

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT SUPPORT UNIT (WiP-SU)

BASELINE SURVEY

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1. BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY

Women's participation in politics and decision-making has become one of the central advocacy issues of activists the world over. There are basically three reasons why women and men should participate, on an equal basis, in politics and decision-making. Humanity consists of females and males and, in the context of Zimbabwe, 52% of the population is made up of females while the other 48% is made up of males. Women and men are different in their biological makeup but equal in their humanity. That being the case, gender justice requires that, in all sites of power and decision-making, there be an equal representation of women and men. The requirement for women and men to take part in making decisions that affect their lives is not negotiable but mandatory. There should be a match in numbers between those who are in decision-making and the national population ratios.

The second reason why there should be an equal representation of women and men in decision-making is that no one sex should be responsible for making decisions for the other. Women need to represent themselves in making decisions that affect them. Men cannot and should not be expected to represent women's interests.

Lastly, the greatest resource that any country has are its people. For as long as there is no equitable representation of women in politics and decision-making and other sites of power, then Zimbabwe is under-utilising the potential of its human resources and the country is not benefiting from the knowledge and perspectives that women bring. "The concept of democracy will only assume true and dynamic significance when political policies and national legislation are decided upon jointly by men and women with equitable regard for the interests and aptitudes of both halves of the population" (Inter-Parliamentary Council Resolution on Women and Political Power, April 1992. In: Progress of the World's Women 2000, Unifem Biennial Report, Unifem).

A government by men for men is not a government for all the people. Women must participate both as leaders and as voters to ensure that decisions made at every level meet their practical and strategic needs globally, regionally and nationally.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that every one has the right to take part in the government of her/his country, yet the Beijing Platform for Action notes that despite the widespread movement towards democratisation in most countries, women are largely underrepresented at most levels of decision-making.

Parliament is the highest policy-making body in Zimbabwe. There is a serious under-representation of women in parliament and in other decision-making bodies. Of the 150 seats in parliament, 120 of which are elected seats, women occupy 15 seats which represent 10% of the total. What this means is that 52% of Zimbabwe's population is represented by 10% of parliamentary seats. This is a serious anomaly which should be corrected.

Zimbabwe is a member state of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In 1997, Zimbabwe, together with other SADC member countries, signed the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development. This Declaration commits member states to ensuring the equal representation of women and men in their decision-making structures. The member states also committed themselves to achieving at least 30% representation of women in political decision-making structures by the year 2005.

In 1995, the United Nations convened its 4th conference on women which was held in Beijing, China. This conference came up with critical areas of concern perceived as hindering women from achieving their full status in society. After the Beijing Conference, parties to the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform of Action set out to come up with national priorities for action, selected from the twelve critical areas of concern.

Zimbabwe came up with four priority areas of concern and these are:

- Institutional Mechanisms For The Advancement Of Women
- Women In Power And Decision-Making
- Education And Training Of Women
- Women And The Economy

Given the foregoing, the expectation is that Zimbabwe prioritises the equal participation of women in politics and decision-making. Indeed, the Department of Gender in the Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation has made efforts in increasing the number of women who contest local government and national parliamentary elections. In 1997, the government, working in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), set up the Women in Politics and Decision-Making Project whose objective was to enhance the position of women through their increased participation in politics and decision-making positions and processes at all levels of society.

This project went out to local authorities to raise awareness on the equality of the sexes and the importance of the equal participation of women and men in politics and decision making. Potential candidates for local councils, identified through local consultative structures were encouraged to contest elections. Although a lot of work went into this exercise it did not have a significant impact on the local election results because the project started rather late when a lot of ground work had been done in preparation for the local council elections

The expected outcomes of the Women in Politics and Decision-Making Project were:

- to achieve 50% representation of women in decision-making in local council and other decision-making bodies by the year 2005
- to identify potential women candidates for decision-making positions

- to equip women for participation in politics and decision-making through civic education and skills training
- promoting a culture of recognising women's talents and abilities.

Regrettably, this project wound up in 2000 before the targeted 50% representation of women in decision-making positions saw the light of day.

There have been other initiatives by some Non-Governmental Organisations to advocate for and engage in practical projects aimed at increasing female participation in politics and decision-making positions. Organisations such as the Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN) through its Linkage Programme, Gender Politics Project have been initiatives to increase women's participation in politics and to offer support for those women already in decision-making.

At a continental level, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) undertook a five country study to compile a dossier on how women already in parliament and local government got there and how their experiences could be used to help increase women's participation in politics and decision-making. The WILDAF initiative culminated in the publication of a book entitled "Women In Politics and Decision Making in Southern Africa: A Gendered Political Analysis." This publication is available at WILDAF offices.

The experiences gained so far in these various initiatives have indicated the need to have a long-term strategy that would ensure the achievement of the full participation of women in politics and decision-making. The long-term strategy should be multi-faceted, targeting women who are already in parliament with a view to getting them to bring the gender agenda to parliament. It should also aim at working with the women's movement and women at the grassroots to increase women's participation in politics and decision-making.

An engendered policy framework, positive attitudes towards women's leadership, together with women conscious of the need for them to participate in politics and decision-making should result in the equal participation of women in all spheres of decision-making, including parliament.

Recognising the experience gained so far through other initiatives, a new initiative known as the "Women in Parliament Support Unit" is under development. The main objective of the project is to increase women's qualitative participation and influence in policy and decision-making.

The project also aims at empowering women legislators in technical capacity and resource allocation so as to minimise the hindrance of women wanting to rise up to positions of decision-making. More specifically the Women in Parliament Support Unit Project has the following objectives:

- To strengthen the skills and capacity of current women in parliament so that they can represent women's issues and be able to take the gender agenda into the decision-making process and product
- To raise the awareness of women candidates around women's issues for purposes of advocating them in parliament
- To set up platforms (caucus) within parliament for women Members of Parliament to meet and discuss gender issues across party lines
- To set up a support centre for research, analysis, issues articulation, presentation of maiden speeches, bills for women parliamentarians
- To facilitate and provide technical, financial and material assistance to women members of parliament
- To create and strengthen links between women legislators with their women folk in the constituency, the local women's movement and regional/international women's movement

Because of the multifaceted nature of the project there is a need to have some baseline information from the general public. WiP-SU set out to find out the following:

- how many constituents said they knew their members of parliament
- how many actually knew their members of parliament by name
- what policy issues they would want their MPs to take to parliament
- how, when and with what frequency they would want to communicate with their MPs,
- to establish which gender they would want to represent them in parliament, and finally
- to suggest ways in which Zimbabwe could increase women's representation and participation in parliament.

This information will be used to identify strategies that will enhance the project activities of WiP-SU. In addition the gathering of baseline information creates an opportunity for dialogue between members of parliament and their electorate. The baseline information should be viewed as a starting point towards developing reference material in the area of women in politics and decision-making.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

WiP-SU works within a gender perspective. Gender here is defined as a culturally and socially constructed identity ascribed to females and males. Gender mainly refers to the relationship between females and males. Unlike sex differences, gender relationships are not static, they differ from one social setting to another and from time to time. The general meaning of gender therefore includes sex identity, social role differentiation, behaviour patterns, social expectations and general life aspirations.

