did not have a gender policy but borrowed from the National Gender Policy. He further reported that the council ensured gender mainstreaming in terms of employment and balancing of the number of females and males within the local authority and committees for community development projects. The Council Official also reported that the women were being encouraged to attend meetings for community development. He further noted that they have been encouraging both men and women to register and participate in community initiatives, hence effecting gender mainstreaming.

The Municipality also reported that the Local Board's budget was gender-sensitive. It was reported that the Local Board had consulted both men and women in the formulation of the budget and that



women and men benefit equally from the budget. The Council Official reported that there were projects, mainly focused on women empowerment, and that there was gender balance in recruiting council workers, and that, therefore, gender balance is an empowerment mechanism.

Recent demolitions of structures deemed by the Chitungwiza Town Council to be illegal were reminiscent of the 2005 “Operation Restore Order” or Murambatsvina in that they caused similar displacement and helplessness. The houses to be demolished had been acquired through third parties and corrupt practices in the Town Council. *Mr. Mlambo* a resident affected by the demolitions, lamented that he had bought a stand four years ago and built his eight roomed house only to be told that his stand was illegally acquired so his house was demolished. However, not only men were affected by this policy as women became homeless too. They pleaded with the government to find a way to regularise the stands. The Council official, however, reported that government had since abruptly halted the demolitions of the so-called illegal structures citing that they had been done without a full assessment of the socio-economic impact on the people. The study found that the demolitions worsened the housing problem in Chitungwiza and the country as a whole by swelling the large number of people on the housing waiting list.

The Ministry of Gender and Community Development official, another key informant, stated that the country had a National Gender Policy which also included the issue of Housing and Poverty though it was still a challenge for most women to access affordable housing. The Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing (MLGPWNH) official reported that the policy was mostly formulated on a macro level and micro level and thus caters for both Commercial and household or individual level. He noted that there were very few women in the housing sector, which has seen this sector, become

mostly male-dominated. For example, there are very few women town engineers or town planners. The Ministry of Local Government Urban and Rural Development official reported that men contributed mostly to the planning and implementation of policies.

Plate 6 below shows how the issue of housing poverty has resulted in environmental degradation through illegal acquisition of building materials such as sand thereby escalating illegal sand mining creating mini ponds which may end up risking resident's lives and health. And allocation of stands in wetlands by the Town Council.



**Plate 6** - Environmental Degradation in Chitungwiza (*Field Work, 2016*)

The Deputy Minister of Environment lamented environmental degradation that was being caused by the Chitungwiza Town Council by allocating residential stands in wetlands. He stated that there was massive deforestation and destruction of wetlands due to the housing poverty which has resulted from excess housing poverty. The Environmental Management Act (EMA) provides for the protection of

the environment and the conservation and preservation of natural resources (land, air, water, flora and fauna) and the control of development in a given area (urban and rural). The Deputy Minister stressed that the Environmental Management Act is the watchdog, an instrument used to achieve the objectives of planning as far as environmental planning is concerned and it encompasses issues such as sustainability and preservation. VaGari, VaChifamba, Mai Moyo and Mai Nyasha had similar sentiments to those of the Minister of Environment that housing poverty was the main reason why there was massive destruction of wetlands, pollution and land degradation in Chitungwiza.

The gender policy mainly focuses on the integration of men and women in economic empowerment and other sectors of the economy but has not been implemented in the community. The community in Chitungwiza has mixed feelings about the Gender Policy. Some have an idea about it and most do not want hear about since they think it destroys their marriages, they know little of how it can assist them in improving the livelihoods of most women hence it is quite a challenge for women in this area. However, the current housing policies are not so clear and are mainly marred by corruption hence does not cater for the less privileged communities. The grassroots do not seem to have been involved in the planning process of these policies hence they have little knowledge about them.

Most households in Chitungwiza, as revealed by the study, cannot afford housing because it is expensive. Among the general concerns about the area and its inhabitants are poverty, environmental degradation, poor service delivery, poor habitats, limited access to housing and corruption. The other concerns must do with affordability of housing and socio-economic connotations regarding access to housing as defined by culture. Table 4.1 illustrates the matrix of the emerging issues in the study. However, it was found out that

unemployment was very high in Chitungwiza especially among women and the sources of livelihood were commonly vending, small to medium enterprises and home industries. There was concern of underrepresentation of women in key structures of community development since there were regarded as passive participants and that they were not taken seriously by the responsible institutions. Poor social service delivery which includes water supply, refuse collection, street lighting health services and poor road networks were quite a cause for concern on how the town council was managing its operations.

**Table 4.1:** Matrix of Emerging Issues (*Fieldwork, 2016*)

Issue	Manifestation and Degree of Concern
Economy	Unemployment is very high in Chitungwiza hence most people are in the informal sector in which run small to medium enterprises, vending and home industries.
Tenure	Most Residents in Chitungwiza are Lodgers and Tenants who are on the housing waiting list which has increased yearly without any housing initiatives helping to reduce it.
Habitability	Some areas in Chitungwiza have houses that are too old hence they are no longer habitable and in turn become life-threatening hazards to residents.
Good Governance	There is concern among Chitungwiza women that women are regarded as passive participants in community initiatives and the underrepresentation in key structures of community development such as the Town Council itself. Their concerns and initiatives are sometimes not taken seriously by the responsible institutions. Regarding these concerns can be instrumental in lightening the burden of work on them which includes sustainable housing. Lack of transparency and corruption has marred the Chitungwiza town council and has made access to housing a tall order for residents.
Service Delivery	Poor social service delivery are the order of the day in Chitungwiza this includes, water supply, refuse collection, street lighting, health services and well as poor road networks coupled with an incompetent engineering department of the town Council.
Education	-Women are more likely than men to be illiterate. Women are less likely than men to have access to information and be included in

	political and community life.
Culture	The strong patriarchal society still has an effect on women's access to sustainable housing; hence due to lack of knowledge of intestate laws they are losing their homes and property to property grabbing relatives.
Environment	Environmental deterioration and problems related to sanitation and pollution (including air and water pollution from garbage and sewers). Women tend to be most affected, since they face the challenges.
Location	Some locations have poor roads and road networks hence are difficult to access such as Nyatsime which is a new residential area in Chitungwiza.

Patriarchy still affected women's access to housing due to lack of knowledge of legislature on the administration of their deceased spouses. Women were facing challenges due to environmental deterioration such as pollution because of garbage and sewerage refuse. Finally, some locations have poor roads and road networks hence are difficult to access such as Nyatsime which is a new residential area in Chitungwiza.

Many interesting research findings were presented, analysed and discussed in this chapter, mainly based on the research questions and objectives of the study. In the next chapter the researcher recommends possible solutions to the challenges of the gender, energy and poverty nexus and concludes the study.