



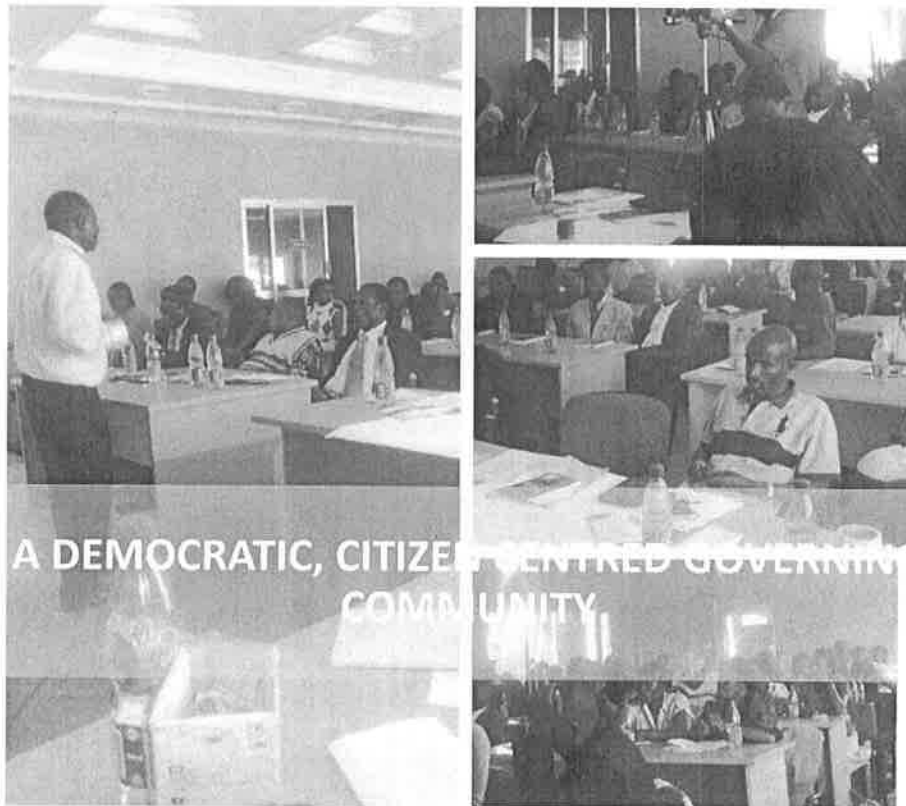
## **NATIONAL WOMEN'S LOBBY GROUP (NAWOLG)**