Working within a gender perspective involves acknowledging that societal structures and attitudes marginalise women and practise male preference. The subordination or marginalisation of women takes various forms depending on the historical, cultural

location of the community involved and, therefore, would vary in manifestation according to class, race, gender and ethnicity.

In its approach and programming work, WiP-SU aims at making gendered differences, and the gender gaps arising visible, and works towards dismantling all structures and manifestations of gender inequality.

Recognising gender inequalities in the Zimbabwean society and working towards gender equality through uplifting the status of women to achieve that equality, WiP-SU's research approach had the express intention of empowering women. The survey aimed at using research methods which allowed appropriate data to be collected while empowering the respondents and the researchers alike.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 The survey used two sources of data: primary and secondary. For primary data collection, the study used qualitative and quantitative research methods. A questionnaire was designed to capture both qualitative and quantitative data from the field. The questionnaire was administered by enumerators who came from Bulawayo, Gweru, Harare and Mutare, the major cities where the interviews for the survey were conducted. The questionnaires were individually administered because it was felt that the survey discussed issues which would be difficult to handle in a group situation. Interview questions were administered in the Shona, Ndebele and English languages.

The study identified a team of enumerators from Bulawayo, Gweru, Harare and Mutare. These enumerators were picked, based on their experience in working on similar studies and also based on the fact that they resided in the areas where the survey would be undertaken and so would be familiar with the people and their language. They were then taken through a day's training to introduce them to the questionnaire and to develop a common understanding of it. The questionnaire was framed in English but had to be administered in the language the respondents were most comfortable with. The use of appropriate language was meant to relax and engage the interviewee on their own language terms.

Language is a part of culture and a strong instrument for transmitting and perpetuating culture-bound principles of social order and systems of belief that define and assign unequal social values to females and males. The day's workshop, spent going through the questionnaire was a critical methodological issue in dealing with empowerment at the community level. Enumerators went through each question casting it in the local language and, more importantly, sharing views on appropriate and engendered language for each of the questions.

The questions were framed so as not to impose ideas on respondents but to solicit their views. The language used and the way questions were framed and asked was meant to

enhance a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, triggering a process of undoing the effects of internalised oppression in women.

Questions to do with where, how and within what time frame constituents wanted to interact with their members of parliament were meant not only to provide information to members of parliament on communities' expectations of them. They were also meant to trigger an ability to negotiate and influence the nature of the relationships and the decisions made within those relationships.

Enumerators took some time to come up with words which would extract information on what people did to earn a living without excluding unpaid work and without making women who work at home feel any less occupied than those women and men who work away from home.

For secondary sources of information, the survey looked at literature generated by projects such as the Women in Politics and Decision-Making Project, Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network that have worked with parliamentarians. The survey also looked at similar studies for parliamentarians undertaken by South Africa's Gender Commission and works of theorists such as Sara Longwe, Naila Kabeer and Jo Rowlands who have done work on women's empowerment. The survey also looked at the Zimbabwe government's Progress Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

For the analysis of quantitative data, the survey used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. For the qualitative data analysis, the study used the conditional matrix which is based on the fact that all behaviour or observed phenomena is conditional upon what is happening at the different levels of human existence from the individual level, community, national through to the international levels.

3.2 Survey study group

WiP-SU targeted all the constituencies in Bulawayo, Gweru, Harare and Mutare as well as female members of parliament constituencies neighbouring these four major cities. The survey covered twenty-seven constituencies. The study aimed at a sample size of 1000, targeting about 35 respondents per constituency. The survey considered that the sample size of 1000 would give a solid enough view on the questions asked. In the end, a total of 1692 interviews were conducted.

3.3 Sampling method

A simple random sampling method was used to identify the target group. Enumerators went out into constituencies looking out for respondents in varying age groups,

occupations and social groupings. All the respondents had to be of voting age and 70% of them had to be female and 30% male.

It was hoped that through targeting a variety of age groups, social classes and ethnic groupings, the survey would simulate the national population representation. Mindful of the fact that at least 65% of Zimbabweans live in rural areas, every effort was made to target respondents in the lower income bracket to counteract the sample population weighted towards the urban population.

Because enumerators could only interview those respondents that were willing to talk, it was not always possible to get an even spread of respondents in the constituencies. The table below lists the constituencies which were part of the sample population, the numbers of people interviewed per constituency and then a presentation of those figures as a percentage of the total.

Table 1: Sample Population per Constituency

TABLE 1: SAMPLE POPULATION PER CONSTITUENCY

	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
HARARE CENTRAL	31	1.8
HARARE EAST	48	2.8
HARARE SOUTH	20	1.2
KUWADZANA	63	3.7
KAMBUZUMA	50	3.0
HATFIELD	22	1.3
GLEN NORAH	30	1.8
MUFAKOSE	42	2.5
MBARE EAST	65	3.8
DZIVARESEKWA	22	1.3
MABVUKU	57	3.4
HARARE NORTH	59	3.5
BYO SOUTH	17	1.0
MPOPOMA	46	2.7
PELANDABA	61	3.6
MAKOKOBA	77	4.6
PUMULA-LUVEVE	63	3.7
LOBENGULA-MAGWEGWE	39	2.3
BYO NORTH	182	10.8
NKULUMANE	65	3.8
UMZINGWANE	21	1.2
MUTARE CENTRAL	18	1.1
MUTARE SOUTH	71	4.2
MUTARE WEST	11	.7
MUTARE NORTH	24	1.4
MUTASA	22	1.3
GWERU RURAL	1	.1
GWERU URBAN	121	7.2
MKOKA	112	6.6
GOKWE WEST	1	.1
MHONDORO	24	1.4
GUTU SOUTH	13	.8
OTHER	127	7.5
HIGHFIELD	13	.8
GLEN VIEW	17	1.0
MBARE WEST	37	2.2
Total	1692	100.0

The number of people interviewed per constituency varied from constituency to constituency. Constituencies such as Gokwe West and Gweru Rural had 1 respondent each in sharp contrast with Gweru Urban with 121 respondents. Bulawayo North recorded the highest number of interviews with 182 respondents. As a result of this uneven

distribution of respondents the survey could not give a constituency by constituency analysis of the findings.

The findings are presented on a census basis for all the constituencies that were covered. Reference to constituencies by name is only made to illustrate a point as opposed to indicating that constituency as the only source of such a finding. By and large, findings apply to all constituencies surveyed but vary in detail and emphasis depending on the local realities in the constituency. For example, where a constituency has a bad road network, no streetlights and a poor sewage system, respondents in that area tended to emphasise those concerns. There were some frequent and recurring references to issues such as the high cost of living, prevalence of politically motivated violence, the education system, poor employment opportunities, health and social issues related to the AIDS pandemic.

The survey findings used the language and expressions of respondents as much as possible. Every effort was made to quote the respondents wherever possible.

3.4 Limitations of the study

The study was undertaken during a period where political tension is generally high in the country and the level of political violence threatens the basic right of freedom of expression. In the urban areas, the study coincided with the mass stay away which was called by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) on the 4th and 5th July 2001. The media reported some violence in some high density suburbs and as a result, the enumerators assigned to the affected were not deployed on the 5th July 2001. Where enumerators went out, there was reluctance to talk to them.

