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DONOR AID PRACTICES AND THEIR IMPACT ON CIVIL SOCIETY OPERATIONS IN ZIMBABWE: THE CASE OF ACTION AID ZIMBABWE'S GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAMME

BY

LOREEN MUPASIRI

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Abstract

This research is a summary of findings on the study of donor aid practices and their impact on civil society operations in Zimbabwe, which focused on Action Aid Zimbabwe (AAZ) Governance and Accountability programme as a case. Specifically, the study sought to relate to AAZ's programmatic, financial and administrative practices, challenges faced and the impact on civil society development work. Qualitative methods, mainly in depth interviews, observations and focus group discussions formed the backbone of the research methodology considering the nature of the study. Purposive Sampling was used to select in-depth interviewees while snowballing was used for the focus group participants. Study participants were drawn from AAZ programmes and finance staff, staff and community members from three CSOs that AAZ funds namely: Institute for Young Women's Development, Zimbabwe Young Women Network for Peace Building and Youth Agenda Trust. The impact of donor aid practices on civil society operations in Zimbabwe is inferred partly from overall aid performance and partly from the performance of individual civil society projects supported by AAZ. The research established that a top-down relationship exists between AAZ and the CSOs it funds. As such, AAZ determines the project objectives, which CSOs have to align with so as to get funding. The relationship has implications on project ownership, implementation strategies and performance of the CSOs. Conversely, the research found evidence of active citizen participation in local government decision-making in the localities where the CSOs work. The study recommends that donors should allow CSOs to set project agendas as they have an understanding of contextual settings and it also encourages project ownership.

Key terms: Civil society, civil society organizations, donor aid, governance, accountability

Declaration

This is my original work except where sources have been acknowledged. The work has never been submitted, nor will it ever be, to another university in the awarding of a degree.

Researcher: Loreen Mupasiri **Date**.....

Signed……..

Supervisor: Dr. Pindai Sithole **Date**……

Signed……

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Lastly, I acknowledge my husband who endured lonely days and nights while I worked on this research.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Phebbie Vundu and my sister, Biatrice Mupasiri without whose love and prayers I would not have made it this far.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
AAI	Action Aid International
AAZ	Action Aid Zimbabwe
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IYWD	Institute for Young Women's Development
RWA	Rural Women's Assembly
YAT	Youth Agenda Trust
ZYWNP	Zimbabwe Young Women's Network for Peace Building

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The researcher acknowledges that different scholars may have conceptualized the key terms used in this study in different ways. However, the definitions that have been given for key terms below, are for the purposes of this study.

Civil Society- This study will adopt the definition from Scholte (2011), where civil society is defined as the political space where voluntary associations deliberately seek to shape the rules that govern aspects of social life. The key characteristics of civil society include separation from the State, formed by people who have common needs and interests, inclusion, cooperation and equality.

Civil society organizations- the OECD (2006), defines civil society organizations as the multitude of associations around which society voluntarily organizes itself and which represent a wide range of interests and ties. Such organizations include but are not limited to, faith-based organizations, women's rights groups, children's rights groups, labour unions, independent research institutes and environmental groups. For the purposes of this study, civil society organizations will also be referred to as voluntary organizations whose governance and direction comes from citizens or the constituency members that they represent, without government controlled participation or representation.

Donor aid- This study used the definition of official development assistance (ODA), where donor aid consists of grants and loans, which donor governments or multilateral organizations give to developing countries to promote economic development and welfare (Reci, 2014). The data on ODA also include technical assistance and cooperation.

Governance- the "use of power in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development" (The World Bank, 1992, p.1).

Accountability- the degree to which public officials, elected as well as appointed, are responsible for their actions and responsive to public demands (Hyden and Court, 2002).

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research examined donor aid practices and their impact on civil society operations in Zimbabwe, focusing on Action Aid Zimbabwe's (AAZ) Governance and Accountability Programme as a case. Specifically, the study sought to examine AAZ's aid management strategies and practices and the impact on civil society development work and also suggest how aid effectiveness to civil society can be improved. The impact was assessed on three levels. Firstly, the ability of AAZ to achieve its stated objectives of poverty alleviation through fostering good governance and accountability of policy makers at local level; secondly, the ability of aid to strengthen civil society capacity to fulfill development objectives of economic and social welfare of poor and marginalized communities; and thirdly, the ability of aid to relieve some long-term development constraints, that is, enhancement of human and institutional capacities, fostering local ownership (participation of aid beneficiaries in identification, design, implementation and evaluation of aid programs) and improvement in economic and social infrastructure. Accordingly, the impact of donor aid practices on civil society operations in Zimbabwe is inferred partly from overall aid performance and partly from the performance of individual civil society projects supported by AAZ.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

A growing interest among donor agencies to support democratic reforms and good governance practices in developing countries has paved way for an influx of donor funds

to civil society organizations that are involved in policy advocacy and democracy campaign activities (Davis and MacGregor, 2000; Hearn, 2000; Hearn, 2010; Oxfam GB, 2013). Orjuela (2005) attributes this phenomenon to the increasing recognition that civil society has an important role to play in democracy and governance by mobilizing and educating grassroots communities to participate in public policy making processes as well as hold governments to account. Similarly, theoretical expectations on the potential of organized associations in democratic transitions in the past have also influenced donor perceptions of civil society. In the liberal conception, which dominates contemporary scholarship and policy debate, civil society provides a vehicle through which citizens can pursue common goals, participate in and influence public affairs (Orjuela, 2005; Kasfir, 2008). CSOs actively contributed to regime change and transition from authoritarian rule in Eastern and Central Europe between 1980 and 1995 through public debates, campaigns, street demonstrations and other forms of mobilization (Davis and MacGregor, 2000). Donor agencies, having been influenced by these events, became increasingly aware of the role and potential of civil society in democratic transitions in other parts of the developing world, especially sub-Saharan Africa.

However, literature from previous research, particularly on Official Development Assistance to governments in developing countries, has demonstrated that problems can arise from over-dependence on foreign funding, poor governance practices, and capacity constraints and these lessons have begun to inform donor perceptions and strategies (Orjuela, 2005; Gara 2009; Knack 2001; Easterly and Pfutze, 2008). In addition, there has been increasing criticism of civil society effectiveness despite much aid (Carlsson, Somolekae and van de Walle, 1997). Oxfam GB (2013) points out that CSOs have

demonstrated a lack of consistency in their level of direct involvement in policy processes and few make significant changes to policy outcomes. Pallas (2015) also notes that while donor agencies have been credited with funding the growth of civil society in developing countries, often through democracy promotion efforts, they have also been blamed for manufacturing an elite group of civil society organizations with limited or no grassroots connection. This is where the highly paid civil society leaders join the middle class, focus on reporting to their donors and create a distance away from the poor people and communities that they claim to represent (Orjuela, 2005; Banks and Hulme, 2012). Similarly, Sundet (2011) cautions that there is a risk of donor support contributing to the weakening of domestic accountability as civil society organizations may end up being accountable to donors rather than the constituencies they represent. These criticisms raise questions on whether the delivery of aid is the cause or effect of poor performance by civil society or whether there are gaps in terms of donor-recipient relationships and practices that have resulted in negative returns.

Conversely, other scholars (Creswell, 1999; Burnside and Dollar, 2000; Hearn 2010; Kim 2011; McGillivray 2004), dispute the arguments put forward against donor aid, pointing out that aid has, in a number of cases, contributed to positive economic development in recipient countries as well as strengthened the growth of civil society. The fact that aid has succeeded in some cases and failed in others calls for further investigations into other underlying factors affecting the impact of donor aid to either governments or civil society organizations in developing countries.

This study sets out to test the validity of these arguments in the context of Zimbabwe by critically assessing the impact of donor aid practices on civil society work in governance and democracy.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The relationship between foreign aid and recipient governments in developing countries as well as how this has impacted on public service delivery and governance is widely documented in the literature (Sithole, 2014; Moyo, 2009; Andrews, 2009; World Bank, 2005; Knack, 2001). To date, very little is known in the context of Zimbabwe about the nature of the relationship that exists between donor aid agencies and civil society organizations in the country and how particular aid practices impact on local civil society efforts towards democratic development and governance. Therefore, this study sought to investigate this notion with a focus on the aid practices of Action Aid Zimbabwe and its relationship with the implementing local civil society organizations in the country.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research sought to:

1. Establish the financial, administrative and programmatic strategies that AAZ has employed to promote democratic governance and accountability through civil society organizations in Zimbabwe
2. Assess the extent to which the donor agency strategies have been successful in promoting democratic governance and accountability through civil society's development work in Zimbabwe

3. Identify challenges that the donor agency has faced in promoting democratic governance and accountability through civil society's development work in Zimbabwe
4. Recommend key strategies that the donor agency can explore in order to strengthen civil society work on governance and accountability in Zimbabwe

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the financial, administrative and programmatic strategies that AAZ has employed to promote democratic governance and accountability through civil society organizations in Zimbabwe?
2. To what extent has the donor agency strategies been successful in promoting democratic governance and accountability through civil society's development work in Zimbabwe?
3. What are the challenges that AAZ has faced in promoting democratic governance and accountability through civil society's development work in Zimbabwe?
4. What recommended strategies can the donor agency explore in order to strengthen civil society work on governance and accountability in Zimbabwe?

1.6 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study sought to examine donor aid practices and assess the impact they have made on the work of civil society organizations in Zimbabwe, with particular focus on the extent to which Action Aid Zimbabwe has supported civil society organizations in advancing democratic and accountable governance. The aim was to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement, particularly on how donor aid agencies can strengthen

their strategies in order to effectively support and achieve positive impact in advancing democratic and accountable governance through civil society development work in Zimbabwe.

1.7 ASSUMPTIONS

This study was based on the assumption that there may be a missing link in donor funding strategies to effectively strengthen civil society work in Zimbabwe. If the findings suggest so, then viable alternatives should be sought to address this gap. It was the assumption of this study also that aid may be failing to address the governance and accountability problems in Zimbabwe due to a multiplicity of factors that have to do with the donor agencies themselves as well as the aid recipients. Another assumption in this study was that donor aid practices have a direct impact on the effectiveness of civil society organizations' work in Zimbabwe.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Donor aid has been criticized for failing to achieve sustainable development in Africa and for creating an incompetent elite civil society. Consequently, the search continues for solutions as to why donor aid has continuously failed to produce tangible results.

Accordingly, this study contributes knew knowledge on donor aid practices, particularly in relation to support for civil society in Zimbabwe. The research findings also provide important insights to donor agencies in general and Action Aid Zimbabwe (AAZ) in particular, as they identify strengths, gaps and key opportunities for improvement. This is critical in terms of contributing to the strategic review efforts for both donor agencies and their civil society recipients.

1.9 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

AAZ supports a total of eight civil society organizations (CSOs) under its Governance and Accountability Programme but this study focused on three only namely: Institute for Young Women's Development (IYWD), Zimbabwe Young Women's Network for Peace Building (ZYWNP) and Youth Agenda Trust (YAT). The Researcher chose to focus on these two CSOs for three important reasons. Firstly, the AAZ country strategy's (2014-2018) targeted project beneficiaries are youths and women. The above-mentioned CSOs work with women and youths. Secondly, the three organizations are membership based and this is an important characteristic as it helped the researcher to establish the extent to which these CSOs actually have a presence in the communities they represent and whether they have direct interactions with their members.

The three organizations in this study have a target project population of 15 000 young women and men but the research was delimited to only 30 people (10 per CSO) who are project beneficiaries of the CSOs funded under the AAZ Governance and Accountability Programme. The study also included five CSO staff members and three staff members of AAZ.

10. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to time and resource constraints, the researcher was not able to reach all the CSOs that are being supported by the AAZ under its Governance and Accountability programme. This is because these CSOs are scattered in different provinces of the Country. In order to mitigate this challenge, the researcher had to reduce the number of organizations from the originally proposed five to three. Some of the respondents, especially those from the CSOs, were not willing to release sensitive information about their operations and programs as they feared the information may be made public resulting in political victimization from local government leaders. In addition, some of them were afraid that if they openly criticize AAZ funding practices, funds would be withdrawn. However, the participants also agreed to release information after the researcher assured them that the study would establish problems and suggest possible solutions that would likely contribute to an improvement in terms of their relationship with AAZ. Furthermore, the absence of baseline data to use as basis for analyzing changes that may have taken place as a result of the project intervention was a limiting factor.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework that the Researcher adopted for the study. The chapter is also a review of previous research with a special emphasis on the issues surrounding donor practices and their efforts to support civil society's efforts in development. Specifically, the chapter reviews literature on the following themes: current discourse on civil society in international development, ideological perspectives behind donor funding, architecture of international donor aid, the concept of civil society, an overview of donor approaches and funding mechanisms, donor and CSO relations in perspective as well as the theoretical framework which guided the study.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is premised on two theories that explain the ideological convictions behind donor aid funding practices for civil society in a country and these being the deliberative democracy theory (Habermas 1996) and Putnam's (1996) social capital theory. Donor ideological convictions also have a direct influence on donor funding practices. Gutmann and Thompson (2004) point out that deliberative democracy refers to justifications on policy decisions that are made and not only by policy makers but also by citizens in development discourse. It also considers the rationale regarding citizens' preferred interests in a given development action. In other words, deliberative democracy theory helps to understand why citizens at community or national level would want their participation to be genuinely considered in government decision-making processes including public policy formulation. In other words, it is a system of democracy that

creates consensus by taking into consideration a broad range of opinions and competing aspirations from the citizens (Habermas, 1996). This means that government actions should be based on the will and interests of the people. Habermas (1996) points out that deliberative democracy has four key features namely communication, dialogue, negotiation and accommodation between government and citizens. Donor aid agencies, particularly multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and United Nations development agencies confirm the deliberative democracy because of their strong belief that citizen participation in government decision-making is a pre-requisite for democratic development (World Bank, 1992).

Social capital theory, on the other hand, refers to features of social organizations such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate development actions and cooperation for mutual benefit in a given community or country (Tzanakis, 2013). Similarly, Putnam (1996) conceptualizes social capital as anchored on voluntary associations that enable a horizontal link of people in a community with a common goal to produce mutual trust that becomes a norm that sustains interpersonal bonding. Tzanakis (2013) connects this trust to citizen engagement and argues that it is an index of the strength of civil society. Tzanakis (2013, p.6) further asserts that social capital is associated with political involvement, particularly through voluntary associations and that this "…amounts to a direct test of democratic strength". Earlier, Fukuyama (2001, p.7) pointed out that social capital is "…the sine qua non of stable liberal democracy". It is clear that social capital explains relationship between or among civil associations while deliberative democracy is concerned about the need for individuals or such civil associations to freely participate in decision-making of development actions.

