**Vote Run Lead Reloaded**

**1. Main purpose of the intervention**

1.1. Purpose of the intervention

This intervention will take place from January 2021 until February 2024 and seeks to contribute to a more inclusive electoral process in Zimbabwe’s 2023 Harmonised Election.

The intervention aims to strengthen political representation of young women and women (YWW) as political candidates in Parliament and Local Councils in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the intervention seeks to advance women’s participation in the electoral process as active citizens who vote, and observe the 2023 harmonised election. Moreover, use the same window of opportunity created by the election to engage and influence the political agenda to be more responsive to women’s needs and rights.

Elections are one of the most fundamental instruments to give citizens a voice in representative democracies. Elections serve the purpose of: (1) giving the individual an opportunity to obtain a mandate and position to represent others by running for elections and (2) it provides citizens with the power to elect the representatives they believe will best serve their interests. Moreover, it is a human right to take part in the government of his/her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. The Government of Zimbabwe must work to protect, promote and fulfil this right without discrimination, according to international law (Universal Declaration of Human Rights art. 21.1 and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights art. 25). Nevertheless, the opportunity to influence politics, and not at least to run for office, has been very limited for women, especially young women in Zimbabwe. This is due to their low social status within society and limited access to economic resources. Moreover, due to these social structures, when it comes to YWW, the decision on whom to vote for is often dictated by family members and/or influential community members.

Zimbabwe is a highly patriarchal society where girls and YWW are subordinated to men. Cultural perceptions rooted in traditional, religious, age and gender-biased structures effectively exclude girls and YWW from decision-making processes. The barriers for women’s political participation are therefore many, e.g. the perception that the private domestic sphere including childcare and housekeeping is regarded a female domain whereas all public life, not least political decision-making platforms, is considered a male prerogative.

Albeit girls and women constitute 52% of the Zimbabwean population, they are disproportionately represented in decision-making processes. Their low representation in elective positions at different levels of governance is testimonial to their marginalisation. Their gendered needs and roles predispose them to more suffering, due to poor decisions and policies by public officers. This intervention, thus, seeks to activate the agency of YWW for their effective participation in Zimbabwe’s electoral politics as a critical mass that can influence and hold politicians accountable. The intervention will, therefore, work with YWWs civic participation in seven[[1]](#footnote-1) districts within the three provinces of Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East and Midlands. In addition, we aim to strengthen the supply side of YWW political candidates across the whole country by supporting aspiring female politicians with training, mentorship and support systems to contest as candidates themselves.

Through the social mobilization of both YWW candidates and a critical mass of YWW civilians that can hold representatives accountable, the intervention will largely contribute towards strengthening civil society organising that promotes protect and fulfil the right YWW to participate in elections and other decision-making processes and call for new Government to ensure that all men and women, in law and in practice, have equal right to economic resources, ownership and control over land and access to other natural resources in line with their human rights.

Lastly, the proposed intervention is also a ‘phasing-out’ intervention of the GA-IYWD project-based collaboration. We aim to seal the achievements we have reached together over the past ten years, and slowly phase out the partnership in a sustainable manner[[2]](#footnote-2).

1.1.1 The proposed intervention is an extension of previous interventions

The intervention builds on previous experiences from Institute for Young Women Development’s (IYWD) and Global Aktion’s (GA) cooperation in enhancing women’s participation in decision-making processes, especially in local government and traditional leadership.

Firstly, this intervention is an extension building on the achievements of the intervention titled United Against Patriarchy (CISU journal nr.: 17-2105-UI-sep), which is set to finish in November 2020. The United Against Patriarchy addresses the exclusion of YWW in the traditional court systems and village councils in five targeted districts in Mashonaland Central. Although not yet finalized, several results and objectives of this intervention have already been obtained. Notably, IYWD and GA have advanced the constitutional rights of women in the traditional judicial system by advocating for gender sensitive and rights-based practices in the traditional courts. This has amongst other outcomes, resulted in two paramount Traditional Chiefs appointing young women to help them with gender assessments in their courts. This has positively influenced the practices and attitudes towards women in the traditional courts, which for example has led to four chiefs making landmark rulings on cases of access to land in divorce and inheritance cases, for the benefit of women. Another key result, is the increase in numbers of Peace Committees from 13 to 52 during the current intervention. This increase has enhanced YWW influence in the various traditional courts, hence strengthening the force against patriarchy. In relation to the proposed intervention, the good working relationship between IYWD members and the traditional leaders will be beneficial, as the traditional leaders can be engaged as key stakeholders in mitigating violence against women during the election process.

Additionally, as a result of deliberate advocacy strategies supported under the United Against Patriarchy intervention, young women have been self-mobilising and organising local protests against corruption in the justice systems, both the traditional and conventional. For instance, in the Bindura district, young women organised their community members and petitioned their Municipality on their failure to access water. The Municipality is currently seized with the issue.