In the rural areas, enumerators reported a reluctance to participate freely in the survey. Zimbabwe came out of general elections held in June 2000. These elections were marked by high levels of violence, intolerance and intimidation. The violence took many forms, including beatings, killings, use of abusive language and, generally, the instilling of fear into people.

The result of the violence and intimidation is that hundreds of people were severely injured, over thirty deaths were reported and scores of abductions were recorded. It is this pre-election violence and intimidation which has instilled fear in citizens. They are not comfortable discussing issues that they perceive as political for fear of reprisals. Because the enumerators raised questions some perceived as requiring them to give a political opinion, a number of people refrained from, either participating in the interviews, or freely expressing their opinions. A good illustration of the reluctance to participate in this survey is shown in the experience of some of the enumerators.

An enumerator in Harare East got 12 people who were willing to be interviewed while 20 people turned her down on one day of interviews. The reasons given for refusing

interviews ranged from fear of employers, in the case of house workers or gardeners, to having no time for the interviews. The rest were not interested in politics and one asked, “If I grant you an interview, will you pay me?” When no payment was promised, the interview was denied.

In Mufakose constituency, one enumerator was turned down by 7 prospective respondents and all of them were suspicious about why they were being asked ‘political’ questions immediately after a ZCTU stay away.

4. REPORT PRESENTATION

The report first presents the personal profiles of the respondents as background to the survey results. The profiles are presented in the report in order to place into focus those that were interviewed. The reader is then able to locate the survey results in the context of the identities of the respondents.

Personal profiles of respondents were recorded in order to give a sense of the range of people interviewed but also to raise awareness in members of parliament that their constituents are not a homogenous group. They are different individuals with varying personal backgrounds and yet they come under the leadership of the member of parliament. All the respondents, with their different realities, were willing to give time to the study which they considered important as it had potential to positively impact on the quality of service delivery by their members of parliament.

After the presentation of the profiles of the respondents, the report goes on to narrate the responses to the different questions in the questionnaire. The study then narrates the responses of the MPs to questions raised with them in response to what some of their constituents had to say. The next chapter discusses conclusions from the survey findings and then makes recommendations for action.

5. SURVEY FINDINGS

5.1 Profiles of Respondents

Figure 1: Respondents by Age

Figure 1 shows the numbers of respondents by age groups and those figures as a percentage of the total number of respondents interviewed.

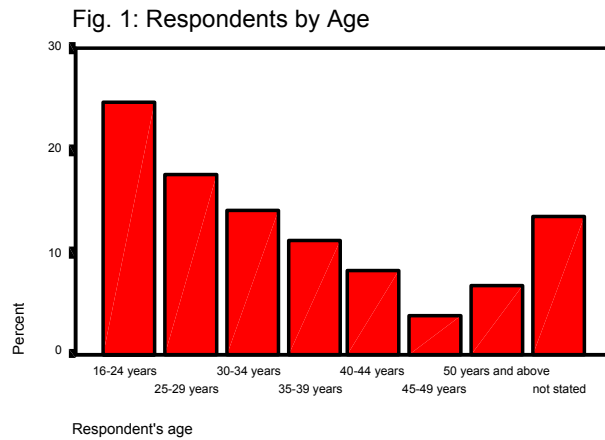


Table 2: Sex of Respondents

WiP-SU deliberately targeted women respondents because women are their target group.

TABLE 2: SEX OF RESPONDENT

	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
FEMALE	1112	65.7
MALE	577	34.0
Total	1689	99.8
No response	3	.2
Total	1692	100.0

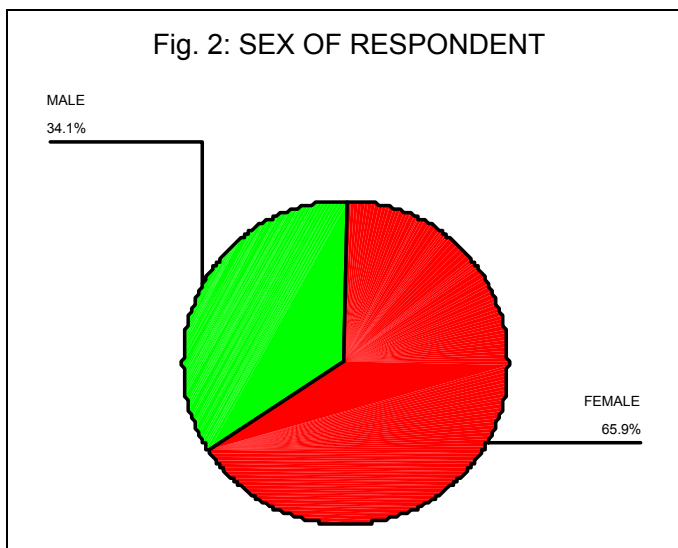


Table 3: Educational Background of Respondents

Table 3: Educational Background

	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
primary education	181	10.7
secondary education	841	49.7
A-Level	167	9.9
college	284	16.8
university	132	7.8
not stated	66	3.8
Total	1671	98.8
No response	21	1.2
Total	1692	100.0

Fig. 2: Educational Background

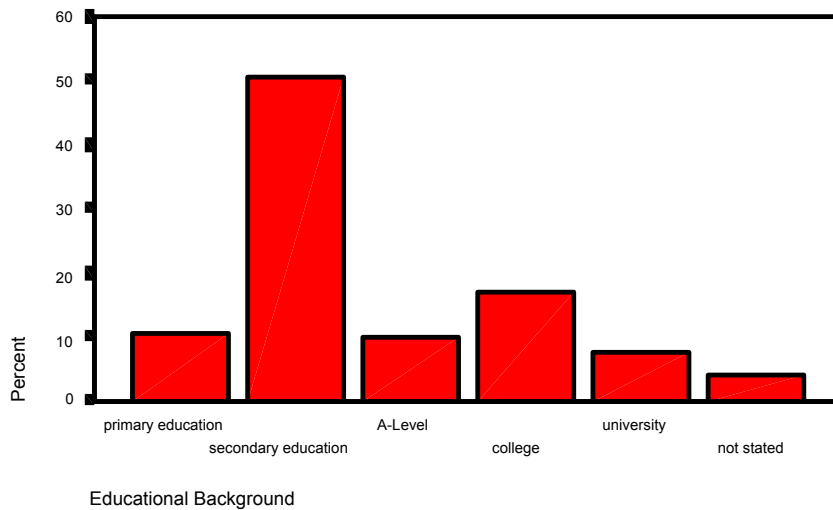
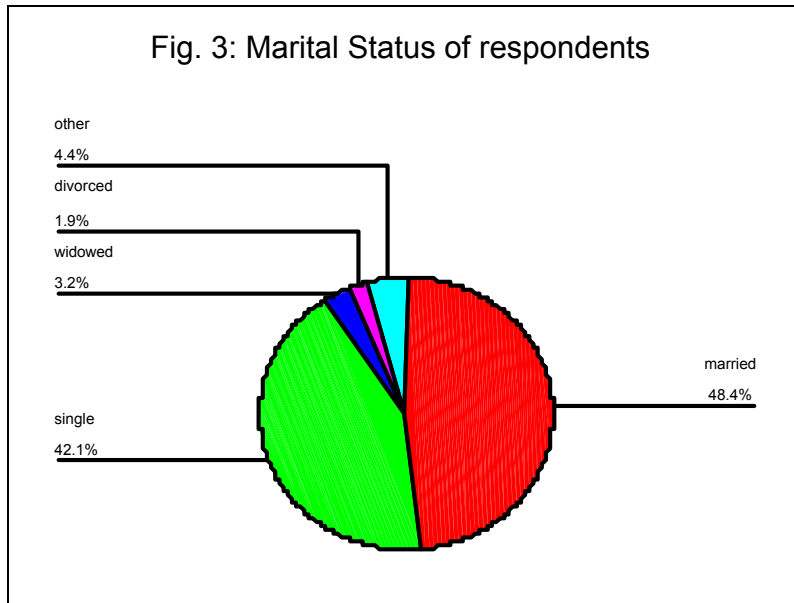