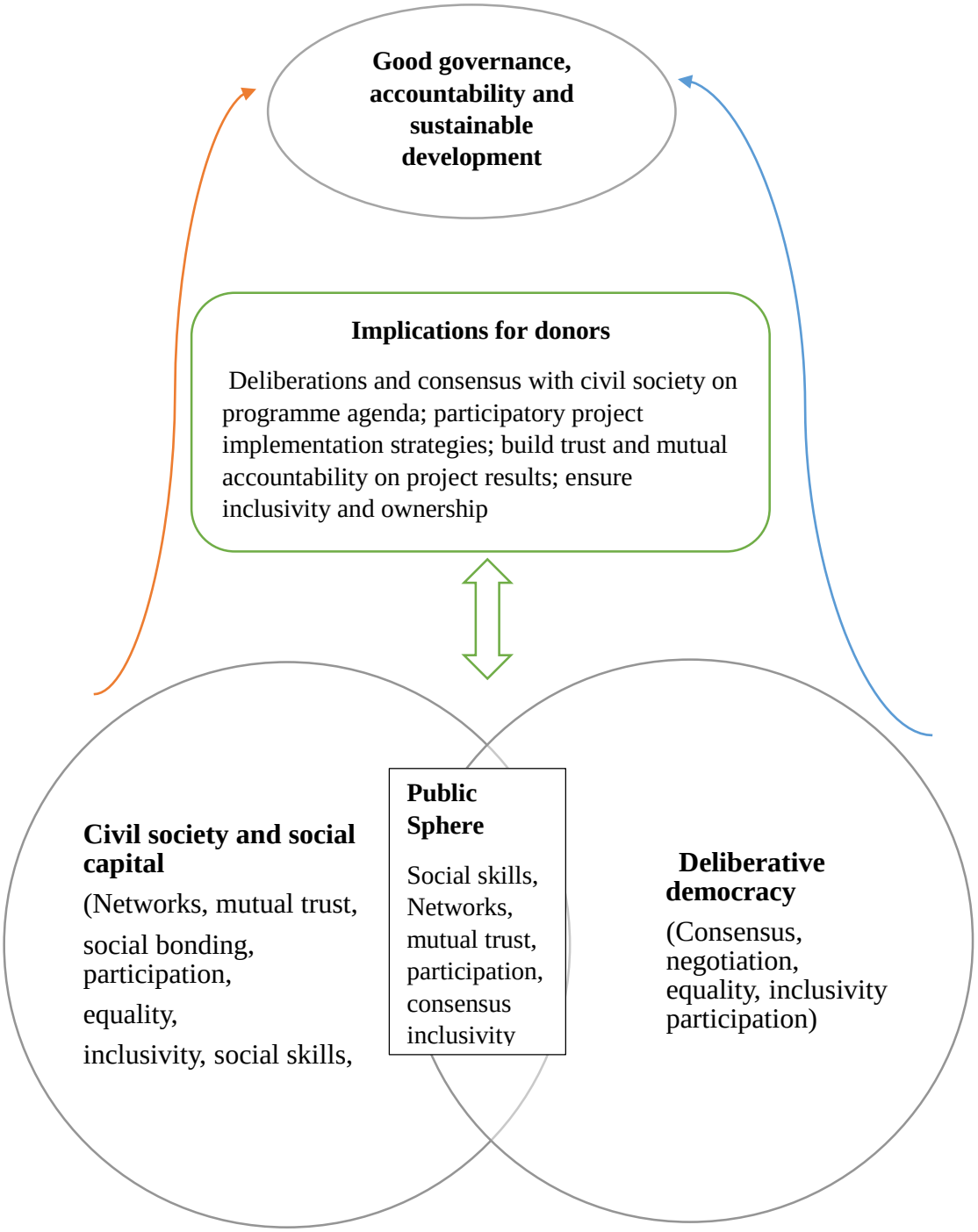
2.3 RELEVANCE OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

From the foregoing discussion, it can be seen that the deliberative democracy and social capital theories are relevant to explain the ideological foundations behind donor funding for civil society's development work in a country. The social capital theory forms the basis for analyzing the work of CSOs that AAZ funds while the deliberative democracy model is relevant to explain the ideological factors behind donor aid on civil society. Thus, deliberative democracy relates to the beliefs of AAZ as well as how AAZ's own actions promote democratic development as it works with local civil associations in Zimbabwe. As noted earlier, deliberative democracy emphasizes the accommodation of different aspirations and opinions which means that inclusivity is a necessity for democratic governance and accountability in development. Considering that donors believe that aid is effective in democratic environments where inclusivity and consensus are considered important and upheld (World Bank, 1998; Burnside and Dollar, 2004), the study sought to use the same lenses to evaluate the nature of interactions between AAZ and the CSOs it is working with in Zimbabwe on its governance and accountability program. In other words, this study sought to test the reality of deliberative democracy, not only in the light of state-citizen interactions but also donor-civil society interactions. Furthermore, the Paris Declaration principles, which speak to local ownership of projects by aid recipients, participation of CSOs in agenda setting and mutual accountability for project results means that there should be some democratic deliberations between donors and CSO recipients, hence the use of deliberative democracy and social capital theories which guided this study.

The deliberative democracy theory is relevant to ascertain the emphasis on democratic participation as outlined in development reports by most development agencies such as World Bank (1998), Action Aid (2014) and UNDP (1992) and the actual practices within aid organizations that apply this discourse in their work. Actually, the World Bank (1996) argues that sustainability and ownership of projects should be ensured through beneficiary participation in project design, where communities also deliberate and give mutual consent to development projects. In addition, the deliberative democracy and social capital theories raise the need to understand considerations on the role of aid in advancing democracy through civil society as well as explain donor commitment to principles of promoting social capital, local ownership and participation that are embedded in the Paris Declaration (Brett, 2016). Although these theories do not address aid effectiveness on civil society, they guided the study in providing an analysis framework to understand AAZ's own practices and the impact of their actions on particular civil society organizations' development work in Zimbabwe.

The diagram below summarizes the relationship between social capital and deliberative democracy theories in this study as well implications on donor aid practices within the development discourse.

FIGURE 1 SYNTHESIS OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



Habermas (1996) points out that deliberative democracy causes the public sphere to thrive. He describes the public sphere as "a network for communicating information and points of view…, the streams of communication are, in the process, filtered and synthesized in such a way that they coalesce into bundles of topically specified public opinions…" (Habermas, 1996, p. 360). It is through civil society that citizens are able to communicate and form public opinions that may influence government decisions. Similarly, donors view CSOs as necessary institutions to build social capital, which is a critical component for democracy (Davis and McGregor, 2000). Putnam (1996) describes civil society as a strategic factor that creates social capital. Similarly, Abele (2006, p. 22) views civil society as the "primary locus for the potential expansion of democracy". Agre (2004) points out that social capital has three elements namely, trust, networks and social skills. Civil society, as a network, has the capacity to bring citizens together through identification of common interests. Citizens then build trust through constant interactions and they use their social skills to negotiate for their interests (Agre, 2004). The AAZ governance and Accountability Programme focuses on addressing the exclusion of marginalized citizens from government decision-making through increasing their political agency and mobilizing them to influence democracy. The deliberative democracy and the social capital theories therefore became critical in assessing AAZ's focus on civil society as agents to mobilize marginalized people to participate in government decision-making processes to promote democratic governance in development discourse in the country.

2.4 DISCOURSE ON CIVIL SOCIETY IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Although donors have originally been known to channel funding towards governments in developing countries, particularly in the form of grants and soft loans, there has been a notable shift of donor agencies towards support for civil society organizations (CSOs) (Sundet, 2011). The Annika Billing School of Global Studies (2011) outlines the common reasons why aid agencies channel their funds towards CSOs in developing countries. Firstly, donor agencies see civil society organizations (CSOs) as key players in helping to advance democracy and the rule of law, and in enhancing the transparency and accountability of government institutions as part of a strategy towards institutionalizing good governance practices. In addition, the good governance agenda, which was propelled by the World Bank in its 1998 report on development assistance to governments in Africa, significantly influenced donor strategies in increasing support to civil society organizations (CSOs) as critical agents in advancing democratic governance. Furthermore, the ideas of scholars like Putnam and Habermas, as well as researches conducted by development institutions such as the United Nations (UN) agencies on democracy and development also shaped the debate, funding practices and strategic approach of donor aid agencies. Kasfir (2008) notes that the ideas of scholars often became strategies of donors. Consequently, donors now give growing attention to civil society that represents the demand side of public service delivery as a way of creating checks and balances for State institutions through social accountability mechanisms that empower citizens collectively to hold state institutions to account (Griffin and Judge, 2010). The belief is that citizen demand for political involvement,

complemented by state responsiveness and accountability, is essential to promoting constructive state-citizen engagement and building resilient communities.

Secondly, donor agencies believe that CSOs have the capacity to reach marginalized and poor populations better than the state thus resources can easily reach these vulnerable social groups through the CSOs (Annika Billing School of Global Studies, 2011). Davis and McGregor (2000) point out that support for civil society is not only about the promotion of good governance as an end in itself, but donor agencies see civil society as an instrument for the removal of poverty in developing countries. In addition, donor agencies are keen to promote the growth of a vibrant civil society in the developing countries that can represent the interests of the poor social groups towards the State and the market (Davis and McGregor, 2000).

The notion that civil society is synonymous with associational life as well as the public sphere has also placed civil society at the center of the international development discourse. Hearn (2010, p. 2) reflects on the current international discourse on governance and civil society and points out that, "… civil society has moved from the periphery to center stage, at least at the level of rhetoric, if not programme implementation". In addition, there is also a strong belief in the donor community that development is linked to democratic governance and civil society is a key driver of democracy. Similarly, the Southern Africa Trust (2007) asserts that some donor agencies have increased direct support to CSOs especially in countries where donors perceive that governance is not good enough. Accordingly, the OECD's Development Assistance

Committee (DAC) has explicitly stated the promotion of democracy and good governance as the main goal of development assistance [to civil society], (Enia, 2006).

Furthermore, considering the events that took place in Latin America between 1990 and 2000 (Baiocchi, 2003), grassroots movements have been recognized as having key roles in transitions to democracy. Davis and McGregor (2000, p. 52) note that this positive role "… lies behind much of the interest in the 1990s of the support for civil society by donors". Putnam's interpretation of social capital, which is "…also seen as a variable underpinning effective democratic governance, is also usually prominent in donor documentation." (Davies and McGregor, 2000, p. 52). Likewise, Hearn (2010) accounts for the renewed interest of donors in funding civil society, emphasizing that it was from within civil society that opposition to authoritarian rule had emerged in Europe, therefore, it was imperative for donors to penetrate civil society and assure Western control over popular mobilization in Africa. Thus, where western foreign policy had almost exclusively focused on government structures, the new donor democracy strategy began to recognize the importance and role of civil society. In addition, Kasfir (2008, p. 123) notes, "Civil society has played a crucial role in building pressure for democratic transition and pushing it through to completion." Civil society is also presumed to be closer to the people and a check on the power of the state (Cornwall, 2002).

However, the scholars mentioned above (Kasfir, 2008; Davis and McGregor, 2000; Hearn, 2010) also demonstrate skepticism and question the motives of donors in advancing democracy in Africa, arguing that this is just a strategy to popularize the neo-liberal policy in Africa. Gyimah-Brembong, Shaw and Samonis (2012), argue that

donors generally tend to follow the national interests of their home countries. As such, there is a trending donor practice of focusing on aspects of governance that are consistent with their foreign policy interests but not necessarily interests of aid recipient countries. In fact, "Most donors give aid to further their strategic interests even in the face of poor governance records." (Gyimah-Brembong, Shaw and Samonis, 2012, p. 2). As a result, the governance situation in recipient countries is often rather less of a success story than the much spoken about stories of democratic participation that took place in Brazil's Porto Alegre (Baiochi, 2003).

Kasfir (2008) also questions the righteousness of donor motives in supporting civil society. He contends that donors wish to avoid appearing to favour one political view over another hence the idea of supporting non-partisan advocacy is quite attractive. That is why development aid is targeted at the most influential, modern, advocacy-oriented civil society organizations, (Hearn, 2010). Boone (1995, p. 17) concurs with these arguments, pointing out that despite the popular belief that development is motivated by the need to reduce poverty in developing countries, "…substantial evidence points to political, strategic and welfare interests of donor countries as the driving force behind aid programs". Likewise, the Former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director, William Colby once remarked, "Many of these programs which…were conducted as covert operations [can now be] conducted quite openly, and without controversy", (quoted in Hearn, 2010, p.816). In other words, the implication is that funding civil society is a cover-up for advancing western interests. On the other hand, Hattori (2001) points out that aid is actually defined by the symbolic power politics between the donor and the recipient [implying that aid is a strategy for dominance].

However, other scholars (Creswell 1999; Kim 2011, Burnside and Dollar, 2004; McGillivray 2004), dispute the arguments put forward against donor aid, pointing out that aid has, in a number of cases, contributed to positive economic development in recipient countries as well as strengthened the growth of civil society. Kim (2011) chronicles the case of South Korea, which has emerged as one of the world's largest economies yet it used to be one of the least developed and a former major recipient of aid. He argues that aid played a significant role in South Korea's economic development and the improvement of the welfare of its citizens. Arguably, the policy environment in the aid recipient countries also plays a significant role in the success of donor-funded projects (Burnside and Dollar, 2004). McGillivray (2004) also contends that, in the absence of aid, poverty would be higher in developing countries.

2.5 CIVIL SOCIETY, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND DEMOCRACY

Orjuela (2005), argues that donors see civil society as a strategic factor that creates social capital and that the existence of social capital consequently increases the likelihood of democracy and development.

Fukuyama (2001) points out that social capital promotes cooperation among individuals. In the economic sphere, it reduces transaction costs and in the political sphere, it promotes the kind of associational life, which is necessary for the success of limited government and liberal democracy (Fukuyama, 2001). This explains the interest of donor aid agencies in building social capital through civil society. Likewise, low levels of social

capital lead to a number of political dysfunctions, chief among them being undemocratic governance (Fukuyama, 2001).