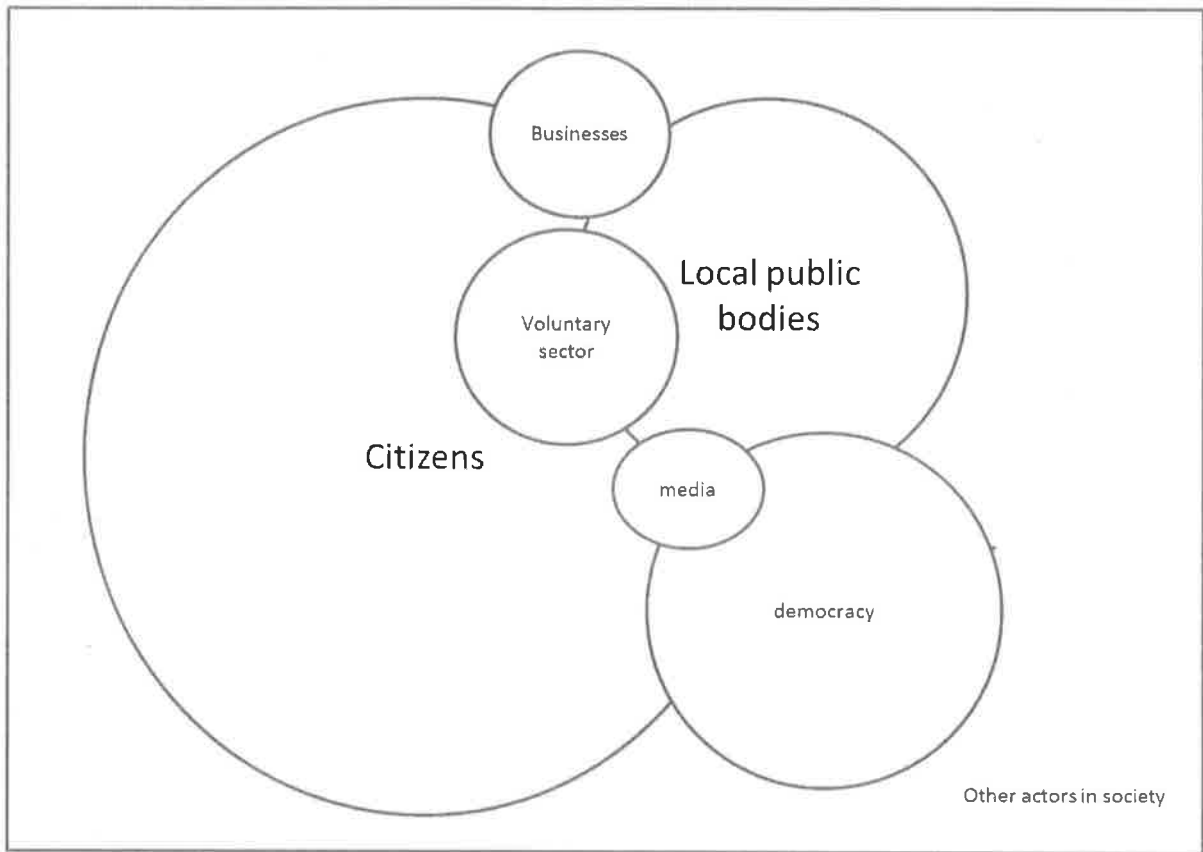
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*THE RUMPHI, NKHATA BAY AND MZIMBA  
WE WANT: TOWARDS A PEACEFUL 2014  
TRIPARTITE ELECTIONS WITH IMPROVED  
HAPPY GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY  
LIVILIHOOBS*





**CITIZEN’S MANIFESTO FOR RUMPHI, MZIMBA NORTH AND NKHATA BAY SOUTH**

We the communities that are signatories of this document have put together this “Citizens Manifesto”, that reflects the concerns of the communities from the point of view from citizen’s representatives across the three districts of Rumphu, Mzimba and Nkhata Bay.

NAWOLG has held public meetings, stakeholder forums, trainings and panelist discussions that resolved to come up with manifesto highlighting areas of concern on key community issues and governance issues that the communities would like their politicians to address when elected into office in the fourth coming presidential, parliamentary and local government elections (2014 Tripartite elections).

“We shall not elect local government politicians, candidates who don’t have clear plans to improve governance at local level,” chairperson of the Mzimba Area Development Committees said in one of the meeting. “This time, we are voting on issues not to be blind folded by handouts”. District Coordinators, read out the citizens’ strategy to beneficiaries and key

stakeholders for influencing local politics to accord key issues identified the priority it deserves in the area. In the manifesto, the communities are demanding improvement in service delivery and government systems, easy access to facilities and increased share of participation in key decision making systems i.e. Local government budget.

Traditional leaders with trained area civic educators started to mobilize community members in their areas to vote for candidates with clear agenda that will benefit the communities. They promised to vehemently de-campaign those candidates without a clear development agenda in their political manifestoes. "We are tired of politicians who give hand outs and fail to deliver on key area problems. "In the previous elections many community members received handouts from politicians to get elected and many have done nothing to help in improving our situation, this time we are only voting for those with clear development plans." Traditional Authority Mwamlowe of Rumphu said.

The meetings concluded with all communities of the three districts agreeing to distribute copies of the citizens' manifesto to all opinion leaders/ elders in their respective areas. They also suggested giving copies of the community priorities to all political aspirants and parties soliciting for votes in their respective areas to commit their support to the issues highlighted.

Strategizing to push communities agenda on the local political landscape is just one of the many examples under the National Democratic Institute (NDI) with support from DFID (UKAID) project where community members are empowering to interface with service providers and leaders to bring about improved governance; emphasizing value for money on local and constituency development funds, accountability and transparency in decision making processes that affect them. In view of the above issue based campaigns, the Programme manager of NAWOLG Madalo Mononga said, with community led advocacy what matters is the transformation as a result of the citizens' action. "There is need to use these experiences at local levels to also influence national level policy change."