Table 4: Marital Status

	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
married	811	47.9
single	705	41.7
widowed	53	3.1
divorced	32	1.9
other	77	4.3
Total	1679	99.2
No response	13	.8
Total	1692	100.0



5.2 RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

5.2.1 Knowledge of the Member of Parliament

Respondents were asked the following questions:

- i) Do you know your member of parliament?
- ii) If the answer to i) is yes, mention her/his name.

1692 people responded to the two questions above. 60% of those who responded to the first question said that they knew their member of parliament and 40% said they did not know their MP.

Responding to the first question, one respondent replied, “I do not even know who our member (of parliament) is. Do we have one? If so, I would love to know him/her!”

In Harare, 15 constituencies were surveyed and, of these, 3 had more than 50% of respondents saying they did not know their member of parliament. In Bulawayo, 6 constituencies were surveyed and three of these had less than 50% respondents who said they knew their local member of parliament. In Mutare, 4 constituencies were surveyed and, of these, 3 constituencies surveyed showed that more 50% of the respondents knew who their member of parliament was, with Mutare North recording an equal number of respondents who said they knew their MP and those who did not know their MP. Gweru Urban recorded the highest number of respondents - 80% - who said they knew their member of parliament.

The response to the second part of the question which asked respondents to actually name their MP produced different results. Of the 1692 people who responded to the request to name their member of parliament, only 50% had the correct name for their member of parliament. 8,3% gave an incorrect MP name while 41,7% said they did not know the name of the member of parliament

Table 5: Do you know your member of parliament?

Yes	1012	60%
No	672	40%
Total	1684	100%

Table 6: Name your member of parliament.

Answer given	Number	% of Total
Correct	830	49
Incorrect	137	8
Not know	684	40
No response	41	3

5.3 Communication with the Member of Parliament

Respondents were asked the following questions in relation to communicating with their members of parliament:

- i) Have you had an opportunity to meet your MP?
- ii) If yes, how often have you met her/him? Weekly/Monthly/Once in six months/Once a year?
- iii) How often would you like to meet your MP?

5.3.1 Responses

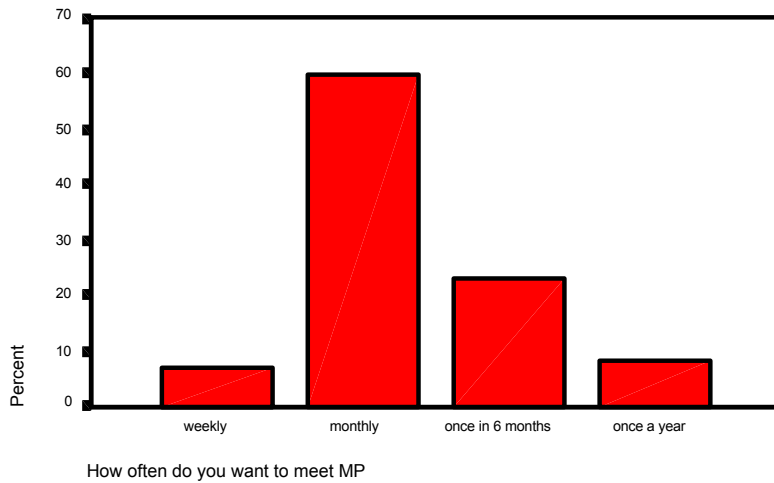
- i) Out of a total of 1683 respondents to these questions, 23% indicated having met with their members of parliament. 77% indicated that they had not met with their member of parliament.
- ii) Glen Norah and Mbare East had the highest number of respondents who had met with their members of parliament. More than 50% of respondents from these two constituencies said they had met with their members of parliament at least once.
- iii) Of the 1108 female respondents to the question whether or not they had met with their MP, 88% had not met their local member of parliament and only 12% of the female respondents had met with their MP.
- i. In response to how often they would want to meet with their MPs, 49% of the respondents preferred to meet their MP weekly. 23% opted for monthly meetings,

25% preferred meetings once is six months and 15% would be content with meeting their MP once a year. 30% of the respondents did not answer that question as they did not feel they needed to meet with their member of parliament or raise any issues with him/her.

Table 7: How often do you want to meet MP

	No. of Respondents	Percentage of respondents
weekly	112	6.6
monthly	980	57.9
once in 6 months	378	22.3
once a year	139	8.2
Other	38	2.1
Total	1647	97.3
No response	45	2.7
Total	1692	100.0

Fig. 4: How often do you want to meet MP



5.4 Relevance of Communicating with the MP and How to Communicate with the MP

Respondents were asked, “How relevant are these meetings (with your MP) in terms of the issues that concern you and your constituency?”

“From your own experience, what do you suggest as the best mechanism of communicating with your member of parliament?”

5.4.1 Responses

These were some of the responses to the first question:

- “Communication brings a bond of a good relationship between the MP and the people.”
- “People have a lot of problems they want to be solved by the MP.”
- “Meetings between MPs and constituents open the eyes and ears of the MP.”
- “Meetings will bring MPs closer to the people.”
- “The MP cannot develop the area if he does not know what we want” said one shop-keeper from Budiriro in Harare.
- “If she comes to meet the constituency at least once in a month she can have a chance to put corrective measures before they go out of control”, expressed a school matron from Mkoba Gweru.
- “It is through meetings that members of parliament come to know and understand problems of the area they represent” said a teacher in Zhombe.
- Another teacher from Matabeleland says “Meetings would help us to know him/her better and make our own assessments on choice of leaders in the future”.

Generally, most respondents felt that holding regular meetings with the local member of parliament was necessary, however there were a few dissenting voices:

- “Meeting the local MP is unlikely to solve the current problems that the country is facing. The current political climate is just not conducive to have objective discussions at the local level, hence the reason why one is discouraged to attend such meetings” a student from Bulawayo indicated.

v) Respondents suggested what they thought were the best mechanisms of communicating with their MPs. These are some of the ways they suggested:

- Constituency offices.