Hauser and Benoit-Borne (2002) argue that practices within and among civil society public spheres are the relevant source for the social capital of trust on which deliberative democracy depends. Deliberative democracy emphasizes popular participation where the political choice of citizens is based on the common good through dialogue. In fact, "the point of democracy is to satisfy the common good over and above personal interests, and has an abiding concern with justice", (Hauser and Benoit-Borne, 2002, p.263). Arguably, civil society is important for a rich concept of deliberative democracy because it is the locus of the vast network of associations between family and the state (Hauser and Benoit-Borne, 2002). Similarly, Habermas's democratic theory envisions a de-centered society, one in which the political system has no center and entrusts social networks to make up the public agenda (Kapoor, 2002). Hauser and Benoit-Borne (2002) concur with this view, pointing out that civil society's normative force resonates emphatically with the ideals of deliberative democracy. In addition, Habermas's democratic theory also pays particular attention to giving voice to and overturning subordination of marginalized groups [for example people living in poverty and women] and this also informs donor aid strategic objectives.

However, scholars also caution against the over emphasis on civil society and social capital as key elements for advancing democracy (Fukuyama, 2001; Kapoor, 2002). This is because completely removing the state can have detrimental effects as there will be no arbitrator to mediate in the event of conflicts and differing interests. Baiocchi (2003) also

argues that the state should maintain the important role to buffer social inequalities. Quendo (2002) is skeptical about the democratic theory altogether. He points out that there are limitations in applying first world theories to third world realities, arguing that Habermas's theory does not adequately address issues of particular significance to third world politics. These are, for example, the legacies of colonialism, the West's hegemony in global politics and socio-economic inequalities. Orjuela (2005) concurs, arguing that civil society organizations in Africa are frequently organized along ethnic lines, and strengthening civil society might contribute to increased ethnic polarization, which in turn destroys the associational life critical for democratic governance. Fukuyama (2001, p. 8) argues that people do not always cooperate for the common good. He notes that, "…group solidarity in human communities is often purchased at the price of hostility towards out-group members". Likewise, Kabeer, Kabir and Huq (2009, p. 8) argue that Putnam's focus on civic-minded associations and failure to consider conflicts of interests within civil society led to generalizations that took no account of the "darker side of social capital". For example, the possibility that associational ties can be used as effectively by fascist organizations to pursue their goals as they can by human rights organizations to pursue theirs.

2.6 OVERVIEW OF DONOR PRACTICES

Donor approaches differ, depending on the strategic vision and policy direction of their host countries. However, the APRODEV (2010) cautions that the dictates of donor interests and priorities are not always conducive to local autonomy and the strengthening of the social contract between governments and citizens in recipient countries.

One of the contentious issues under scholarly debate is donor reporting procedures (Rauh, 2010; Win, 2004; Mawdsey et al, 2002 and Wallace et al, 2006). Donor reporting requirements have been criticized as time-consuming and difficult to use, which has forced civil society recipients to invest more time in reporting to donors rather than actual programme implementation (McGill, 2010; Mawdsley et al., 2002; Wallace et al, 2006). One such reporting tool is the Log frame, which is a donor reporting tool that outlines the project inputs, objectives, targets, expected outcomes and quantifiable indicators for measuring success that are summarized and linked together. Some scholars have criticized the log frame as a reductionist tool due to its use of linear planning, which, they argue, is at odds with participation, locally defined development strategies and objectives (Bornstein, 2003; McGill, 2010). Bornstein (2003) further argues that development processes are complex and they need flexible and responsive interventions that respond to the dynamic and changing political environment in developing countries, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa. Likewise, Rauh (2010) points out that quantitative performance indicators may not reflect or measure the actual change in people's lives and CSOs may end up putting more focus on developing the right programme reports instead of focusing on community programming. The need to ensure accountability and transparency and guard against misappropriation of donor funds by the recipient organizations has influenced the increased focus on standardized planning, reporting and accounting practices. However, while Win (2004) acknowledges the importance of procedures, concepts and reporting methods as relevant tools to assist in conducting development work, she also argues that development is not about words and procedures but about changing people's lives. In fact, Win (2004, p. 127) argues,

> When development is reduced to fitting things on blue squares, then we create more problems than we claim to solve… The bigger story has probably not yet been told. That is the story of the ordinary woman and man out there and that story certainly does not fit on a blue square.

Similarly, Lindenberg (2001) points out that the donors' focus on programmes that have quantifiable results hardly promote long-term sustainability. In addition, there is a glaring disconnection between the paper-based plans and the realities on the ground (Rauh, 2010). Furthermore, over-emphasis on paper-based management tools and reporting gives rewards to organizations that produce good documents, while organizations that lack such skills may not be as highly respected by donors although they may be making positive impact on the ground (Jellinek, 2003; Lindenberg, 2001). Similarly, APPRODEV (2010) notes that the eligibility criteria and financing procedures of donor agencies are not adapted to the specific situation of local civil society actors and only a minority of these actors are able to meet donor requirements and this creates competition for funding rather than being an incentive for cooperation. Furthermore, Rauh (2010) also points out that the donor practice of emphasizing on formal and standardized organizational procedures has 'professionalized' civil society organizations (CSOs), forcing them to spend more time organizing formal events in hotels while contact with the communities they represent becomes less and less albeit gaining them legitimacy with donors at the same time.

Apart from reporting procedures, scholars have also noted lack of coordination as a gap in donor aid practices, which has had a negative impact on civil society effectiveness in

programme implementation (Win 2004; Rauh, 2010; Misi, 2013; OECD, 2012; Easterly and Pfutze, 2008). Misi (2013) points out that coordination is weak both among the donors themselves and even with state institutions. Likewise, Easterly and Pfutze (2008) point out that donor aid is characterized by fragmentation where too many projects are funded at the same time. The Southern Africa Trust (2007) observes that harmonization and coordination of donor projects is also constrained by differing interests among donors. This, unfortunately, compromises the gains of specialization and lead to unnecessarily high transaction and overhead costs for both donors and their civil society recipients. Easterly and Pfutze (2008) also note that the same phenomenon is prevalent even within the aid system itself. For example, the United States Government has over fifty units involved in giving aid with overlapping responsibilities for an equally high number of objectives (Easterly and Pfutze, 2008).

2.7 DONOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY RELATIONS IN PERSPECTIVE

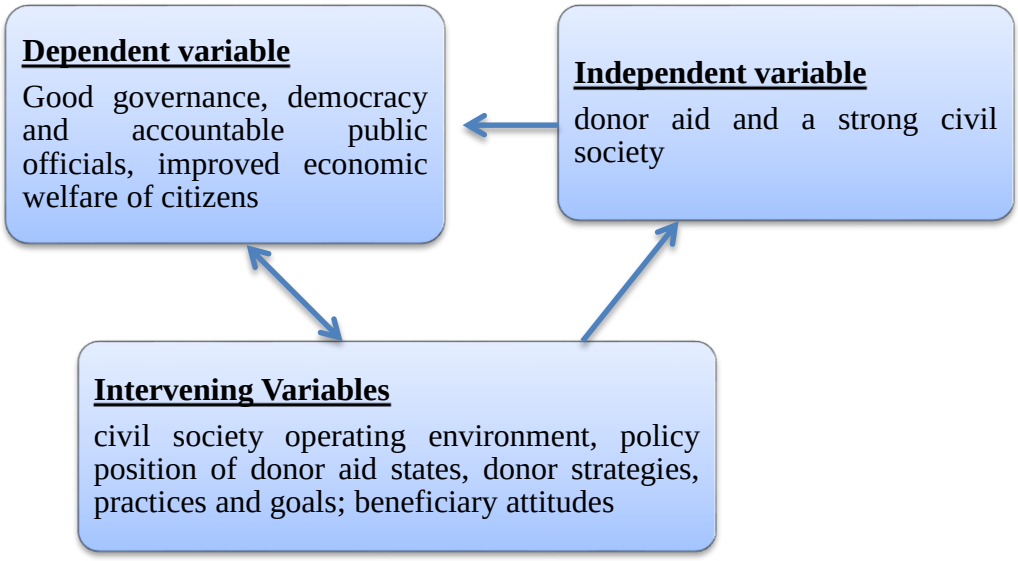
As much as donors have made efforts to relate with CSOs in a beneficial way, the relationship between donors and CSO recipients remains largely dependent. The relationship reflects dependency where CSOs depend on donors for financial support. The OECD (2012) gives an insight into donor-CSO relations, observing that civil society organizations (CSOs) experience problems with donor conditionalities and inflexibility as well as lack of clear policies. Consequently, “while DAC members recognize civil society organizations in developing countries as potential development partners, their procedures and mechanisms for channeling funds to these organizations can be overly complex and demanding”, (J. Brian Attwood quoted in OECD, 2012, p. 8). Arguably,

the dependence of CSOs on donor funding compromises their autonomy as well as their legitimacy with the governments in their respective countries.

2.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The diagram below illustrates the concepts discussed in this study and how they relate.

FIGURE 1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



(Adapted from Busiinge, 2010).

The interpretation is that improvements in governance and accountability of public officials as well as social and economic welfare of the poor is dependent on strong and representative civil society, which is a result of donor aid support. However, this also depends on a number of factors namely: the political operating environment of CSOs, donor strategies, practices and goals as well as beneficiary attitudes. Donor practices and strategies are a key component in either building a strong civil society or weakening it.

Similarly, beneficiary attitudes determine the strength of advocacy activities as well as the building of networks to fight for the common good, which is the necessary foundation for advancing good and accountable governance. There is the expectation among donors that civil society could play the role of ensuring good governance and accountability of public officials through articulation of public opinions against excessive state power.

2.9 SUMMARY

Literature reviewed in this chapter demonstrates that ideological and theoretical perspectives significantly influence donor aid practices as well as approaches in funding civil society organizations. This Chapter also discussed, in depth, the efforts that donors have made to mitigate the heavy criticism on aid effectiveness, the challenges with the theoretical assumptions that donors make and how this affects civil society. In addition, literature also demonstrates that there are challenges with donor aid practices, particularly the administrative and programmatic procedures that donors impose on their civil society recipients that have compromised the capacity of such recipients to implement effective projects that are relevant to the constituencies that they represent.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology that was adopted for this study. This research is an evaluative case study, which sought to document and evaluate the impact of Action Aid Zimbabwe's (AAZ) funding practices on the operations of the CSOs that it is supporting under its Governance and Accountability Programme. The choice for a case study research was to reflect deeply on individual organizational practices, which would not be possible if many organizations had been studied. According to Hartley (2004), a case study research consists of a detailed investigation of a phenomenon within its context to illuminate certain theoretical issues. In this case, the Researcher focused on the AAZ's Governance and Accountability programme from 2014 to 2016. AAZ is a donor agency that has worked in Zimbabwe since 1999 and has a long history of funding CSOs that implement a number of projects in different parts of the country.

The Chapter also describes in detail how the researcher chose the study population sample, how data was analyzed and the ethical considerations that were made.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Hartley (2004) defines research design as the logical steps that the researcher takes to link the research questions [and objectives] to data collection, analysis and interpretation in a coherent way. This study used qualitative research methodology. Denzin & Lincoln

(2005) define qualitative research as studying things in their natural settings, attempting to interpret a phenomenon in terms of the meaning that people attach to it. Accordingly, the use of the qualitative research methodology was prompted by the need to capture lived experiences of the research participants to obtain first-hand information that is vital to get a clear view of the AAZ funding practices.

The Researcher used the triangulation design in collecting data so as to balance and reduce subjectivity of data from different sources and different perceptions. Oliver-Hoyo & Allen (2006) point out that triangulation in qualitative research is a method that is used to compare information from multiple sources and data collection procedures to evaluate the extent to which evidence and themes converge. Accordingly, the Researcher used a number of data collection methods such as In-depth interviews, observations, Focus Group Discussions and document study to collect data. In addition, this considered that various views coming from different stakeholders on the subject of study would strengthen the validity of the study findings. Thus, the Researcher collected data from AAZ, CSO recipients, strategy documents and project beneficiaries from the communities so as to ensure multiplicity of data sources.

3.3. POPULATION SAMPLE

A sample is a subset of a population selected to participate in a research study (Polit & Hungler, 1995). AAZ funds a total of eight CSOs under its Governance and Accountability Programme but only three were selected for this study namely: Institute for Young Women and Development (IYWD), Youth Agenda Trust (YAT) and Zimbabwe Young Women's Network for Peace Building (ZYWNP). The Researcher

chose these organizations because their relationship with AAZ has been in existence for more than four years while the rest of the other CSOs are fairly new. Curtis et al (2000) points out that a sample should have the highest likelihood to generate rich information on the type of phenomenon being studied. Accordingly, the long relationship that these organizations have with AAZ made it possible for them to share richer experiences of the Agency's funding practices. The Researcher conducted 8 in-depth interviews with 3 AAZ staff management members and 5 CSO staff members consisting of directors and staff members. The Researcher also conducted 3 FGDs with the community members who are project beneficiaries for the AAZ projects. Thirty people, ten for each FGD, participated. Thus the research drew 38 participants.

3.3.1 SAMPLING PROCEDURE AND TECHNIQUES

The Researcher chose purposive sampling as the most appropriate method because this is an evaluative qualitative research, which requires research participants who have extensive knowledge on the subject of study. Accordingly, the Researcher applied her knowledge of the research problem to handpick the participants. More so, the research is a case study and there was need to make use of participants that have deep knowledge and experience with AAZ practices. In addition, the Researcher used the maximum variation method, which is a type of purposive sampling to ensure balanced collection of data. Maximum variation is a type of purposive sampling where the researcher chooses participants who have different expertise and knowledge on the same phenomena (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016). This helped the researcher to look at the subject from all available angles thereby achieving greater understanding. Within that context, the

Researcher interviewed CSO directors and AAZ staff members who have knowledge in Programing and strategy development, finance and administration as well as monitoring and evaluation. The Researcher chose participants using the following criteria: level of knowledge, length of time working for the organization (minimum of two years), position within the organization as well as job responsibilities.