The objectives of this manifesto is to deepen the understanding on the concerns of the three districts from the point of view of citizen's representatives i.e. CBOs, religious and other opinion leaders, ADCs, VDCs, youth, women, people with disabilities, assembly/government officials etc. and collectively seek their proactive action that will benefit all grassroots communities, thus fostering transparency and

build confidence amongst the common Malawian. We intend to revisit this manifesto half yearly and get a report at constituency level and at Ward level, as we know the challenges and crises facing the three districts differ from that of the entire nation, hence we wish to state that we are united in a common determination with the local government to make our areas a better more inclusive nation. The manifesto is not an exhaustive blue print for social economic and political policies or administration management and therefore does not articulate positions on every possible policy option. The manifesto proceeds on the basis we the citizens feel that good, modern local authorities and public bodies that desire more citizen participation will want to do the listed key issues below and more. A limited number already are, the challenge is for all to do what is needed by smart thinking within the current budgets. More importantly, it also recognises and endorses the principles of national policies.

We the communities of Rumphu, Mzimba and Nkhata Bay understand the responsibility to ensure that the government creates the conditions for a better future for all of us in the community as we will see growth and development in our areas ..... A DEMOCRATIC, CITIZEN CENTRED GOVERNING COMMUNITY. Our areas require a democratic local government and leadership, chosen by the people and accountable to them; An area where women and men play an equal role in decision-making; A government which has the right powers, finances and human resources to enable it to develop high quality public policies; and which works with other levels of government, as well as with neighboring local governments and municipalities, to develop common approaches to successful development. An informed community needs accurate timely information to make good local decisions.

## **THE ISSUES**

In the consultations, communities raised several development issues and concerns and below we present the most mentioned issues in the three districts and Interest Group Consultations. As communities, Hence we seek our authorities and political candidates to focus on –

### **1. EDUCATION**

- Improve the quality and accessibility for all to education services and removal of prohibitive high costs
- provision of adequate teaching and learning materials by prioritizing provision of an enabling environment for children with special needs, resource allocation to building dilapidated school infrastructure
- recruitment and retention of increased numbers of qualified teachers through provision of appropriate and adequate teachers training, improvement of teachers conditions of services and incentives
- review of curriculum to reflect job markets, increase entrepreneurship skills to curb youth unemployment
- improvement of capacity of schools committees integration of early development childhood development into the public education system;
- enhancement of gender equality in education
- provide scholarships/bursaries for students whose parents cannot afford fees

### **2. HEALTH**

- Ensure increased health sector financing especially focusing on rehabilitation of all dilapidated public hospitals/health centres, inputs (drugs and equipment) and health sector staff welfare in the districts
- strengthening monitoring of the health delivery system
- ensure that the health policy review is transparent and meets the communities' aspirations and target results
- expanding access to health facilities through construction of adequate health facilities
- better information to support tough decisions on local social care
- ensure security and providing measures to reduce drug pilferage

- ensure medical councils monitor the quality of health professionals deployed to administer different ailments i.e. HIV, Cancer, TB etc.

### **3. AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY**

- Support and ensure the agricultural cooperatives are functional in the districts
- Ensure policies that tackle the different manifestation of poverty and inequalities and lessons from the past around poverty reduction strategy
- Ensure that government makes a substantive investment in the agriculture sector of the national budget in parliament
- Provision of better management to the farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP) to the best interests of ordinary citizens
- Enhancing food production through increased access to land, inputs by promoting and expanding extension services and irrigation schemes that train farmers modern farming technologies
- Ensuring effective and fair food distribution through established farm committees to foster local ownership and monitor local agricultural activities
- Facilitate construction for affordable metallic silos to cater lean periods of farming

### **4. WATER AND SANITATION**

- Increase access to safe and clean water by increasing the number functional water sources i.e. boreholes and dams which provide piped water
- providing communities with training in bore hole maintenance standardising water rates and gravity-fed piped water schemes
- Maintaining public ownership of water boards through training in management and subsidising connection fees and tariffs in rural areas.

### **5. ROAD NETWORK AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Improved road infrastructure to access markets and establish a market economy as in the policy document of the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy.