Some respondents suggested the establishment of constituency offices with staff to manage them. The suggestion to set up constituency offices came up in both urban and rural constituencies. Some respondents, mindful of the workload that an MP carries, noted that they did not expect the MP to run the office single-handedly but to have helpers in that office to lessen the burden of responsibility on the MP.

- Meetings.

Here, respondents suggested big group meetings and also meetings on a one-on-one basis. In recommending meetings, some respondents cautioned against rallies as these often attracted intimidation and violence.

The suggestion of meetings was qualified by some respondents who were emphatic that meetings with the MP should be punctual and held in places that are accessible to the people. Some respondents suggested that constituency meetings should be widely publicised, posters put up to advertise the meetings so that everyone knows where and

when the meetings will be held. Public meetings should be held in public places, suggested one respondent.

Referring to unpublicised meetings, one respondent said, “Everything is being run privately. Meetings are held in halls during the evening.”

Again talking about meetings, one respondent proposed that, if MPs are going to hold meetings in their constituencies, they should not just come. They should announce that they are coming because, “We also have got things to do in our homes.”

Some respondents emphasised the need for appointments for meetings, particularly on a one-on-one basis but also that MPs should be punctual and keep their promises.

At the constituency meetings, there should be no discrimination on party lines. Some respondents expressed a desire to see meetings where the ruling party and the main opposition work together “so that we can build a true Zimbabwe,” they said.

Meetings must not be far from where the people are, some respondents suggested, noting that some people are busy while others are too indisposed to walk long distances to meetings. One woman from Glen Norah said, “I cannot walk a long distance because, since my husband died, my health is not in good condition, so when she (the MP) calls for meetings, I cannot walk to that hall.”

Some respondents recommended convening thematic meetings in constituencies where MPs could be invited and, that way, they would get to meet the people.

Not all respondents were prescriptive in terms of when and how to meet. “Whatever means of communication should be accompanied by proper feedback. Whatever means are used, there should be clear communication lines as to where people should report.” Respondents expected the MP to tell them what problems she/he might be experiencing as their MP.

- Personal visits.

A significant number of respondents preferred that MPs visit them in their homes. One woman in Hatcliffe said, “One day in six months would be sufficient for a home visit.”

- Communication through local government structures.

Some respondents suggested that their MP work through councillors and provincial chairpersons as a means of communicating with them.

- Seminars.

Some respondents suggested that MPs hold seminars which accommodate a few people at a time and open up for discussions. These respondents were emphatic on the need for dialogue with the MP.

- Constituency news letter

A suggestion was made that a constituency news letter would be a good way of communicating . However it was stressed that such a newsletter would need to focus on

development issues and not “politics” as the later would put off those of a different political persuasion in the constituency.

5.5 Issues that respondents would like to bring up with their MPs

The question was asked, “If you are given an opportunity to meet your local member of parliament, what are the issues that you would like to raise with her/him?”

5.5.1 Responses

Several issues were raised which constituents would like to raise with their members of parliament. The issues raised were specific to the local needs of a community, although there were a number of cross-cutting ones. The following were listed:

5.5.1.1 Transport and the road network

- Improving transport and road networks
- Mending potholes
- Supply of good transport

5.5.1.2 Health facilities and health-related issues

- MPs need to find out how the AIDS levy is being used
- There should be a free supply of family planning tablets
- Building of hospitals within people’s reach. One respondent noted that people are dying because of no health facilities
- Dealing with the shortage of drugs in hospitals and clinics
- Dealing with the poor handling of patients in hospitals
- There are no doctors in hospitals and MPs should take up this issue
- MPs should look into the welfare of AIDS sufferers
- That maternity leave should be increased from three months to six months recommended a woman from Mutare. She argued that in that way female members of parliament would be able to take time off from work and then come back to work for their constituencies.

5.5.1.3 Education system

- Building of schools within easy reach of everyone
- Provision of scholarships for children at school
- Supply of sufficient text books at schools
- School fees are too high resulting in high school dropouts
- Provision of quality education delivered by quality teachers

- Education should be made more affordable
- Pay-out amounts for tertiary institutions should be increased
- Colleges and schools are too far from people. As a result, one student respondent said, “We need to spend a lot of money on transport in order to get to school.”
- Government should go back to Cambridge exams for ‘O’ Levels as ZIMSEC is experiencing problems
- There should be free education for AIDS orphans

5.5.1.4 School leavers

- Both parents and school leavers expressed concern about high unemployment of the youth who are school leavers. One respondent suggested that a solution to that problem could be “to introduce jobs which use hands”
- There should be recreational facilities for everyone. One respondent suggested, “Everyone should be kept busy with something to do.”
- There should be skills training for school leavers

5.5.1.5 Employment-related issues

- Employment creation for all the unemployed
- People who lose jobs through retrenchments should be helped to start projects
- Members of parliament should “look into the improvement of jobs for workers”. Particular mention was made by some respondents who work as domestic workers that they expected MPs to look into their terms and conditions of employment. One domestic worker said, “I want to be treated like a human being too.”
- Creation of income generation projects. Some respondents expected their MPs to engage in income generation projects with them
- Capital for starting income generation projects
- Government should reduce income tax
- Provision of adequate shelter for fruit and vegetable vendors
- Stop the harassment of vendors by the local authorities

5.5.1.6 Provision of accommodation

- A number of respondents were concerned about shortage of accommodation as well as the quality of accommodation available
- Together with the supply of accommodation, there should be street lighting. Some residents of Hatcliffe felt insecure because of poor street lighting
- The same residents (Hatcliffe) would like good storm water drainage installed in their residential areas
- In almost all the constituencies visited, there were concerns about increased crime resulting in home burglaries and they would like increased security in order to reduce crime. Some respondents hoped to see increased police presence in order to reduce levels of burglaries at homes

- Residents of Harare North called for the improvement of the sewage system

5.5.1.7 Social services

- Help widows access pensions

5.5.1.8 Bread and butter issues

- Respondents would like a good supply of food and general development
- Parliament should reduce the cost of living
- Parliament should reduce the cost of fuel
- MPs are expected to “do something about fuel shortage”, said one respondent

5.5.1.9 Provision of public amenities and services

- MPs are expected to ensure that radio and television services reach communities which do not have access to such facilities
- There should be an increase in the number of post offices
- Constituents expected their MPs to look into the provision of library facilities. This expectation came strongly from the rural constituencies
- Look into the provision of improved shopping centres
- Removal of refuse

5.6 Governance Issues

Respondents often outlined two levels of interventions by their members of parliament. They expected interventions which would improve their quality of life through provision of health facilities, food, education and other social amenities. They were concerned about income generation and employment creation, and they were also concerned about the broad governance issues which they saw as impacting negatively on their lives and on their communities. These governance issues were raised in response to the same question, namely, “If you are given an opportunity to meet your local member of parliament, what are the issues that you would like to raise with her/him?”