In order to recruit participants for FGDs, the Researcher used snowball sampling where CSOs' staff members made references of members who have worked with the CSOs for two years or more. Those who were referred in turn referred the researcher to their own networks of people that they work with in their respective communities. This is because this study focused only on the period 2014 to 2016. This sampling method was appropriate as the Researcher was looking for participants who have experience working with and benefitting from AAZ funded projects.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The Researcher used in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observations and document study to gather data for this research.

3.4.1 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

In-depth interviews involve conducting intensive individual conversations with a small number of respondents to explore their opinions and views on a particular situation or program, (Boyce & Neale, 2006). The Researcher used this data collection method so as to capture the lived experiences of the research participants. It also gave the Researcher

the opportunity to deduce meaning from facial expressions of the participants during the interviews, especially with CSO directors, which helped to enrich the Researcher's understanding of how they feel about the AAZ funding practices.

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions are an effective way to obtain information about how people think, feel, or act regarding a specific issue. It is a type of in-depth interview that is accomplished through a group. Focus group discussions are appropriate for evaluative research especially when they involve beneficiaries of a certain programme (Freitas et al, 1998). Accordingly, the researcher employed focus group discussions because they were useful in evaluating the impact of AAZ projects on community members.

3.4.3 Participant Observations

Participant observation is a process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of people under study in their natural settings (Kawulich, 2005). This method was appropriate for this research as it gave the Researcher the opportunity to relate to the settings within which AAZ interacts with CSO recipients and also to learn "what life is for an insider while inevitably remaining and outsider", (Dewalt and Dewalt, 2000, p. 1). The Researcher observed two partner reflection meetings that AAZ conducted with the CSOs it funds and two training workshops on shrinking political space and monitoring and evaluation.

3.4.4 DOCUMENT STUDY

It was important for the Researcher to study the AAZ country strategy documents, annual reports for CSOs and AAZ so as to verify and validate the data that was obtained through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The Researcher requested from AAZ to be allowed to observe and document the proceedings of their annual reflection meetings and some of the training workshops. Permission was granted as the Researcher had conducted prior discussion with the AAZ Country Director on the intention to conduct the study as well as the objectives of the study. AAZ funded the Researcher's travelling costs to the training workshops. In-depth interviews and Focus Group discussions were also conducted after getting consent from the research participants.

In order to ensure reliability of data, the Researcher used standardized data collection tools such as the interview guide and a guide for focus group discussions. The development of the tools was informed by the research problem and objectives. The Researcher also pre-tested the interview guide to ensure that the questions were clear and easily understood. Pre-tests were done randomly with three community members and 2 CSO field officers. The Researcher also reviewed AAZ's 2014-2018 strategy document, annual reports of the CSOs under study and AAZ annual reports. Only documents produced within the period between 2014 and 2016 were reviewed since the study is focusing on this period only. Desk review of documents was an important data collection

method as this provided background information and facts about projects implemented before primary data could be collected from research participants.

Making use of FGDs, the Researcher adopted the concept of Beneficiary Assessment as postulated by Salmen (2002), which is a process of assessing the value of a project or programme as perceived by principal users. Considering that this study focused on assessing the impact of donor aid practices with a specific case of AAZ Governance and accountability Programme, beneficiary assessment was necessary to reflect deeply on the impact from the perspective of the beneficiaries of the programme, particularly the communities in which the CSOs work. Beneficiary assessment focuses on evaluating how the intended beneficiary views the value of a programme and practices as they affect his/her life (Salmen, 2002).

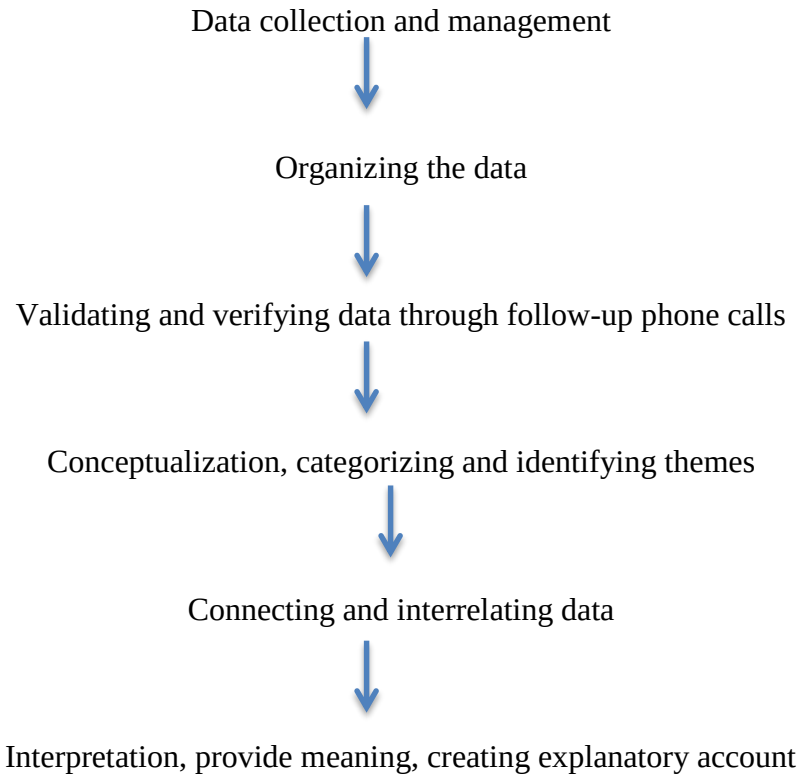
(See appendix 2 for data collection tools guide)

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS, ORGANIZATION AND PRESENTATION

The Researcher employed content analysis to analyze data. The database consisted of interview transcripts, voice recordings, field notes, FGDs transcripts, CSO annual reports and AAZ strategy documents. Firstly, the Researcher read through the interview transcripts and made brief notes on recurring phrases, statements and words. The second step was to categorize the data according to emerging themes and patterns. Themes were further examined in detail, linking them to direct quotes from research participants. The themes were also analyzed in comparison with reviewed literature on donor aid practices as well as data from reports and strategy documents of AAZ and CSOs. The objective was to test and verify the research findings in light of the themes and theories that

emerged from the literature review. The Researcher attempted to understand the themes from the viewpoints of the participants while setting aside her own pre-conceptions. The diagram below shows the steps that the Researcher took to organize and analyze the data.

FIGURE 3 DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS (ADAPTED FROM DE HOYOS & BARNES, 2012. P. 4)



The Researcher also used tables to present data. However, most of the data is presented in descriptive form.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Researcher ensured and adopted the following ethical considerations:

Privacy- Burns & Grove (1993) describe privacy as the freedom an individual has to determine the time, extent and general circumstances under which personal information

is shared or withheld. In this context, the researcher made sure that the participants had the right to decide whether or not to release personal information or any other information that they felt they should not divulge.

Confidentiality and anonymity- in order to protect confidentiality and anonymity, the respective research participants' identities were not openly linked to their individual responses. In fact, the researcher gave each respondent a code as identity for the purposes of the research.

Consent- the researcher respected the right of participants to participate out of free will, without any undue influence. Adequate information pertaining to the study objectives was shared with the participants and upon agreement to participate, the participants were asked to sign a consent form. The consent form also explicitly explained the right of participants to withdraw from the study should they feel the need to do so. The researcher also managed to get official approval to conduct the study from the AAZ Country Director. The purpose of the study was explained to participants and official approval from their respective organizations was sought before conducting the interviews. Furthermore, during the in-depth interviews, the researcher only took notes and voice recordings with the approval of the interview participants.

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Chapter looked at the research methodology that was employed to carry out this study and the ethical considerations that were made. The data collection tools that were used are: Focus Group Discussions, In-depth interviews, document review and analysis as well as observations.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The study revealed three major findings. Firstly, the research revealed that there is a top-down linear relationship between Action Aid Zimbabwe's funding practice and the operational strategies of the civil society organizations (CSOs) in Zimbabwe that it funds. Specifically, the CSO project design processes, implementation strategies, project beneficiaries as well as financial management practices are significantly influenced by donor policies and operational procedures. Firstly, the research established that there are unequal power dynamics between AAZ and its CSO recipients. Secondly, the sustainability of the CSOs' administrative, financial and programmatic operations are heavily dependent on AAZ and other donors. The study found that this situation has a negative impact on their ability to achieve and sustain significant positive changes within the communities that they work. AAZ requires its CSO recipients to disclose any other donors and funding sources that they have and AAZ assessment reports confirmed that the CSOs only have foreign donors as funding sources. Lastly, in spite of some relational challenges owing to both AAZ funding practices and CSO project implementation strategies, there was evidence of active citizen participation in local government decision-making processes and influence on development changes in the areas that the CSOs work.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Research participants consisted of AAZ staff members, directors and staff of IYWD, ZYWNP and YAT as well as community members who work with these organizations. A total of 38 respondents participated in the research where 30 were FGD respondents and 8 were in-depth interview respondents. The response rate is tabulated below.

TABLE 4.1 RESPONSE RATE

Data Collection Method	Number of Targeted Respondents	Number of Actual Respondents	Response Rate	Overall average Response Rate
3xFocus Groups Discussions	30	30	100%	95%
In-depth Interviews	10	8	80%	

The study focused on AAZ and its CSO recipients that work with young women and men between the ages of 18 and 35. Most of the respondents are young women between the ages of 18 and 35. This is so because AAZ programmatic focus for the period under study is gender responsive governance and accountability with primary target beneficiaries being women and youths. The sex distribution of the respondents is shown in Table 4.2

TABLE 4.2 SEX DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Sex	**Frequency**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative**
Male	12	28,6	28.6
Female	30	71.4	100%
Total	42	100	100%

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

This section is the analysis and presentation of the research findings in line with objectives 1, 2 and 3. Objective 1 sought to establish the programmatic, financial and administrative strategies that AAZ employs to support CSOs under its governance and accountability programme. Objective 2 focused on assessing the impact and extent to which these strategies have been successful. Objective 3 spoke to the challenges that AAZ has faced in promoting democratic governance and accountability through civil society.

4.3.1 AAZ PROGRAMMATIC PRACTICES

The study findings revealed that AAZ's development practices from the design stage to the implementation stage are anchored on principles of good governance and democracy. This is a notion where citizen participation in government decision-making is upheld and is at the center of development.

Firstly, AAZ strongly believes that the prevalence of poverty and slow rate of development in developing countries is primarily caused by undemocratic governance practices that feed on exclusionary policies (Action Aid, 2014). In other words, they believe that lack of citizen participation in local and national government decision-making processes causes poverty because when citizens are not included in decision-making, then public policy making becomes limited in addressing the welfare needs and priorities of the people. This is because when policy decisions are not informed by citizens' needs and priorities, they come short of addressing such needs (Babooa, 2008;

Fung 2015; Biocchi, 2003; Berner 2001; Chikerema, 2013). In fact AAZ identified the contextual problem that informs their programming as the "…interlinked development problems in Zimbabwe, which may include the centralization of decision making power…lack of public accountability and endemic corruption…restricted democratic space for civil society and ordinary citizens" , (Action Aid Zimbabwe, 2014, p. 4).

The quotation above shows that AAZ believes that lack of development is directly linked to restricted citizen participation in decision making, hence the justification for the Governance and Accountability Programme. Similarly, Brass and O'Dell (2012) argue that the success of development and participatory governance depends on an active civil society with healthy levels of civic engagement, which is important to influence democratic governance practices. Key principles of democratic governance include accountability, transparency, responsiveness, inclusivity and legitimacy of government authorities and policies with citizens (Graham, Amos and Plumptre, 2003). This is also in tandem with the deliberative democracy theory as postulated by Habermas (1996). AAZ management staff (coded as M 1 and M 2) strongly argued that such principles can only be upheld through citizen engagement. They revealed that this is the primary reason why AAZ emphasizes on working with CSOs that have community membership as they are better placed to mobilize citizens to hold their governments to account.

Secondly, AAZ considers the Zimbabwean governance system as primarily exclusionary and that it tends to create inequality hence there is a need to "transfer good governance best practices through capacity building and deliberately creating platforms where poor

people, especially women, can engage and participate in decision-making" (M 2, 2017). This principle argues alongside Blomkvist (2003) who points out that the people's empowerment and their ability to hold government authorities to account is influenced by their capabilities. Accordingly, the funding that is channeled to CSOs is meant to develop the capabilities for people to demand accountability from government authorities. The assumption is that working with CSOs that have a presence in the communities is an effective way to mobilize citizens to participate in decision-making and build the social capital that is needed to advance local and national democracy, which is a critical component for development. AAZ's M 2 asserted that,

> We want to address all forms of excluding vulnerable social groups from participating in decisions that affect their lives. In addition, CSOs are in touch with the people, they work in the communities and we believe they have the capacity to mobilize...they can achieve greater impact because of the existing relations that they already have with the policy makers...CSOs are conduits for ordinary people to air out their views and to interact with policy makers.

The remarks above further confirm AAZ's firm belief in the role and capacity of CSOs to bridge the gap that exists between citizens and government through mobilizing communities to participate in decision-making. Kasfir (2008, p. 127) quotes the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) saying that civil society plays an important role "in bringing about democratic changes…" DANIDA is Denmark's development aid agency, which manages the Danish government's development funds. DANIDA is the host donor for AAZ's Governance and Accountability Programme. Thus, the interest in supporting civil society is also influenced by DANIDA and ultimately, the Danish government.

Thirdly, AAZ emphasizes on the principle of the human rights based approach (HRBA) to development, particularly the rights of people to freely influence public policy, access quality public services and to participate in the way that they are governed. As such, part of its mandate is to "advance the political agency" of poor and marginalized people. Blomkvist (2003, p. 11) gives a vivid description of HRBA, pointing out that,

> A rights based approach recognizes that human rights are both a cause and consequence of poverty. Violations create inequalities, contribute to the social exclusion and marginalization of certain groups [for example women and youths] and erect barriers to accessibility of key social services. The human rights based approach moves away from the notion that the beneficiaries of development are subjects of charity. Instead, it recognizes individuals as rights holders and places obligations on governments to protect and promote their rights. Linked to this, the right to participate in decision making is a key human rights principle to development. Participation of the poor and marginalized, is critical to ensure that strategies to address inequality, discrimination and poverty are relevant and appropriate.

