The Gungano Urban Poor Fund was established in 1999 and is still functioning.

It was created by the Zimbabwe Homeless People’s Federation (ZHPF), to bring together women-led, local savings groups from low income urban areas, to collect community savings and provide accessible finance. By means of these savings groups, its members have the opportunity to access loans and financial assistance. The ZHPF manages the Fund.

**Beneficiaries:** The Gungano Urban Poor Fund provides loans to groups of individuals, organized in solidarity loan or savings groups, living in poor urban areas or informal settlements. They are slum dwellers and evictees, who do not have access to land. These groups are organized in solidarity loan or savings groups.

**Civil Society Partner:** Dialogue on Shelter for the Homeless in Zimbabwe Trust (DSHZT).

**Public Partners:** City government funding, Harare city funds.

**International Partners:** Philanthropists and bilateral like Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, DFID, SELAVIP (Latin American, African and Asian Social Housing Service), SDI Urban Poor Fund International, MISEEROR, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

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**LOCATION**

Harare, Zimbabwe

**RESOURCES**

Contact with Patience Mudimu, March - April 2021

International Institution for Environment and Development, *Delivering climate finance at the local level: the Gungano Urban Poor Fund*, 22 November 2018


International Institution for Environment and Development, *Gungano Urban Poor Fund (SDI)*

World Habitat Awards, *Dzivarasekwa Slum Upgrading* Full Project Summary, Bronze 2019

CoHabitat.io, *Dzivarasekwa Slum Upgrading Project*, 2020
The collective savings of the women-led local savings groups are the foundation of the Gungano Urban Poor Fund. The ZHPF collects the savings and contributes to the Fund. It also attracts external funding, like international donors such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and SELAVIP (Latin American, African and Asian Social Housing Service) and funding from the SDI Urban Poor Fund International. Besides that, it uses financial, material, human and technical resources from the government.

The Fund provides in turn loans for individual housing improvement projects, implemented by the solidarity savings groups of the Zimbabwe Homeless People’s Federation. There are more than 500 grassroots organizations linked to the ZHPF, each made up of some 30 families. The members are expected to repay the loan within a specified timeframe and at an affordable interest rate. The loans are paid back to the Fund, to give other members the opportunity to implement their projects. In 2018, the total Gungano savings since 2009 stand at 804,000 USD (666,729 EUR) and a total of 1.2 million USD (995,118 EUR) for land acquisition.

DZIVARASEKWA SLUM UPGRADING PROJECT - HARARE

The Dzivarasekwa Slum Upgrading Project is part of one of these city-wide upgrading projects in Harare, implemented by the ZHPF in partnership with the City of Harare. The technical partner of the Federation is the Dialogue on Shelter for the Homeless in Zimbabwe Trust (DSHZT). The construction began in 2011 and is still ongoing.

The Dzivarasekwa Project was the first one to take a people-led approach. As part of the project, the Harare Slum Upgrading Finance Facility (HSUff) was created, to provide extra financial sustainability. The HSUff started in 2014 with an initial capital of 200,000 USD (168,876 EUR). The cost per housing unit averages 2,400 USD (2,573 EUR) for a 24 square metre house, paid by the resident with a loan from the savings group, loans from the HSUff or the Gungano Urban Poor Fund.
The Dzivarasekwa project is a sustainable model for upgrading slums in-situ. The land for the project had been allocated to the Federation by the central government a few years before the start of the project. The project adopted an incremental approach, demonstrating that services can be developed with residents already living on the site. The entry point was lowered, to suit the community income levels, demonstrating that even the poorest inhabitants can have housing.

The affordability of the project is due to the people-led approach, where community members do much of the work (mapping, planning, constructing houses and upgrading services etc.), with minimal supervision. Instead of using the funding for contracting out labor, the money was used to reach more beneficiaries and extend the impact of the available resources.

Construction was divided into 3 categories: infrastructure, superstructure and social amenities. The infrastructure was constructed by the community who divided themselves into work gangs. The community identified individual connections to the municipal water line as a priority, after Harare Municipality reticulated the area.

Several approaches were adopted to reduce the construction costs: semi-detached housing designs or shared walls and the gradual and incremental improvements of communal services helped to ensure the affordability of the project as the households shared various costs. It was a challenge for the community to accept these approaches, so they became more involved in the design of the architectural plans.

Cash crises have an impact on the funding, most of all on the repayment of loans, as many businesses were struggling and lacked the availability of cash. In 2019, issuing loans temporarily halted due to a decline of the Zimbabwean economy and currency inflation.

The Fund has an important role in establishing partnerships between the urban poor and the local governments, providing a platform for communities to engage directly with the government and other donors. It was a challenge to encourage the different actors to work together, discuss their contributions and partner in fundraising. But the project in Dzivarasekwa highlights the importance of partnerships between low-income communities and city governments, making these communities serious partners when city governments engage them differently and together, they established city funds as a means to drive city-wide upgrading projects.