These are the governance issues that respondents raised:

- MPs should point out the significance of the voters’ roll
- There should be peaceful elections in Zimbabwe and perpetrators of political violence should be punished
- Democracy should be introduced into the country
- MPs need to address the issue of soldiers who beat up people in bars
- “People are afraid to say out their concerns because the government arrests anyone who says bad about it. You should just keep quiet,” said one respondent

- Respondents, in various ways, expressed concern about the poor relations between the ruling party ZANU (PF) and the opposition party, the MDC. They noted that the intersection of party affiliation and constituency work has been a difficult one. One respondent emphasised the need for MDC MPs to stress their work, not as party cadres, but as national leaders. One respondent from Glen Norah constituency had this to say, “To be frank, each MP wants to please her/his big bosses of her/his own party. This makes it difficult to satisfy the needs of the people she/he represents. If possible, the element of to which party the MP belongs should be driven out of these MPs for them to feed the *povo*.”
- The government should extend freedom of movement and expression to everyone regardless of political affiliation
- Use of government machinery should be available to all MPs
- People are not free to co-operate with opposition MPs for fear of intimidation and harassment
- Corruption in Government should be stopped
- The size of the president’s delegation should be reduced when he travels abroad in order to reduce the budget, was the feeling of one respondent
- The president should reduce foreign trips
- One student noted, “We must address and find support for R. G. Mugabe - The president must be impeached!”
- The government should accommodate members of the opposition party in Cabinet
- MPs must advocate for a new constitution
- Land should be transparently given to the people
- Mass terrorising of the opposition MPs by ZANU (PF) youths must stop
- The Government of Zimbabwe should mend relations with Britain

5.7 Advancement of Women to Achieve Gender Equality

- Government itself should view women as capable people and not as incapable
- The party itself should recognise women and support them the whole way up to parliament
- One female respondent from Bulawayo asked, “Why is the government now silent about gender issues?”
- Women should be given opportunities at all work places

5.8 Matabeleland

Matabeleland had a unique problem which featured prominently among respondents. The aftermath of Gukurahundi left a number of orphans and this was a major concern to a number of respondents. Some of the respondents saw a federal political system as a solution to the problem of marginalisation of Matabeleland in terms of development.

5.9 Problems faced by Members of Parliament in executing their duties

WiP-SU was not only interested in finding out implementation gaps in the work of female members of parliament, but was also keen to find out to what extent constituents were sensitive to the challenges their MPs faced in executing their duties.

In response to the question, “What do you think are the main problems faced by your member of parliament in undertaking her/his duties in your constituency?” Respondents had this to say:

- “I know nothing of his problems, its his own lookout,” said an unemployed single mother from Bulawayo North.
- “Lack of access to current information of the state of affairs in the constituency, since he resides in Harare,” said a twenty-four year old teacher from Gweru.
- “The only problem he has is being voted in power and spending his time sitting and doing nothing, just waiting for the next election”, said a single mother from Bulawayo.
- “Intimidation by liberation war veterans who are the rulers of this country”, said a housewife from Zhombe.
- One dejected school teacher from Zhombe expressed his feelings by saying, “I am not aware of any problems he faces in executing his duties, but I am just assuming that lack of concern is one of his problems. I say so because, when he was campaigning, he frequented the area. In short, he lived with the people who voted for him, but now...”
- A number of respondents indicated the lack of an office for the Member of Parliament and the current shortage of fuel.
- Lack of transport facilities for MPs which tends to restrict their movement
- Lack of moral support from the constituencies
- Language problems for the non-black members of parliament
- Members of parliament do not have budgetary allocations for the running of their constituencies. Elaborating on this point, one female respondent from Mzilikazi said, “Being an MP does not mean that you are rich.”
- Another respondent from the Glen Norah constituency said that once people become MPs, the public expects too much from them. “People become over-demanding that they even expect the MP to buy groceries for their homes.”

Not only were respondents asked what challenges MPs faced in undertaking their duties but they were also asked to suggest ways of addressing those problems. The question read, “Can you suggest ways of how these problems could be addressed?” The following were some of the responses:

- “Have courses for the MPs to educate them on their duties”
- “By holding meetings with local leaders like chiefs, councillors, teachers and kraal heads”
- “Members of Parliament should live in her/his constituency”
- “Offices should be established by government for all members of parliament”
- One young school teacher from Gweru said the only solution was “to remove the ruling party and replace it with a good one”.

- “The MP should address her constituency and state what her problems are and people would then suggest solutions. Otherwise people are not aware of what problems the member of parliament faces.”
- “The Police must be fair when dealing with issues of political violence,” a teacher from Mutasa said.
- “Government should allocate resources to all constituencies irrespective of their political parties,” said another respondent from Mabvuku.

5.10 GENDER ISSUES

WiP-SU sought to establish to what extent the public thought about gender balance in parliamentary representation and to try and quantify the nature of preferences. To do that, respondents were asked the following:

- i) “In terms of parliamentary representation, do you have any preferences between women and men?”
- ii) “Would you prefer a scenario where there are more women or men members of parliament? Explain.”

5.10.1 Responses:

1415 people responded to this question. 25% of these preferred more women and less men. 16% preferred more men than women and 31% preferred equal representation. 1% of the interviewed wanted an all male representation while 5% wanted an all female parliament and 17% had no specific preference.

Of the 1415 respondents, 1088 of them were female and 327 male. 7.3% of women preferred more men than women in parliament. Among the male respondents, 4.6% preferred more female than male representation.

Table 8: Preference between men & women by Sex of respondent

	SEX OF RESPONDENT		Total
	FEMALE	MALE	
more women & less men	344	75	419
% of Total	20.9%	4.6%	25.5%
more men & less women	120	147	267
% of Total	7.3%	8.9%	16.3%
equal representation	337	140	477
% of Total	20.5%	8.5%	29.0%
all men	9	16	25
% of Total	.5%	1.0%	1.5%
all women	4	2	6
% of Total	.2%	.1%	.4%
no preference	186	134	320
% of Total	11.3%	8.2%	19.5%
not applicable	88	41	129
% of Total	5.4%	2.5%	7.9%
Total	1088	555	1643
% of Total	66.2%	33.8%	100.0%

5.11 Reasons given for preferring more female representation

- “I prefer women to be more than men because they are always with the people”, said a woman from Mpopoma.
- A young woman had this to say, “I would prefer more women because since independence men have just been eating money and sitting and rotting in parliament.”
- One 47 year-old woman said she preferred women because they are loving, caring and hardworking.
 - Women are powerful in speech
 - Most women are born as good leaders
 - “Women must be more in parliament because so far, men in parliament are thieves, they do not fear even to steal millions and millions of money,” remarked one respondent
 - Women are more approachable and easier to talk to.

Expressing a preference for more male representation, some respondents made the following comments:

- “More men, women would spend time creating problems and more time trying to solve them.”
- “From the Bible, a woman is always under a man so how can they be elected into parliament?” one man asked.
- “Culturally, politics is a man’s sphere, hence women should stay away from it.”
- Women are too sensitive and that tends to cloud their decisions.

- Politics is a dirty game.
- Child-bearing. What would happen to her job when she went on maternity leave?" one respondent from Harare North asked.
- "We do not need more women because they only represent each other and they are slow learners."

In support of gender balance in parliament, the following remark was made:

- A 29 year-old farmer from Zhombe said, "...equal numbers of women and men. It will allow balance of opinions and views pertaining to issues regarding both sexes. No, let it be by the ballot box, whoever wins must go to parliament."