Similarly, the HRBA is AAZ's key strategic principle, which informs their target beneficiaries youths and women). Accordingly, AAZ only funds CSOs that have the same convictions in terms of advancing human rights and the political influence of ordinary people. The rationale behind this is that governments that respect human rights

and human dignity are likely to score better in good governance indicators as postulated by the United Nations Development Programme (Graham, Amos and Plumptre, 2003). This is the reason why the Governance and Accountability programme specifically focuses on empowering women, youths and men living in poverty to hold their governments to account and to also demand participation in decision-making processes so as to address economic and social injustices. Thus the Programme is premised on the ideology of deliberative democracy, where citizens and elected officials should actually engage in dialogue and agree on key policy issues and development programs (Baiocchi, 2003).

In view of the AAZ ideological principles discussed in this section, the next sub-sections focus on program design and implementation strategies.

4.3.1.1 PROGRAM DESIGN STRATEGIES

Findings from the in depth-interviews conducted with two AAZ staff and three CSO directors revealed that CSOs do not have absolute autonomy in developing project thematic areas, objectives and even the reach of project beneficiaries. AAZ Programs staff acknowledged that initially the development of the Country strategy had to be in line with Action Aid International (AAI) head office and the host donor, which is DANIDA's global strategic objectives. DANIDA channels funds to AAZ through the AAI which is based in Denmark. As such, although AAZ conducts context and political analyses in order to develop projects that are relevant to Zimbabwe, they still have to operate within the DANIDA global framework and objectives. This confirms the

International Development Association's (2007) assertion that aid is explicitly motivated by the interests of donor host countries.

Similarly, the CSOs that want funding from AAZ are expected to develop their project proposals in-line with the AAZ strategic objectives and that becomes one of the key qualifications for funding. All interviewees from the CSOs acknowledged that sometimes it is difficult for them to exercise independence in developing project proposals as they have to customize project activities to fit in the AAZ objectives so that they qualify for funding.

The researcher noted a mismatch between the project design processes as outlined in the Country strategy document and the actual design practice on the ground. The AAZ strategy document stipulates that project focus areas are developed in a participatory manner where AAZ conducts consultative meetings with CSO recipients in order to gather views on key priorities and project focus areas. However, the in-depth interviews conducted with CSO directors revealed that AAZ, in practice, develops its own project focus areas and objectives, which the CSO recipients then have to align with and that becomes one of the key qualifications for them to get funding. The researcher also observed a reflection meeting that AAZ conducted in November 2016, which further confirmed this finding. The agency had already developed a project strategy document for 2017 and the CSO recipients were divided into groups and given 30 minutes to discuss and give comments on the document. Interestingly, the meeting participants

focused on typographical errors rather than the project objectives and focus areas. The CSO recipients were then asked to pick the objectives that they would want to contribute to and develop project plans for 2017 from there, which would be submitted to AAZ the next day before the end of the meeting. This finding is in contradiction with Mansuri & Rao's (2012, p. 1) argument that there "…has been the underlying belief that involving communities in at least some aspects of project design and implementation creates a closer connection between development aid and its intended beneficiaries." This observation prompted the researcher to make follow-up inquiry with the CSO directors and staff during the in-depth interviews to find out why they didn't actively probe the strategy document. Out of the five that were interviewed, three said that it was pointless because nothing would change, one said the objectives in the Strategy document are already in line with their organizational mission and vision while one expressed disappointment with the process. Similarly, in-depth interviews with the AAZ's M1 and M2 confirmed that the design practice is not as participatory as the AAZ strategy document states. Wallace, Bornstein and Chapman (2006, p. 165) echo this finding, arguing that with donor projects there is usually a "disjuncture between the paper-based plans…and day to day realities." M 1 and M 2 clearly pointed out that the Action Aid Internal Head Office in Denmark, firstly comes up with project thematic areas, which AAZ then has to customize according to the local context. AAI also approves the strategy document first before releasing funds for implementation. This results in postponement of project commencement dates as the AAI head office oftentimes returns the project documents with comments on changes that have to be made. Similarly, when AAZ receives comments from the head office, they in turn send back the project proposals of CSO recipients so that they can also make changes accordingly.

There was, however, a general agreement among all the CSO interviewees that, once the project proposals are approved, AAZ is flexible to changes in activities by the CSOs during the course of implementation (if need be), as long as such activities remain within the boundaries of contributing to the achievement of laid down strategic objectives.

4.3.1.2 PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

AAZ major implementation strategies include capacity building, technical support and field visits. The strategies are explained in detail below.

Capacity building: 'Training for Change'- AAZ calls its capacity building initiatives 'training for change'. Findings established that although AAZ's CSO recipients have the autonomy to implement their approved projects, AAZ has its own strategies that they feel are necessary for "strengthening the implementing capacities of our partners", (M 1, 2017). Firstly, AAZ's capacity development strategies include capacity building exercises for its CSO recipients particularly on how they can advance the Agency's thematic areas. For example, the 2014-2018 project thematic areas are gender responsive public services, social accountability focusing on local governance, tax justice and coalition building. Between 2014 and 2016, AAZ conducted numerous training workshops for the CSO programme officers to build their capacity to effectively influence policy change on these thematic areas.

However, CSO interviewees also complained that they are fatigued by the numerous training sessions as each training usually takes a week long, with some of the trainings

being conducted at the Action Aid Denmark training Centre (MSTCDC) in Arusha, Tanzania. The researcher also sought to investigate why AAZ prefers conducting some of its capacity building trainings in Tanzania and whether this is cost effective. M 2 pointed out that the arrangement is part of the DANIDA funding framework for the governance and accountability programme. In addition, MSTCDC is the training Centre for AAI funding beneficiaries from all over the world hence it is a Centre for cross-learning, networking and adopting best practices through interacting with CSOs from other countries. However, CSO interviewees had a different opinion. The director of CSO 3 argued that,

> Personally, I haven't seen the differences between the trainings we do here and those in Tanzania. I think it is more about instilling Action Aid International values rather than cross-learning because I am yet to learn something worth adopting for our Zimbabwean context.

The director of CSO 1 put it thus, "these training workshops are eating too much of the time that should be used for implementation. In addition, AAZ is not the only donor that is training us on these thematic areas." The researcher further conducted a comparative analysis of the training workshops that the CSOs under study did with AAZ and other donors, which focused on the same thematic areas so as to ascertain the impact this has had on the CSOs' project implementation. Findings are tabulated below

TABLE 4.3 NUMBER OF CAPACITY BUILDING TRAININGS AND THE IMPACT (2015-2016)

Organization	Thematic Area	Number of trainings	Number of donors conducting the training	Impact
CSO 1.	Social accountability	6	AAZ and one other	• Increases effectiveness in program implementation due to improved capacity and knowledge • Losing touch with constituencies because more time is spent away in hotels for training workshops • Consumes time that is needed for implementation • Creates fatigue on program officers due to repeated trainings on same thematic area • Creates problems in standardization of concepts as donors have different conceptual approaches to same thematic areas
	Gender responsive governance and budgeting	4	3	
	Monitoring and evaluation	10	5	
	Political economy and context analysis	5	3	
CSO 2	Social accountability	4	3	
	Gender responsive governance and budgeting	5	2	
	Monitoring and evaluation	7	4	
	Political economy and context analysis	3	AAZ only	
CSO 3	Social accountability	5	3	
	Gender responsive governance and budgeting	8	3	
	Monitoring and evaluation	8	3	
	Political economy and context analysis	3	2	

The repetitions in trainings tabulated above confirm the assertion by Misi (2013) that donors usually undermine what people know hence they continue disseminating knowledge that may not be necessarily new.

Furthermore, the research also established evidence of frustration on the part of the CSO recipients, which they did not openly display but would let out in their own informal discussions or during training workshops where AAZ senior staff members were not present. The researcher had the opportunity to observe the proceedings and discussions of two workshops that were conducted at MSTCDC in Tanzania. One was on shrinking political space (November 2015) and another on monitoring and evaluation (March 2016). The CSO workshop participants complained that the workshop facilitators were not giving new knowledge and that they were not competent trainers. The November 2015 workshop also had some few legislators from Zimbabwe as part of the participants and these were not afraid to openly air out their views. During the course of the workshop one of the legislators asked, "Why did you bring us here because we are giving these guys [the trainers] information instead of them giving us information? We could simply have discussed these issues back home and saved time!" CSO staff members who were present welcomed his remark with silent nods. The same complaint also came out of the monitoring and evaluation workshop where participants complained of repetition and lack of new knowledge on the part of the trainer and that AAZ was not responding to the contextual demands of Zimbabwe in terms of monitoring and evaluation strategies. The trainer responded, "Action Aid is generally inward looking, which is an operational dysfunction." Results displayed in the table above and the fatigue expressed by CSO

interviewees and workshop participants shows that donor aid agencies are not coordinated in their efforts on CSOs, which has resulted in repetition of activities.

Technical support for 'People for Change'- The research found evidence that AAZ depends highly on skills exchange and transfer so as to ensure smooth implementation of the projects that it funds through CSOs. AAZ calls this the 'People for Change' strategy where expatriates from other African Countries and Europe (especially Denmark) are assigned to different CSO recipients to give technical support and advice on project implementation. The placement of such personnel is based on organizational capacity assessments, capacity gaps identified from compliance and field visits as well as emergence of new programme priorities. The personnel then assist the CSOs to implement the projects in line with the AAZ thematic areas and strategic objectives.

CSOs have welcomed the People for Change support with mixed feelings. Some feel that the expatriate personnel come with a "know-it-all" attitude where they dictate how things should be done and this frustrates the host organizations. CSO 1 program officer complained, "These people are not Zimbabwean and they don't understand our context. It's frustrating to be told what to do by someone who has no idea of where we are going or where we are coming from." Similarly, Bornstein (2003) argues that external expertise-oriented approaches miss the complexity of development challenges as it negates local knowledge and politics. Conversely, the CSO 3 staff member remarked that the People for change technical support has helped their organization to achieve more

impact than what they could have done alone. However, upon follow-up inquiries with CSO directors, two of them were of the opinion that some of the tensions faced with technical support personnel and CSO programme officers are sometimes personality conflicts and not the fact that the practice is at fault.

Field Visits and Partner/CSO Assessments- AAZ also carries out field visits and partner [CSO recipients] assessments as part of the project monitoring process. The objective of the field visits is to assess the impact of the work that CSOs do as well as pay courtesy visits to the local public officials that the CSOs target as part of the advocacy work. Findings revealed that CSO programs staff are quite happy with the fact that AAZ pays courtesy visits to government officials as this brings legitimacy to the work that they do. Furthermore, the Director of CSO 1 pointed out that field visits "…also allow them to see the context in which we are operating and helps them to better understand us." Interviewees from all the three CSOs that were part of this research commended AAZ for inviting government officials from the local authorities where the CSOs work to the partner reflection meetings and some of the training workshops. This is because that involvement of government officials has strengthened the relations of CSOs with the government officials and institutions as well as created space for CSOs to influence policy and local developmental plans in spite of the volatile political operational environment. CSO 2 director remarked,

> This approach by AAZ is unique and they are the first donor, and perhaps the only one, who have been transparent and humble enough to engage public officials in that manner. Most of the other donors we work with do

> not even want to be known that they fund us. They actually make it a contractual obligation to force us to conceal their identities. They are like enemies of the state. (CSO 2 director, 2017).

Mawdsey, Townsend and Porter (2005, p. 29) also point out that field visits "…contribute to comprehensive monitoring processes and help eliminate corruption where some civil society organizations produce project reports that have no basis in reality."

However, one issue that came out as a frown among the CSO interviewees is that AAZ has used field visits to interfere with project implementation and dictating how the CSOs should conduct field activities. CSO 1 Programmes officer complained, "AAZ should stop interfering with our program implementation and dictating how things should be done because they are not conversant with our operating context." Upon further probing on whether they had raised this concern with AAZ, the officer chuckled and said, "Hmmm...It's tricky." The CSOs feelings with regards to the People for Change and AAZ field visits clearly displayed subtle signs of unequal power relations between AAZ and its funding recipients.

4.3.1.3 Program Accountability and Reporting Requirements

While the CSOs appreciated the fact that AAZ has made efforts to train them on how to meet reporting requirements, there was a strong agreement among all CSO interviewees that the AAZ reporting templates are not user friendly. Consequently, the CSOs

sometimes end up spending more time working on the reports instead of implementing project activities. CSO interviewees expressed frustration with the half-year and annual programme reporting templates, which they described as confusing. Actually, when responding to questions on reporting requirements, the words "confusing", "traumatizing", "challenging" and "difficult" kept coming out. CSO 1 director lamented, **"**Their reporting template is very rigid. The things they measure… sometimes you wonder if they really speak to achievements. They need to change that matrix." CSO 3 director concurred,

> The template is very confusing. Every year our programs staff are going through reporting clinics and they still can't figure out what AAZ wants with that template. I wonder why they still haven't changed it. All organizations have the same problem with that template. So I feel we are not the problem, the template is the problem. Maybe it's because that is the template that Denmark wants and AAZ is not being honest with us, but honestly I don't think the person who developed that template understands the context of Zimbabwe. We all can't be that daft with reporting templates.

The researcher however established that AAZ has conducted 'reporting clinics' with the CSO programme officers but the clinics seem to have achieved very little results. The annual partner reflection meeting that the researcher observed in October 2016, where the first three days of the meeting were spent on reporting, confirmed this finding. The AAZ Programme Manager and her team tried to correct reporting errors as individual

CSOs presented their reports. The discussions on project reporting issues clearly displayed a mismatch between what AAZ regards as project outputs and outcomes and what the CSOs perceive to be so. The AAZ Programmes Manager ended up resolving to deal with the reports on a case to case basis with individual CSOs so as to agree on what should be the project outputs and what should be outcomes.