- Advocate for a new policy limiting contracting of road works and maintenance to only highly specialized undertakings such tarmacking , is passed and operationalized and local governments are fully responsible for public works

However the manifesto needs to reflect that the problem of access to market, health centres, and schools remained the challenge to communities due to poor road networks. This issue also needs to be addressed through programmes and projects which can benefit the communities e.g. public works, food for work and lower class contractors to build bridges joining hard to reach areas and reducing drowning related accidents used to occur where people could not access bridges

## **6. WIDESPREAD CORRUPTION**

- Implement necessary measures for the prevention of corruption in public and private bodies
- Ending impunity by strong and decisive action against corrupt Cabinet ministers, MPs, local councilors and public officers implicated
- Speedy investigations into complaints and prosecute those who are involved in corruption which is a major challenge to governance and development i.e. cash gates, misappropriation of development funds, bribery etc.
- Establishing Nonpartisanship in the bureau and the Ant-Corruption forums communities at district level, institutions and village, T.A levels to combat the corrupt practices.
- Develop a policy instrument to deal with implicated authorities and public officers
- Support and strengthen NGOs and Civil Society Networks in tackling corruption

## **7. WIDESPREAD UNEMPLOYMENT**

- Expanding employment opportunities by encouraging self-employment through provisions of access to capital and skills development

- ensuring that number of women and youth in employment is increased and improve conditions of employment by revising the minimum wage upwards
- ensuring wages and salaries reflect the cost of living and enforcing laws prohibiting child labour
- increase job opportunities for the local communities from well-developed mining sectors
- Increase support to enterprise development and make necessary budget allocations
- Ensure that the Education System and curriculum are reviewed and refocused to respond to contemporary challenges facing our economy and development

The districts have several good mining sites which the communities are failing to benefit from with only the government benefitting i.e. Chenga, Kaziwiziwi coal mines and Kanyika mines in Rumphi. There are no clear indications that the communities benefit from the companies' social responsibility including the national park and game reserves.

## **8. GROWING POVERTY STATUS**

Citizens need to be equipped with basic information on economic policies and policy interventions that promote economic growth and poverty reduction.

- Need to prioritize poverty reduction policy and programmes as part of development plans
- Formulate and implement constituency development plans that meet the communities aspirations and address the economic challenges by the grassroots poor
- Ensuring proper management of the constituency development fund, local development fund and district development funds for continuity of community development funds
- Influence national level policies action to the betterment of the communities i.e. trade, taxation, national budget, indigenous empowerment allocations, productivity opportunities, equal distribution of resources, inclusive participation, public resource management, security, elections etc.
- Ensure inclusiveness of marginalised and disadvantaged groups in development plans i.e. women, youth, people with disabilities.



## 9. ENVIRONMENT

- Increase awareness of environmental issues among communities to protect natural resources
- Inform people's decisions about levels of pollution in their daily lives so that they can avoid or campaign to change it.
- Punish those who are involved in destroying the environment
- Support national debates on land reforms and any other national issues

## EXPECTATIONS

Citizens/communities in the district of Rumpfi, Mzimba and Nkhata Bay are aspiring to have competent political parties, aspiring candidates whose nature of interest are for the communities and positively depend to focus and address social key issues; promote democratic governance and development; taking on board to incorporate the facts in this manifesto into theirs; agree to it as a social contract and will empower the communities, civil society to use as an assessment tool upon the services delivery of the elected members of Local Government Council, Parliament and Government. The polls for the Tripartite elections are due on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014, what remains is to see how the elected politicians will deliver on the citizens' manifesto.



*AS WE APPROACH OUR 50<sup>TH</sup> YEAR INDEPENDENCE  
ANNIVERSARY...WE RECALL OUR DREAM THAT WAS AND SHOULD  
BE....*

*OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM*

O God bless our land of Malawi,  
Keep it a land of peace.  
Put down each and every enemy,  
Hunger, disease, envy.  
Join together all our hearts as one,  
That we be free from fear.  
Bless our leader, each and every one,  
And Mother Malawi.

Our own Malawi, this land so fair,  
Fertile and brave and free.  
With its lakes, refreshing mountain air,  
How greatly blest are we.  
Hills and valleys, soil so rich and rare,  
Give us a bounty free.  
Wood and forest, plains so broad and fair,  
All-beauteous Malawi.

Freedom ever, let us all unite  
To build up Malawi.  
With our love, our zeal and loyalty,  
Bringing our best to her.  
In time of war, or in time of peace,  
One purpose and one goal.  
Men and women serving selflessly  
In building Malawi.