Those who did not support any particular sex felt that merit, as opposed to sex, should be the criteria for getting into parliament.

5.12 To solicit more views from respondents on which gender they prefer to represent them, the question was asked, "In your own views, what are the advantages and disadvantages of being represented by a woman in parliament?"

Advantages	Disadvantages
• very progressive • women are level-headed • men underestimate women and so it is an advantage to be represented by a woman in parliament • women are concerned about the future • women MPs are not corrupt • they are sensitive to family problems • women advocate for women's development • women have higher reasoning capacity than men • women do not give up easily • gender violence will be minimised	• women fear violence • women are not strong, once intimidated, they withdraw from politics • women think they cannot lead. They lack confidence • women face a lot of domestic violence in their daily lives • culture is against women • women do not support each other • women are not aware of their rights • married women have little time to attend seminars because they are governed by their husbands • resisted by men in their constituencies • men take advantage of women and use them against each other • women are not taken seriously. To explain this point, one respondent gave an example of how Maggie Dongo, at one time, was referred to as a little girl in parliament by a male colleague

5.13 Reasons why women are underrepresented in parliament

One of WiP-SU's key objectives is to increase women's participation in parliament from the current 10% female representation. In order to get an insight into the reasons for the current under-representation of women in parliament and how that problem can be solved, the respondents were asked:

- i) "In your own opinion, what are the constraints that limit women from being elected into parliament?"
- ii) "In your own assessment, what needs to be done in order to have
 - a. a good representation of women in parliament
 - b. a successful woman parliamentarian representing your views?"

5.13.1 Responses

Respondents made the following contributions to the study regarding the low female representation in parliament and what could be done to correct that imbalance:

- "The first step is to get women elected at the grassroots levels, as councillors", said a single mother from Bulawayo.
- "Those women that are already in Parliament and at decision-making levels should set up programmes that would empower more women in politics."
- "Encourage women to improve their academic qualifications."
- "Give women more exposure outside the home through programmes."
- There should be political parties set up to support women candidates.
- There should be voter education on the need to vote women into power.
- Education campaigns targeting both women and men should be mounted.
- Women candidates should be promoted during the campaign period.

- Women should be encouraged to run for election and more women must run for political office.
- Women MPs currently in place should be aware of gender issues at stake so as to promote them.
- There should be a quota system.
- Men and women should demand party policies that address current gender inequalities in their respective parties.
- There should be proportional representation which would accommodate minority interests and groups in parliament.
- Young women should be groomed for leadership.
- Political parties should put up structures supporting women candidates and there should be proportional representation within the political parties.
- Women should socialise with each other more in order to increase their liking of each other.
- Women should demand party policies which address current gender inequalities in their respective parties.

Respondents went on to list the qualities of a successful woman parliamentarian representing their views as follows:

- She should be trained in gender issues and be gender-sensitive
- Be principled
- Confident
- Co-operative
- Informed and articulate on issues
- Should go to church
- “She should be married with Chapter 37 or 5:11”
- “She must be dressed as a married woman or Zimbabwean dressing”
- Must be honest and reliable
- Must not be afraid of men
- “She must be able to speak in front of the President”
- Must understand people’s problems and take them to parliament
- Dedicated
- Responsible
- Efficient
- Truthful

5.14 Other related issues

Although the questionnaire was structured to collect comparable data, it allowed respondents to raise issues they considered important which might have been omitted in the questionnaire.

This is what some of the respondents had to say in their closing remarks:

- “Why the sudden interest in women?”.

- “When will the report be published?”
- “How do we access it?”
- “What are the specific activities that will come out of this?”
- A young woman hairdresser from Pelandaba had this to say at the end of the interview, “Why the sudden interest. We have been independent for 21 years, or is it that the elections are around the corner and you want to use us women as always, since we are the majority?”
- On a lighter note, a male vendor in Mutasa said “Only unmarried women should contest for parliamentary seats.”
- A single lady from Mpopoma had this to say, “I think these questionnaires should be shown to MPs, maybe it will help them to know what they are supposed to do in their constituencies.”
- “This is a good survey, please take it seriously – don’t just waste donors’ money. Please take your time and embark on a training programme for women – they need it”, concluded a 32 year-old from Mpopoma.
- “I want the next president to be a woman so that women can be appointed to Cabinet. Because the president is a man, why can’t we have one deputy president of the two deputies(as a woman)?”, said a 42 year-old woman from Gutu South.

6. ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

6.1 ANALYSIS OF MPs’ RESPONSES

6.1.1 What was needed for an MP to be effective and functional?

The MPs generally gave similar responses to the first two questions. As it turned out, the same requirements for one to be effective were the same for one to be functional. The aspects identified can be broken down to the following:

6.1.1.1 Resources and facilities

- Constituency offices, well-equipped and staffed
- Transport
- Financial support

6.1.1.2 Training in special skills

- Communication skills
- Leadership
- Ability to articulate issues in parliament
- research skills
- Public speaking

6.1.1.3 Contact with constituents

- Physical presence in constituency is important

- Establish effective communication links with the constituency

6.1.1.4 Personal character

- Honesty and integrity

6.1.1.5 Publicity

- Access to the media is important

6.1.2 What do you need to be able to take gender issues into parliament?

On what was required to take gender issues into parliament, there was general conformity in responses, both within and across gender lines.

The following aspects stood out:

- Training for MPs on issues of gender and women
- The involvement of NGOs and donors in the training
- Awareness for both women and men in the constituencies on gender issues
- Female MPs must work across party lines on gender issues in order to be effective
- Co-operation and contacts with other countries on gender issues was necessary

6.1.3 Do you see women as a constituency you should represent in parliament?

On this question, there was general consensus, especially among women parliamentarians that women should have preferential representation. The reasons given to support this view included the following:

- Women are currently marginalised
- Gender equity and equality must be attained
- Women must not only be used as voters but must also benefit from their votes
- Women must occupy leadership and decision-making positions

6.2 ANALYSIS OF CONSTITUENTS' RESPONSES

Respondents were very clear on the questions that were put to them and they raised very critical policy issues that they expected their members of parliament to raise in parliament.

Zimbabwe has 120 elected members of parliament. These are people who are chosen by their constituents to lead them. As one female college student from Glen Norah remarked, "Our MP must know that she has a right to lead us for five years, so she must go ahead and do just that." Constituents expect that their members of parliament sit in parliament to represent their views.

6.2.1 Policy issues to be raised by members of parliament

As the survey results show, respondents were very prolific in itemising issues of concern to them on which they expected adequate representation. A look at the diversity of issues shows that they touch on every area of human existence. The issues ranged from expectations that members of parliament care that children are born in well-equipped health institutions; that there is adequate maternity leave for women; to children going to schools which are within easy reach and education is affordable. Children should also get quality education from qualified teachers with adequate educational material and books. Citizens expect that when children finish school, they are occupied in some profession or have resources to set up their own income generation projects.

Citizens expect that members of parliament be concerned about availability of recreational facilities and that citizens live in affordable homes with appropriate facilities such as running water, a good sewerage system, electrification and proper and adequate street lighting for their comfort and security as well as a good transport and communication network.