The other contentious reporting issue between AAZ and its CSO recipients is on target population in terms of the number of people *reached* as compared to the number of people *impacted* by project activities. The researcher found out that AAZ emphasizes on numbers of people that benefit from its projects, either directly or indirectly. Direct beneficiaries are those that undergo training, participate in advocacy and lobby meetings and other CSO/AAZ funded activities. Indirect beneficiaries are those that benefit from changes that happen as a result of the project activities. For example, if a local government decides to drill a borehole in a certain ward to increase water access as a result of the lobbying efforts of a particular CSO that AAZ funds, the CSO has to give an estimation of the number of people who benefit from that borehole and that is the number of people *impacted.* Conversely, if a CSO mobilizes, say, 300 people to demonstrate against public service providers on poor service delivery, that is the number of people *reached.* However, CSOs were only reporting on the number of people reached because they feel that estimating on number of people impacted is exaggerating project results and it is also time consuming to look for statistics of people who live in a whole community. In addition, CSO programme officers pointed out that AAZ should appreciate the fact that other CSOs are also doing the same advocacy work in the same

communities they work hence they cannot attribute all changes to themselves. Similarly, Win (2004, p. 125) comments on donor requirements saying, "…we have to constantly try to remember what a goal, purpose, objective or output means…" However, two of the CSOs that were part of this research reported on estimated number of people impacted but most of the CSOs that participated in the reflection meeting (10 out of 15) did not report on impacted numbers. The table below outlines the targets in terms of number of people that each CSO should reach and impact (as stipulated in the AAZ Programme Objective Plan), juxtaposed with reported numbers. The table only focuses on CSOs that participated in this research.

TABLE 4.4 NUMBER OF TARGET BENEFICIARIES AND ACTUAL RESULTS (2016)

Name of CSO	**No. of direct beneficiaries (reach)**		**No. of indirect beneficiaries (Impact)**	
	Target (as indicated in AAZ Programme Plan)	**Actual results**	**Target**	**Actual Results**
CSO 1	1 850	597	5 000	1 299
CSO 2	2 000	1 899	5 000	1 899 (reported same number of people reached i.e. direct beneficiaries
CSO 3	1 500	730	3 000	13,584

Sources: IYWD, ZYWNP and YAT 2016 annual reports

The table above shows that only CSO 1 and CSO 3 managed to report on impacted numbers.

However, despite the reporting challenges, all CSO interviewees concurred that the AAZ reporting requirements are actually much better than what they have experienced with other donors. The researcher noted that the Agency has made significant strides to introduce flexibility and sometimes leniency on reporting. CSO interviewees acknowledged that AAZ Programmes staff sometimes make follow-up calls to get explanations and clarifications on reported results that they may not be sure of. CSO 1 director remarked, "Considering all the misunderstandings and challenges we have encountered with reporting, if AAZ was another donor, funding would have been suspended a long time ago."

In view of the programmatic practices, the Researcher also assessed the impact on the project end-users, which are the community members. Findings are presented in the next section.

4.3.1.4 EMERGING THEMES AND PATTERNS ON IMPACT ON COMMUNITY MEMBERS

In an attempt to address objective 2 on the extent to which donor strategies have been successful, the research found out that, as explained earlier, the impact on beneficiaries is mixed. The table below highlights the main themes that came out and the responses that the researcher counted from the FGDs.

TABLE 4. 5 EMERGING THEMES AND PATTERNS ON COMMUNITY MEMBERS

n=30

Theme	**sub-themes**	**Number of respondents out of 30**
Citizen participation dimension	**Reasons for participating**	
	Project benefits e.g. workshops allowances	27
	Inward desire to influence policy and development changes	15
	Increased awareness	21
Dependency	Community mobilization cannot survive without CSO support	23
	Community mobilization can survive without CSO support	7
Social networks	Those who sit in Local authority/Council committees	5
	Found internship and volunteering opportunities in livelihood NGOs	7
	Those who sit in leadership community structures	11

Responses from FGDs revealed that community members who felt that project activities would not survive without CSO support are those who are not part of the established community structures. Those who sit in community structures have better access to training opportunities from the CSOs hence they have more confidence than those who have not been exposed to such opportunities. It can also be noted from the table above that, in terms of participation, both project benefits and increased awareness on governance decision-making processes motivate participation. It was also noted that all the people who accessed opportunities to sit in Council committees, found internship placements are those who sit in community structures. This means that community structure members have more opportunities than ordinary members hence they are more

empowered. This may be the reason why they are confident that they will continue with project activities even if the CSOs were to stop supporting them.

4.3.1.5 FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION PRACTICES

The main finding is that AAZ gives some degree of autonomy to its CSO recipients to use their own organizational financial management procedures and policies when managing grant funds. However, AAZ M 3 from the finance department intimated that, "AAZ prefers its own policies but we are also cognizant of the fact that or partners are autonomous and as long as they have policies that are approved by their Boards, we have no problem." M 3, however, pointed out that AAZ has in some instances 'advised' CSO recipients to adopt its financial management policies where the CSO's internal financial systems are weak.

4.3.1.6 BUDGET ALLOCATIONS TO CSOS

AAZ budget allocations for CSO recipients are primarily informed by the yearly allocations from DANIDA. The other factors that AAZ considers when allocating funds to CSOs include the capacity of individual CSOs to implement the project, the internal financial accountability systems, track record in terms of financial reporting, audits and donor compliance findings. Interviews with the CSO directors and staff members confirmed that they do not find this allocation criteria unusual as they have experienced this with other donors apart from AAZ. However, all CSO interviewees expressed

concern with the yearly budget allocations, which are usually done after the project proposals and plans for the year have already been developed. Instead of using the project plans to inform budget allocations, AAZ considers the ability of each organization to account for the money or rather to report on how the money is expended.

The research also found out that it is very difficult for the CSOs to conduct follow-up activities that are necessary to cement their results due to inadequate funds. AAZ does not have a reserve fund that CSOs can access to follow-up, especially on policy advocacy issues that may need more than one meeting to achieve results. All the CSO interviewees concurred that budget constraints and the inability to sustain and follow-up on advocacy activities negatively impacts on their effectiveness in influencing policy change. “The work that we are doing is continuous and long-term and if we approach it from an event perspective, it does not help to achieve impact. As a result, our activities are touch- and-go”, CSO 3 director remarked.

4.3.1.7 Financial Reporting and Accountability

The main finding on financial reporting is that the CSO recipients find the reporting template much easier to use and they have no problem with it. However, frustration was strongly expressed on AAZ’s rigorous financial accountability procedures, which the CSO interviewees described as “exasperating” and “time-consuming”. Apart from the financial reports on a quarterly basis, AAZ also requires files of supporting documentation on expenditures made, which CSO interviewees said are time-consuming. There was also general displeasure among the CSO interviewees with the

AAZ internal audits and compliance visits where AAZ compliance team sometimes makes calls to direct project beneficiaries or service providers [for example, hotels] to verify if certain activities were indeed conducted. CSO Interviewees described this as a 'humiliating' practice that displays lack of trust and labels them as thieves. "I wonder why they are funding us if they believe we are so shameless as to report on expenditures that were never incurred", CSO 3 finance officer fumed. Further probing with AAZ's M 3 revealed that AAZ adopted this practice in 2015 after AAZ discovered that two of the CSOs that they were funding had embezzled USD 28 000 and USD 11 000 respectively. Thus, M 3 maintained that AAZ would continue with this practice even if the recipients are not happy with it. M 3 pointed out that, "For the past two years we have had cases where there were insufficient and unauthentic finance supporting documents and in those cases AAZ has to disallow the expenditures and responsible [CSO] partners have to re-imburse to AAZ because AAZ has to also refund to DANIDA." These issues are evidence of the tense relations, mistrust and also the lack of accountability of CSOs themselves.

The research also found out that continued failure by CSOs to comply with financial reporting requirements can result in suspension and sometimes termination of funding. However, there was also evidence that termination of contracts is always the last resort for AAZ, especially after establishing the unwillingness of the CSO recipient to genuinely address audit and compliance issues. When CSO audits and compliance visits are done, AAZ prepares a report with findings and recommendations to the CSO on how the gaps noted can be addressed. Where there is need for capacity development, this is

done. However, where the same problem continues to come up despite all these efforts, the funding contract is terminated.

4.3.1.8 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH DONOR PRACTICES

Finally, the table below summarizes the research findings presented in the sections above. The data is from in-depth interviews.

TABLE 4.6 LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH DONOR PRACTICES

n=8

Practice	**Satisfied**	**Dissatisfied**	**Somewhat satisfied**
Financial reporting and accountability	4	1	3
Budget allocations	3	4	1
Project design	7	1	0
Programmes reporting	0	7	1
Capacity building	3	4	1
Technical support	6	1	1

Firstly, it was found out that generally, CSO recipients do not have a problem with the financial reporting templates. All respondents from AAZ revealed that they are somewhat satisfied because financial reporting performance from the CSOs they support is a 'mixed bag' where some are good and have strong financial systems while others are still struggling to meet the Agency's requirements. Secondly, most of the respondents from both CSOs and AAZ were satisfied with the project design processes. The researcher found out from the CSO respondents that the process is not new to them as they have experienced that with many other donors so they are used to it. One, however, disagreed to this, pointing out that, "we have normalized the abnormal" by agreeing to

donor imposition on project design. Thirdly, technical support was generally acceptable and satisfying to most of the respondents (6 out of 8). Fourthly, the research established that both CSOs and AAZ programmes staff are dissatisfied with programmes reporting (7 out of eight). CSOs are frustrated with the reporting template while AAZ staff are not happy with CSOs' failure to report correctly on envisaged outcomes.

4.3. 2 CHALLENGES AAZ HAS FACED IN ITS SUPPORT FOR CSOS

This section responds to objective three, which focused on the challenges that AAZ has faced in promoting democratic governance and accountability through civil society's work in Zimbabwe.

Firstly, AAZ management interviewees admitted that the legislative and political operational environment in Zimbabwe has largely restricted space for the CSOs they support to influence significant policy and developmental changes. In many cases, the CSOs have opted for 'softer issues' such as service delivery advocacy at local level and avoid 'hard' issues such as openly challenging certain policy decisions taken by the national government. According to The World Economic Forum (2013), repressive state structures restrict the growth of civil society and limit the type of activities that they are able to engage in. CSO interviewees also pointed out that legislative provisions like the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), which restrict freedom of expression and assembly, often create

an unfavorable environment for them to mobilize citizens for collective policy advocacy actions.

Secondly, the research found out that, AAZ has, on a number of occasions since 2015, made efforts to build a coalition of all the CSOs that they support under the governance and accountability programme so that they can identify common advocacy issues and collectively address such issues. These efforts proved to be fruitless. Although CSOs would agree to coalesce during annual reflection meetings, they did not translate their commitment into practice as they continued to work separately and in a fragmented manner on the same policy issues. The policy makers, especially those responsible for local government, have taken advantage of this weakness to dismiss CSOs who challenge policy decisions on the basis that too many of them are saying different things. CSO directors whom the researcher interviewed pointed out that it is wrong for AAZ "to bunch us together because we have different operational ideologies", said CSO 2.

Thirdly, all AAZ interviewees pointed out that reporting and accountability is one of the major challenges. Most of the CSO recipients fail to meet reporting deadlines despite the fact that reports are submitted on a quarterly basis and CSOs are given ten days to prepare their reports after the end of each quarter of the year. Both AAZ and CSO programmes staff expressed exasperation with the programmes reporting template, which has remained a cause for a lot of relational tensions between AAZ and CSOs. Furthermore, AAZ interviewees expressed concern at the failure by some of the CSO recipients to account for the funds that AAZ gives them. The problem has continued in spite of AAZ's

efforts to train CSO finance staff and even giving on-job training support to improve financial accountability.

Finally, AAZ management admitted that they face challenges in measuring their project impact, especially in terms of the numbers of people who benefit from policy changes resulting from the development work of the CSOs they support. The challenge arises from the fact that there seems to be no agreement between AAZ and its CSO recipients on the definitions of project outcomes and impact as well as the units of measurement. Upon further probing, all CSO interviewees pointed out that the challenge can only be addressed jointly and that means AAZ has to be open to CSO suggestions on how to measure impact as they are the ones who are conversant with operational context.

4.4 Discussion and Interpretation

This section discusses the research findings in view of existing literature as well as the theoretical framework.

4.4.1 Citizen Participation dimension

The AAZ principle of placing the participation of citizens, particularly the poor and marginalized groups at the center of development, confirms that the Agency's approach is influenced by the social capital and deliberative democracy theories. AAZ locates social capital in civil society organizations as they are institutions that are founded on interactions and common interests of people.

However, citizen participation can only be made possible by strengthening the institutions that host common interests. Talpin (2004), argues that social capital makes democracy better by increasing institutional performance. Similarly, Orjuela (2005) and Fukuyama (2001) concur that the existence of social capital increases the likelihood of democracy and development. This is the reason why AAZ's focus is on "increasing the political agency" of citizens to influence decision making in governance processes (Action Aid, 2014). Arguably, AAZ interest in funding CSOs as conduits for citizens to engage with their local authorities to influence policy and hold policy makers to account brings to the fore the issue of deliberative democracy as postulated by Habermas (1996), whose main tenets are equality, consensus and inclusion in decision making. According to Talpin (2004, p. 2), deliberative democracy "…involves public deliberations focused on the common good" and it also "requires some form of manifest equality among citizens." Paxton (2002) argues that, social capital helps to advance democracy through the quantity and quality of political participation by citizens. Membership in CSOs increases the quantity of participation while the trainings and networks within civil society improves the quality of participation. AAZ programme practices of capacity building and coalition building confirm the social capital theory as a critical component for democracy.

Furthermore, Talpin (2004, p. 1) points out that Social Capital and deliberative democracy share a crucial assumption that, "political participation can have- under certain specific conditions- positive developmental effects…" Thus, AAZ's emphasis on civil society's role to mobilize citizens to participate in decision-making and advance

democracy and development confirm both the social capital and deliberative democracy theories. Hauser and Benoit-Borne (2002) also argue that democratic governance is strengthened when it faces a vigorous civil society.

Similarly, Mansuri and Rao (2012, p. 1) confirm that,

> …a more bottom-up and deliberative vision of development that allows for "common sense" and "social capital" of communities to play a central part in decisions that affect them…led to a renewed interest in community based development, decentralization and participation by donors…

In addition, Blomkvist (2003) argues that the level of government responsiveness is influenced by the level of people's participation and interactions with policy decisions. Burnside and Dollar (2004) concur with this argument, asserting that donor funds, when channeled through civil society can actually speed up public policy reforms as well as fostering accountability and transparency. Similarly, the AAZ project activities focus on creating platforms where ordinary citizens can interact with policy makers. Such platforms include public policy dialogue meetings and advocacy forums.

Arguably, this may be the reason why, in terms of reporting, AAZ emphasizes on the number of people who participate and are impacted by project activities. However, Kuhnen (1995) contests this notion, arguing that donors should not be fond of counting numbers as a form of impact but should measure impact in the context of democracy promotion. In other words, emphasis should rather be on measuring the democratic changes and reforms that take place both at local and national government level. On the other hand, the Southern Africa Trust (2007) contests the emphasis on social capital and

citizen participation, arguing that it is not always true that there is an automatic relationship between enhanced citizen participation and improved government accountability. However, research findings confirmed that in some instances, the engagement of policy makers by citizens has resulted in positive responsiveness from local authorities in terms of accountability. Evidence was found in Murehwa RDC which produced annual financial statements as part of accounting for expenditures made from levies collected from residents (**see appendix 1 for summary of achievements made by CSOs under study).**

4.4.2 DEPENDENCY

The research findings clearly confirm the dependency theory as propounded by Arnold et al (1989), who argue that the economic and social development of a country may be dependent on external influence. According to Arnold et al (1989), dependency is characterized with unequal relationships where one party has more bargaining power than the other. Bornstein (2003, p. 393) echoes the same assertion, pointing out that dependent relationships are "often coercive and always unequal".

Furthermore, there is a significant level of community members' dependence on the CSO organizations (as indicated in Table 4. 6 above) and in turn, the CSO organizations are financially and technically dependent on AAZ. All AAZ and CSO interviewees answered questions on CSO independence with uncertainty and hesitation. CSO directors admitted that it would be very difficult for them to sustain administrative costs in the event that

AAZ stops funding them. On the other hand, AAZ interviewees were clear that they could not guarantee continuous funding to the CSOs and that they do not have any project exit strategies in place that could help the CSOs to continue operating. Kasfir (2008) rightly argues that donors have no expectation of supporting the CSOs forever. Findings from this research demonstrate that AAZ does not only determine the amount of money that CSOs should get but also determines how that money should be used. This is the reason why all the CSO interviewees admitted that their project thematic areas have to be in line with the AAZ global focus areas. Thus, even agenda setting is dependent on the donor. Similarly, Robin and Brown (1991) argue that donor aid results in loss of autonomy where independence in decision-making and agenda setting is compromised. Similarly, Banks, Hulme and Edwards (2014) point out that the competitive funding environment forces CSOs to align their strategies with donor priorities and interests.

Consequently, the sustainability of the CSO operations has become dependent on AAZ and other donors' funding. Gara (2009) argues that international aid has conditioned recipients to rely on donors rather than on themselves. Interestingly, it seems as if the CSOs have also transferred the same epidemic to their constituencies. CSO members who participated in Focus Group discussions clearly expressed their inability to continue with community advocacy activities if the CSOs were to stop operating. Most of them kept talking about the need for them to have 'leaders' who would spearhead community development activities and by 'leaders' they meant the CSO staff members.

At the time that the FGDs were conducted, all the three CSOs were winding up their projects for 2016 and the community members who participated in the FGDs expressed worry about the future, pointing out that the organizations "should not abandon us when our problems are still too many to solve." This is because DANIDA had reduced funding for the AAZ 2017 Governance and Accountability programme by 40% and AAZ had communicated this unfortunate development to the CSO recipients, indicating the possibility of termination of funding.

The Agha Khan Development Network (2007) argues that the CSO dependence and funding challenges should not be blamed on donors alone. In fact, the funding challenges are due to the CSOs' "…lack of capacity to come up with innovative fundraising strategies that can complement funding from foreign donors." (Agha Khan Development Network, 2007, p.26).

4.4.3 Active Citizenship, Awareness and Increased Access to Social Services

In spite of some of the project implementation challenges mentioned earlier in this chapter, there is evidence that AAZ (and other donors) capacity building efforts have significantly enhanced the effectiveness of CSOs in terms of building confidence among their constituencies to actively participate in local government decision-making processes as well as demand accountability from their local authorities and policy makers. AAZ has capacitated its CSO recipients to establish community structures that drive community development activities and they have raised awareness on basic social and economic rights, which has resulted in the emergence of groups of citizens who

deliberately squeeze their way into local government decision-making platforms, for example budgeting, even in politically volatile communities. Some have influenced development and budget changes, which have resulted in increased accessibility to basic social services such as water, health and education. This has been done through budget advocacy, public policy dialogue sessions with local authorities and mobilizing communities to participate in council meetings (**see appendix 1).**

The Southern Africa Trust (2007, p. 7) points out that there is evidence that, where donor interventions are targeted at socially excluded groups, particularly women and young people, "they have been useful in empowering such groups and changes have been noted in increased awareness and responsive state officials especially at sub-national level." The researcher found out that the CSOs actually attract an average of 200 people for each ward meeting conducted with local authorities and the young women and young men are quite active in terms of making concrete contributions during the meetings.

4.4.4 INDUCED CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT

Interestingly, the research also found out that active participation as discussed earlier, is not only as a result of citizens' increased awareness about their rights and responsibilities. Actually, the research established another dimension that donor funding for CSO projects in the communities incentivizes the participation of community members in the project activities. Although the end result has been active citizenship in development and governance processes, the study established that the main motive behind the participation of communities in AAZ-funded projects is actually driven by benefits such as trainings, meals during workshops and also travelling perdiems.

Similarly, the researcher found out that community members also actively attend and participate in public dialogue forums that are organized by CSOs so that they can be seen as active members, which then increases their chances of being included in training workshops and also travelling to hotels for such workshops. FGD did not hide the fact that material benefits are the major motivating factor for their participation. They also felt there is nothing wrong with that because they have to take time away from their income generating projects to participate in CSO project activities, hence they should get something out of it. One respondent actually described donor-funded projects as "the only thriving industry here." This finding brings to the fore, the comparative analysis on participation by Mansuri and Rao (2012), where they make a distinction between 'organic' participation and 'induced' participation. Mansuri and Rao (2012) define organic participation as collective action organized by communities on their own, often to counter the state and induced participation as community actions that are incentivized by donor projects. They further argue that there is,

> …little evidence that induced participation builds long-lasting cohesion, even at community level…people get together to derive benefits from project funds. It is very difficult to know whether these effects will last beyond the tenure of the project and the limited evidence indicates that it usually does not. (Mansuri and Rao, 2012, p. 9-10).

This also explains why project beneficiaries revealed that it is unlikely that community initiatives to engage with local government authorities would continue in the absence of the CSOs.

4.4.5 HARNESSED SOCIAL NETWORKS

The research found out that even though social networks existed before the introduction of AAZ and other donor-funded projects; donor aid has increased community cohesion and connectivity through collective problem solving and identification of common problems and interests. The community structures and public dialogue forums that have been instituted under the AAZ projects have increased opportunities for community members to work together and build strong relationships. In addition, the training workshops that were conducted as part of the project activities also opened opportunities for direct beneficiaries to get job placements at local community centers. CSO 1 and CSO 3 also mentioned in their 2016 annual reports that some of the members are now part of the Gender committees in their local authorities and they represent and advocate for community interests in those committees. This means that these community structures have gained trust, not only from within their own social networks but also from other big NGOs. This confirms Wong's (2007, p. 19) assertion that social capital "…generates increasing returns" and that once created it can be "…re-used without cost".

4.5 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the research findings in line with the research objectives. Discussions and interpretation of research findings were also done with reference to theoretical issues.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter summary of key findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented. Also, the implications of the study findings to donor aid on CSO development work are discussed.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The research established that the dependency syndrome characterizes the relationship between AAZ and its CSO recipients. This is evident in that the administrative survival and project sustainability of CSOs is heavily dependent on donor funding, which has also resulted in unequal relations between CSOs and AAZ Similarly, it was revealed that even the community members who work with the CSOs are dependent on CSO staff members to facilitate policy advocacy and to create platforms for them to engage with policy makers in their local authorities.

In addition, it was found that project design processes are not, in practice, participatory. This is because AAZ develops project objectives, not necessarily in line with local needs and priorities, but in line with the DANIDA global objectives framework. Thus, the Agency 'preaches' what it does not practice. This showed that the CSOs do not have the independence to set the project agenda.

Apart from the above, the research revealed that there is some level of lack of accountability on the part of CSOs with regards to financial expenditures. In addition, it was revealed that the programme reporting procedures come short of capturing the changes that take place as a result of project interventions.

The research also established that donor aid has, to some extent, impacted positively on the development work of CSOs in Zimbabwe. Most importantly, in the areas of active citizen participation in local government decision-making as well as awareness among community members on issues of accountability and democratic governance. There were examples of tangible results from CSO annual reports and FGDs with regards to citizen influence on local government policy and developmental projects. Notably, it was also found that, apart from increased awareness and the desire to influence policy being the motivating factors for active participation, project benefits such as workshop perdiems also 'induce' participation

Finally, the research revealed the challenges that AAZ has faced in supporting democratic governance and accountability through CSO development work. The challenges include: the restrictive legislative and political operating environment that closes advocacy space for CSOs; continued failure of CSOs to meet reporting deadlines; unwillingness of CSOs to coalesce and work together on common policy advocacy issues; difficulties in reaching an agreement with CSO recipients on how to measure project results and impact; and the adverse economic environment that has slowed down efforts to eradicate poverty.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

In line with the research objectives, research questions and problem statement, the following conclusions are drawn from the study findings presented and discussed in the previous chapter.

Firstly, there is a top-down approach in terms of project design and implementation where donors' policies influence project objectives in Zimbabwe with less and sometimes no consultation with the project beneficiaries across the participating communities.

Secondly, CSOs projects and administrative costs are heavily dependent on donor funding. Similarly the community members that work with the CSOs also depend on them to spearhead and facilitate policy advocacy activities. Consequently, the dependency syndrome suppresses the CSOs' potential to seek innovative ways to support their development work without foreign aid as well as creates a regular demand for help from the communities. Thus, it can be concluded that donor aid is the lifeline of projects without which, CSOs would not be able to survive and continue with programming. Dependency also creates power imbalances that in turn increase chances for donor imposition of project ideas as a conditionality for funding.

Thirdly, donor aid suppresses organic citizen participation in governance processes as citizens are motivated by the benefits they get from participating in project activities instead of getting motivation from the inward desire to influence policy and developmental changes. Mansuri & Rao (2012), defines organic participation as

collective action that communities facilitate on their own, “often to counter the state”. Suppression of organic participation is also an obstacle to sustainability of CSO projects.

Fourthly, donors are not coordinated in implementing their projects and capacity building strategies. The fragmentation of donor activities results in donor fatigue among CSOs as they are bombarded with the same information and training workshops repeatedly. The fatigue expressed by CSO recipients on AAZ training workshops is evidence of donor fragmentation.

Fifth, it can also be concluded that donors emphasize more on reporting and financial accountability rather than results and changes within the communities. More so the relationship between donors and their CSO recipients is characterized with mistrust, which CSOs sometimes contribute to through lack of accountability on the funds they receive.

Finally, the research concludes that as much as there are relational challenges between AAZ and its CSO recipients, donor funding has actually enabled CSOs to score some positive policy and developmental changes within the communities that they work.

5.4 IMPLICATIONS

Donor aid practices have a number of implications both on CSO operations and development work in general. Firstly, the continued inflow of funds from donors may actually perpetuate poor governance practices (Knack, 2004). This is so because local CSOs may deliberately reduce their efforts to radically mobilize communities to influence democratic governance and policy changes within their localities because continued governance challenges ensures continuous funding. On the other hand, the

difficulties they have to go through when reporting to donors and the uncertainty that comes with depending on donor funds may actually motivate CSOs to seek innovative ways of self-sustenance.

Secondly, limitations on budget allocations may compel CSOs to define project target beneficiaries from a 'sampling approach' (Misi, 2013) where the budget determines the numbers of people that a project will benefit. This implies that the nature of project funding itself may result in a negative and unexpected outcome of exclusion, which AAZ is trying to fight against. It is also likely that project ownership can be compromised. Those people who may not have the opportunity to benefit, for example from training workshops, may feel demotivated to participate in other public activities such as community meetings because they believe they are not part of the process in the first place. In addition to that, some of the project objectives and target beneficiaries that AAZ has stipulated, women in particular, may imply confrontations against embedded traditional practices and beliefs of patriarchy especially considering that some of the CSOs work in rural areas. For example, two of the CSOs that participated in this study have projects that are called 'women's rights' Programmes and they have faced resistance from some male politicians and local authority leaders. The messaging that AAZ crafted for the projects lack contextual understanding and has portrayed the wrong message in terms of the project intentions.

Thirdly, the fact that there is no community consultation during the project design stages implies that there is a mismatch between community needs and the project interventions. Elliot Siamonga (The Patriot, 10 March, 2016) gives an account on an NGO that

constructed Blair toilets for the rural community of Binga without consulting the community members. Community members used the toilets as granaries to store their crops. The implication is that where project beneficiaries are not consulted, the project achieves negative returns, fails to achieve community ownership and developmental changes in the lives of the people.

On the other hand, the emphasis on numbers of people that project activities reach, implies that CSOs should strive to have practical community presence and connection with their membership. This may address a common CSO weakness of community disconnection, which, according to scholars, most CSOs in Africa are guilty of (Banks & Hulme, 2012; Orjuela, 2005; Pallas, 2015; Sundet, 2011).

Finally, the existence of community structures that seek to engage with local government authorities and participate in decision-making implies that the Ministry of Local Government and the relevant local authorities are not creating spaces for citizens to participate in policy decision-making processes. On the other hand, it demonstrates the citizens' willingness to partner with local government authorities to collectively address developmental challenges, which is an area that local government authorities should positively respond to.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section addresses the final research objective, which focuses on recommendations derived from the discussion and analysis of research findings. The recommendations are directed to AAZ and other donors, the CSOs and community members in Zimbabwe who benefit from donor funded development projects.

a) To AAZ and other donors

Firstly, there is a need for donors to identify local priorities through participatory community needs assessments, which should then inform project design and implementation. This requires that donor organizations accept a paradigm shift from laid down project modalities and pre-determined objectives and employ a bottom-up approach where they engage closely with project beneficiaries to agree on development priorities. This is an effective way to ensure project ownership by both CSOs and community beneficiaries. Specifically, AAZ should consider moving away from the 'one-size-fits-all-approach' when developing objectives and implementation strategies. This is because the DANIDA objective framework is not relevant to certain local contexts in Zimbabwe. They should allow the CSOs, who have a better understanding of the local contextual environment to set project agendas in line with contextual needs and socio-cultural dimensions.