Respondents expected their members of parliament to take up issues in parliament to do with the health of the sick, the welfare of the elderly and other disadvantaged groups. MPs are expected to ensure that there are policies which guarantee good working conditions, that preserve the dignity of the workers and guarantee sufficient remuneration.

There was a clear expectation that members of parliament take an interest in and deal with the harsh economic environment where prices of goods are high and there are shortages of critical commodities such as fuel. Citizens expected members of parliament to ensure that there is good governance in Zimbabwe. Some respondents called for an end to political violence and for space for freedom of political choice and expression. Some respondents called for an end to the political monopoly of the ruling party ZANU (PF) and an accommodation of and tolerance for the main opposition party, the MDC. They called for an end to violence against citizens by the country's military forces.

What this study has done is to link, in very real ways, constituencies with their members of parliament on the basis of issues that come from the grassroots. Indeed, it would have been desirable for these issues to have come up prioritised from the different constituencies but that was beyond the scope of this study. What was achieved, however, was to list policy issues of concern to constituents that they would like their individual members of parliament to look into.

This survey has shown, at least from the long list of issues that respondents would like to raise with their MPs, that there is a lot of work ahead of MPs. The success of these MPs is directly linked to their ability to be sensitive and responsive to their constituencies. This study got a sense that as many members of parliament as are willing to tackle these policy issues and concerns will earn the respect and support of the people who voted them into power.

It was interesting to note that, by and large, members of the public were conscious of the possibility of being over-demanding or over-expectant and yet, for those members of parliament who demonstrated a desire to work with their constituents, there was a willingness to understand and help them within the context of their own constraints.

6.2.2 Communication

What this survey intended to do was to bring out issues of communication between members of parliament and their constituents. Working in a representative capacity, members of parliament need to be able to take issues from those that they represent into parliament. At the heart of this work is to have mutually agreed means of communication. MPs need to be able to take agendas from the people, take them to parliament and then give feedback to the people on the outcome.

This survey took time to establish means through which members of the public expected their members of parliament to communicate with them, where and how and with what frequency. Again, the respondents were prolific in making suggestions for possible ways of communicating with their members of parliament. Suggestions ranged from one-to-one meetings, home visits, meetings of groups in public places, seminars, suggestion boxes, telephonic communication, newsletters. In these suggestions, the need for appointments, publicising meetings and timeliness was emphasised. Respondents emphasised the need for members of parliament to respect their time and give them prior notification for whatever activities they wanted to do with the people. The importance of using language which can be understood by all was stressed, including suggestions to use interpreters for those members of parliament who do not speak the indigenous languages.

As with the issues that people would like members of parliament to take up, this survey has not attempted to prioritise the preferred means of communication. These will vary from constituency to constituency. What this survey clearly brings out is that there is a high level of consciousness that members of parliament work in a representative capacity. They are not expected to come up with issues from among themselves but from the people they represent. The only way to get these issues is through communicating with the people and giving feedback on the outcomes.

It is recommended that members of parliament go into their constituencies and engage in dialogue on the mode of interaction with their constituencies. Often, concerns were raised that once MPs were voted into power, they ‘disappeared’ until the next elections. Such allegations might be disappointing for those MPs who felt they visited their constituencies but what is coming out clearly in this study is that it is not enough for MPs to choose unilaterally how they will interact with people. There needs to be a process of consultation where the MPs engage citizens on how they want to communicate. MPs also need to engage on what issues the people want to see them raise. Anything else is not

sustainable and can only result in unmet expectations on the part of constituents. This, in turn, could derail the political career of members of parliament.

Given that WiP-SU has been established to support women members of parliament, it is recommended that considerable resources be invested in helping female members of parliament establish communication links with their constituencies in a participatory manner. It is further recommended that technical, material and other resources be afforded female members of parliament to set up and establish communication channels within their constituencies.

It is also recommended that WiP-SU facilitate female members of parliament in coming up with primary agenda issues for presentation to parliament. These issues could be established through a survey similar to this one which would focus on individual constituencies.

What this survey brought out is that constituencies have as many similar needs as they have divergent needs. Many of these needs may well be beyond the scope of the members of parliament to successfully deal with, both in terms of the vastness of needs and the financial and human resource required. It is therefore recommended that, as part of support for female members of parliament, WiP-SU link up members of parliament with non-governmental organisations which are already providing some of the services that are needed in some constituencies.

There are non-governmental organisations that provide help and support to the elderly, provide skills training to young people, and care for orphans from the AIDS pandemic. All these resources could be linked to constituencies in need and get them to plant some of their projects in the affected communities. This may be a more effective and cost-effective way of linking communities with resources. It is recommended, in this case, that WiP-SU acts as a social entrepreneur for the good of the female-led constituencies. Such linkages will fill a critical social gap while effectively profiling the work of female members of parliament. Some of the ways of countering negative attitudes towards women and hinder them from occupying decision-making positions can and will be dealt with when there are practical demonstrations of the effectiveness of female leadership. Some respondents noted that it was important for the few women in parliament to be seen to be doing well in order to get more women involved in politics and decision-making.

6.2.3 Increasing the Numbers of Women in Parliament

This survey brought out that citizens were not opposed to women's leadership. In principle, there is no reason why Zimbabwe should be doing so badly in female representation in parliament. Over 50% of respondents asked to indicate their gender preference in parliament either preferred balanced representation or more female representation and female-only parliamentary representation.

These views have not been matched at policy level to the extent that one respondent from Mzilikazi asked, “Why is the government now so silent on gender issues?” There is a challenge for the sitting parliamentarians to take the gender agenda to parliament, including the issue of equitable representation of women in parliament. Respondents gave a long list of possibilities for furthering the agenda of achieving equality in parliamentary representation. Respondents called for parliament to lead the debate on dealing with gender inequalities. There was a call for an engendered constitution, political party policies that are gendered and facilitate the nomination and election of women candidates for parliamentary positions.

Respondents called for affirmative action in parliament and political parties through a quota system. There were recommendations that women candidates be supported and profiled by their parties during campaigns preceding elections. Some respondents called for the grooming and training of women for leadership including targeting young women.

The recommendations are many and all of them useful such that a parallel process of implementing policy interventions as well as practical support for female candidates should result in the equal representation of women and men in parliament. At the very least, representation should be on a 50-50 basis, but ideally the proportion of females to males in any decision-making position should be on a ratio of 52% to 48% respectively to match the national population figures.

It is recommended that WiP-SU work with female parliamentarians to help them move motions in parliament which call for an engendered constitution and also help these women to put pressure on their political party leadership to come up with engendered party constitutions which compel the parties to mainstream gender.

Finally, it is recommended that, given the significance of this survey, questionnaires be bound on a constituency by constituency basis so that each female member of parliament gets to see what the people from her constituency had to say. It was worrying to note that a year after the parliamentary elections of June 2000, there are still some people who had not seen their members of parliament or know who they are. That is a serious issue which requires some urgent attention, otherwise members of parliament risk losing their credibility and the confidence entrusted in them by those who elected them.