Secondly, donors should consider a possibility to coordinate their programme implementation processes. The recommendation emanates from the fact that one of the key findings of the study revealed CSO staff members attend capacity development trainings on the same topics with different donors which is evident of fragmentation of donor activities. A systematic coordination will save the donors money and AAZ can take the initiative to engage with other donors so that regular donor conferences can be organized on the subject matter.

Thirdly, donors should learn from the feedback that they get from funding recipients and use that to improve on their funding practices and procedures. For example, the research noted that CSO staff have been struggling with the programmes reporting template which

was introduced in 2015. The fact that the template is still being used shows that AAZ is not responding to feedback from its CSO recipients. It is important for donors to be flexible enough to adjust reporting templates in line with the feedback from funding recipients. Specifically, AAZ should revise the reporting template jointly with CSOs in line with the principle of participation in development.

Fourthly, it is also important for AAZ to establish a reserve fund that can be used to do follow-up project activities so as to improve on project results, considering that some of the objectives on influencing government policies require long term programming. As such, results may not be achieved with one public dialogue meeting with policy makers but several of them. Accordingly, follow-up activities should be planned for by both AAZ and CSOs so as to avoid once-off programming. AAZ can take the first step and include the reserve fund in its budget.

b) To CSOs

CSOs need to seek innovative ways to sustain their projects instead of solely depending on donor funds. Sourcing for local funding solutions, for example from corporate companies may be one of the strategies. This is because corporate companies are also affected by local and national governance policy challenges. Therefore, involving them in planning and design of projects so as to address their priorities is a good entry point to tap into their financial support. Considering that Zimbabwean corporates have corporate social responsibility initiatives, local CSOs can leverage on that if they get responsive

enough to the challenges that these corporates face in terms of the local policy environment.

Furthermore, CSOs need to reform their project implementation strategies and empower community structures with the responsibility to lead and coordinate project activities instead of entrusting responsibility entirely in their staff members. When trainings have been done, awareness raised, CSOs should reach a point where they wean off the community members so that they can continue to mobilize themselves and engage with government officials on their own. In other words, the role of CSO programme officers should be minimal so as to empower communities to operate on their own. This strategy will strengthen project sustainability.

In addition, as much as CSOs need donor funding, they should also realize that donors need them for project implementation. As such, instead of competing against each other, CSOs must unite and resist donor imposition of project ideas and objectives. The reason why donors continue to have the power to impose project agendas is because CSOs are fragmented in their negotiating strategies. While others may see the need for change in their relationships with donors, others would rather go along with what donors want in order to get funding. However, it is important for CSOs to coordinate their voice and insist on setting the agenda for projects or donors have to channel their funds elsewhere. CSOs can come together and form a representative body that is responsible for negotiating on particular issues with donors. It should be noted that donor attempts to reform funding practices, for example the Paris Declaration, are a response to scholarly criticisms on donor aid. Similarly, a significant shift in donor practices and approaches

can be achieved if CSOs also add their voice instead of leaving that role to scholars and researchers only.

Since it is unlikely for donor funds to cater for the training of all community members, CSOs should adopt the 'training of trainers' model. Training of trainers is where personnel with expertise on particular issues train less experienced people on how to deliver courses or training workshops (Hu, 2004). Thus within the training workshops, there should also be manuals on how the trainees can replicate the same trainings within their communities. This encourages knowledge sharing, learning, expands population reach and is an effective way to sustain community activism on development and governance issues due to increased awareness.

c) To Community Structures

Firstly the community structures should build strong relationships with the local traditional leaders. This is because traditional leaders have an important role that they play in local government, specifically the advisory role to local government officials, mediation role between citizens and their local government authorities and even administration of districts. The traditional leadership has significant decision-making power, especially in Zimbabwe and the community members should leverage on that and exert policy influence through their local chiefs and village Heads.

Secondly, the community structures should actively assume the role to organize meetings with government officials, mobilize their community members to participate in local planning processes and facilitate community cohesion around common issues, even without the help of CSO staff members. Community members should not wait on CSO

staff members to do everything for them. They should instead use the knowledge acquired through capacity building and training workshops to lead their communities in influencing policy and development projects.

Thirdly, it is also important for those community members who access trainings to share that knowledge and information with the rest of their community members so as to build confidence and increase the social capital base. Knowledge should not be kept in silos of small groups, but should rather be spread and shared with everyone. When people are knowledgeable about the same issues, for example their social and economic rights, that is a uniting factor which is likely to motivate them to collectively demand the fulfilment of such rights. Thus communities should empower themselves through knowledge sharing.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The researcher acknowledges that this research is not exhaustive and therefore the following areas for further research are suggested:

Firstly, there is a need to research and explore alternative funding sources and models for CSOs in the context of Zimbabwe. This knowledge will significantly assist CSOs to extricate themselves from donor dependency and achieve program sustainability.

Secondly, Investigations on why donors continue to use the top-down approach in their funding relationships despite evidence of its short-comings could shed more light on the development discourse.

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Media Source

The Patriot (10 March 2016), http://www.thepatriot.co.zw

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Achievements Made by CSO Community Structures (*Source: CSO Annual reports 2015 & 2016)*

Name of CSO	Name of Community Structure	Achievements
CSO 1	Community Oversight Groups	✓ Resumption of refuse collection in 6 wards by Chitungwiza Town Council. Previously, residents would dump refuse in the streets because Council was not collecting. ✓ Influenced the increase of budget allocation towards water in Chitungwiza. Residents now get water for 5 days a week, which is an increase from the previous 3 days per week ✓ Lobbied Council to construct a road to ease access to a local clinic in Epworth
CSO 2	Rural Women's Assemblies (RWAs)	✓ Increased accountability and transparency from Murehwa RDC as they produced detailed financial statements for the first time in 2016 ✓ Murehwa RDC agreed to use 10% of all revenue collected from levies for development projects, which the communities decide on. The first of such projects was the roofing of an ECD block at Musanhi Primary School ✓ 3 members of the RWA now sit in the RDC's Social Services and Gender Committee which is responsible for formulating policies on gender responsive service delivery.
CSO 3	Dariro Committees	✓ Improved water supply to residents as Bindura Town council has drilled boreholes to supplement the water distribution network. Due to consistent lobbying and advocacy by the committees through public dialogue meetings, the Council also developed a schedule for water rationing with the residents. Previously, water cuts would just be done without prior notice. ✓ The Committees lobbied Council to build a school in Bindura instead of the planned beer hall. The issue went to a local referendum and CSO2 mobilized young women to vote for the construction of a school. A school was then constructed in Chipadze, Bindura.

Appendix 2 Study Objectives and Data Collection Tool Guide

Objectives	**Data Collection tools [*Tick indicates that the tool will be applied to address the objective*]**		
	Interview guide	Document Analysis	Focus Group Discussion Guide
Establish the financial, administrative and programmatic strategies that donor agencies have employed to promote democratic governance and accountability through civil society organizations in Zimbabwe	✓	✓ E.g. country/ programme strategy documents, policy documents, project proposals	
Assess the extent to which the donor agency strategies have been successful in promoting democratic governance and accountability through civil society's development work in Zimbabwe	✓	✓ E.g. Annual reports, monitoring and evaluation reports, documentaries	✓
Identify challenges that the donor agency has faced in promoting democratic governance and accountability through civil society's development work in Zimbabwe	✓		✓
Recommend key strategies that the donor agency can explore in order to strengthen civil society work on governance and accountability in Zimbabwe	✓	✓	✓

Data Collection Tool Guide: Interview and Focus Groups

Question 1: What are the financial, administrative and programmatic strategies that donor agencies have employed to promote democratic governance and accountability through civil society organizations in Zimbabwe?	
Data Collection Tool: Interview guide - **AAZ Programmes Staff**	
Questions	
1	Kindly explain the motivation (s) behind Action Aid's funding towards CSOs in governance and accountability.
2	What would you say are the key strategies that Action Aid has used to support the CSOs that you work with under the Governance and Accountability Program? Kindly explain the administrative and programmatic strategies
3	What is the role of your host donor in the: a) development of country/programme strategy, b) financial management of AAIZ
3	Kindly explain the processes that AAIZ uses for coming up with country strategies. In other words, how do you develop your programme agendas?
4	According to AAIZ policy, how do you relate with your CSO partners under the governance and accountability programme? Kindly describe the nature of your relationship
5	Kindly explain the feedback mechanisms that AAIZ has with its CSO partners and how effective these have been.
6	What are the eligibility criteria for CSOs that would want to seek funding from you?
7.	How do you monitor and evaluate your impact and the impact that is being made by your CSO recipients?
8.	Does AAIZ have an exit strategy? Say, in the event that your host donor agency decides to stop funding these CSOs.
	Interview Guide: AAZ Finance Staff
	Kindly give a brief description of AAIZ finance policy
	Does this policy also apply to the CSOs that you fund? Kindly explain
	What criteria do you use to allocate funds to different CSOs? Kindly pay particular attention to what informs the amounts of money given to CSOs.
	What are your financial reporting requirements for the CSOs that you fund?
	How do you monitor the financial performance and accountability of the CSOs that you fund?
	What is your assessment of the performance of these CSOs in terms of financial management?
	Does AAIZ have any financial sustainability support strategies for CSO recipients? Kindly explain
	Kindly explain the challenges you have faced with these CSOs and how you have mitigated them.

	CSO Directors and Staff
1	What kind of support (financial or otherwise) have you received from AAZ?
2	Kindly describe the title, main objectives, activities and target beneficiaries of the project that you are doing with AAZ support.
3	Kindly explain your organization's program development strategy. How do you come up with project proposals to apply for funding from AAZ?
4	Kindly describe the relationship that you have with AAZ
6.	Please explain the AAZ reporting requirements both financial and programmatic
7	How did your organization qualify for funding from AAZ? Please describe the application and approval process

Question 2: To what extent has the donor agency strategies been successful in promoting democratic governance and accountability through civil society's development work in Zimbabwe?	
Data Collection Tool: Interview guide- **AAZ Staff**	
Questions	
1	How would you evaluate the effectiveness of your funding strategies? Kindly give examples of your most significant successes
2	Kindly explain the changes (if any) that you have noted in the governance and accountability processes for the localities where the CSOs you support work.
CSO Directors and Staff	
1	For how long have you been implementing the project that is funded by AAZ?
2	To what extent do you think you have been successful in achieving the intended impact? Please mention at least three major achievements.
3	Considering the journey that your organization has travelled with AAZ from 2014 to date, what you would you say have been your smiles [positives] and your frowns [negatives]
4	If AAZ were to stop funding you, would your organization continue with its projects? Please explain

Question 2: To what extent has the donor agency strategies been successful in promoting democratic governance and accountability through civil society's development work in Zimbabwe?

Data Collection Tool: Focus Group Discussions- CSO members	
Questions	
1	Describe what you know about CSO that you are affiliated to (supply name).
2	Kindly describe the activities and objectives of the project that you are benefitting from and how you have benefitted
3	In what ways have you participated in community activities to engage with policy makers and public service providers?
4	In your opinion, are the efforts being made by the CSO you are affiliated to achieving positive results in terms of influencing good governance and accountability? Please explain
5	In your opinion, what would you say has changed in your lives and the community since you started working with the CSO you are affiliated to?
6	Kindly describe the activities and objectives of the project that you are benefitting from and how you have benefitted
7	How did you and your CSO develop this project and is it relevant to you? Please explain

Question 3&4: What are the challenges that you have faced? What recommended strategies can the donor agency explore in order to strengthen civil society work on governance and accountability in Zimbabwe?	
Data Collection Tool: Interview guide - **AAZ Staff**	
Questions	
1	What are the challenges that you have encountered in working with these CSO partners?
2	What recommendations do you have in relation to the challenges that you have discussed above?
CSO Directors	
1	If you were asked to give advice to AAZ regarding its support to CSOs, what would you say?
	Focus Group Discussions- CSO members
	What challenges have you experienced in working with this CSO and also with the local government? How do you think these challenges can be addressed?

Appendix 3 Informed Consent Guide

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

My name is Loreen Mupasiri, a Master in Public Policy and Governance student from Africa University. I am carrying out a study entitled **Donor Aid Practices and their Impact on civil society operations in Zimbabwe: A Case of Action Aid Zimbabwe's Governance and Accountability Programme.** I am kindly asking you to participate in this study by answering a few questions that I have concerning the work that you are doing in supporting civil society organizations in Zimbabwe. My specific focus is on your governance and accountability program.

The purpose of the study is to examine donor aid practices and assess the impact they have made on the work of civil society organizations in Zimbabwe, with particular focus on the extent to which Action Aid Zimbabwe has supported its partner civil society organizations in advancing democratic and accountable governance. The aim is to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement, particularly on how donor aid agencies can strengthen their strategies in order to effectively support and achieve positive impact in advancing democratic and accountable governance through civil society work in Zimbabwe. You have been chosen to participate in this study by virtue of your expert knowledge and experience on the subject of study since you are an employee of AAZ who is also working on the Governance and accountability program.

If you decide to participate you will be interviewed particularly on the strategies that AAZ is using to support its CSO partners as well as on the nature of the relationship that you have with these partners. It is expected that this interview will take about twenty minutes.

Risks and discomforts

The interview process may take some of the time that you need to do your own work. However, with your consent, the researcher is willing to meet with you even during your free time.

Benefits and/or compensation

The Researcher believes that this study will also help AAZ to improve its aid strategies as well as give a platform for feedback from its CSO partners.

Confidentiality

The information that you give will only be used for academic purposes. In addition, you will not be asked to provide your identity. No information will be disclosed without your permission as a participant.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. Should you decide not to participate, or withdraw from the study at a particular stage, please note that your will not affect your future relationship with AAZ. If you choose to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation without penalty.

Offer to answer questions

Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you. You may take as much time as necessary to think it over.

Authorization

If you have decided to participate in this study please sign this form in the space provide below as an indication that you have read and understood the information provided above and have agreed to participate.

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Name of Research Participant (please print) Date

Signature of Research Participant or legally authorized representative

If you have any questions concerning this study or consent form beyond those answered by the researcher including questions about the research, your rights as a research participant, or if you feel that you have been treated unfairly and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, please feel free to contact the Africa University Research Ethics Committee on telephone (020) 60075 or 60026 extension 1156 email aurec@africau.edu

Name of Researcher –LOREEN MUPASIRI