Secondly, in the 2018 ‘Strength Through Election’ intervention (CISU journal nr.: 18-2232-MI-jun), IYWD and GA conveyed a joint election observation mission of the National Harmonised Election, with focus on women’s participation. A significant output of the observer mission was the joint election observation report written by IYWD and GA, titled ‘*Free for All but Not Free for 52%’*[[3]](#footnote-3), which has been shared with CISU together with the finalisation report. The report was distributed to many institutions to include the Electoral Institute For Southern Africa (EISA) and Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) who based on the findings from the report, formally invited the IYWD to make a presentation at the “National 31 July 2018 elections review meeting”. The participants at the review meeting which included political parties, ambassadors, diplomats and other regional and international electoral institutions, distributed the report further. The report concluded, among other things, that there is a need for strengthening feminist organising and movements towards electoral processes, in order to influence patriachal structures affecting YWW’s participation emanating from families, political parties, and violence at a national level.

Thirdly, IYWD initiated a support network among aspiring YWW candidates during the 2018 election, which served as a part of IYWD’s 2018 #VoteRunLead[[4]](#footnote-4) campaign to promote young women’s participation in the election. The network proved beneficial in terms of providing psycho-social support and experience sharing between the candidates, as they shared their individual experiences and journeys despite their different political affiliations. However, as many of the candidates were poorly prepared for the 2018 election, they received poor election scores. Based on these lessons, this intervention therefore seeks to engage with the female candidates at an earlier stage of the election cycle, in order to provide them with more adequate training and know-how (activity 1.1.1), and a Peer-to-Peer Mentorship and Experiences Sharing Sessions (activity 1.1.2)[[5]](#footnote-5) for the 2023 Election in Zimbabwe. Hence, this intervention will conduct trainings for female candidates on key electoral aspects and facilitate feminist solidarity across political parties through a Peer-to-Peer Mentorship and Experiences Sharing network. Thereby bridging the gap of lack of support that women candidates experience from their families and political parties.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Although the proposed intervention is informed by previous experiences, this intervention takes a new strategic approach and has an extended scope and target group. For the first time in the IYWD-GA collaboration, we will work at national level by targeting female political candidates from all over the country. In addition, IYWD will continue to work with women’s civic participation in decision-making processes, this time focusing on electoral processes at the provincial level. Women’s political civic participation will also include the creation of a women’s manifesto, Feministo, used to advance and create awareness of YWW’s political demands. Furthermore, during the United Against patriarchy intervention, the membership base has grown and IYWD’s operational area has extended to include seven districts across Mashonaland central, Mashonaland East and Midlands. Thus, the scope of the intervention has expanded both in terms of geography and target group.

In summation, the proposed intervention aims to address the ever-present challenges of patriarchal structures of oppression found in formal politics today. As this intervention seeks to scale up and builds on the lessons learned from the smaller 2018 #VoteRunLead campaign, we have chosen to call this intervention Vote Run Lead Reloaded.

1.2 Context of the intervention

The following section discusses the prevailing conditions in Zimbabwe, shaped by a fragile political, social and economic context which negatively affect women’s access to political decision-making.

1.2.1 Political & Economic Context

Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) has dominated Zimbabwean politics since its independence in 1980. In 2017, Robert Mugabe was removed from power through military force due to internal succession struggles and replaced by Emmerson Mnangagwa, the former vice president who had his power confirmed in the 2018 election. Despite optimism in the population with the fall of Mugabe, and not least the 2018 election, the political and economic situation has only deteriorated.

During its two-year rule, the Emmerson Mnangagwa administration has perpetuated ZANU-PF’s systemic repression through increased crackdown against political activists from the opposition, civil society activists, journalists and any other dissenting voices. Although the military-assisted transition took power from Mugabe while promising constitutionalism, the administration has failed to uphold this promise. The incidents of August 2018 in which the military intervened in civilian protests resulted in the death of six civilians. Furthermore, the disproportionate response by the military in the January 2019 protests[[7]](#footnote-7), arbitrary arrests, abductions, sexual violations and murder of dissenting voices during the COVID-19 lockdown all testifiy a total neglect of the constitution. The crackdown has always been accompanied by a continued shrinking of democratic space for civil society organisations (CSOs) due to surveillance, censorship, hate speech and disruption of activities.

The gazetting of the Constitutional Amendment Bill No.2 to the national constitution in January 2020 and likely adoption[[8]](#footnote-8), even after an overwhelming rejection by citizens in public hearings, shows the extent to which the current administration is keen to erode the gains made in the 2013 constitution. The majority of the amendments seek to entrench all state power to the President while taking away citizen rights to influence public processes.

Zimbabwe also finds itself in a financial crisis that alarmingly starts to echo the situation of the hyperinflation in 2008-2009, with renewed hyperinflation, cash-shortages, removal of foreign currency, coupled with droughts the last three years. This has led to an alarming rise in extreme poverty and food insecurity among more than eight million people[[9]](#footnote-9). Extreme poverty is estimated to have risen from 29% in 2018 to 34% in 2019, an increase from 4.7 to 5.7 million people[[10]](#footnote-10). The increase is driven by economic contraction and the sharp rise in prices of food and basic commodities. All this, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic has seen a stark rise in poverty and food insecurity (see 1.2.4 for context elaboration).

1.2.2 Current legal framework for YWW’s political participation

In 2013, Zimbabwe adopted a new Constitution which has been applauded for it’s impressive bill of rights, not at least for its strong provisions for gender equality on sections 56 and 80. Additionally, Zimbabwe has a National Gender Policy, ratifying international and regional instruments such as Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) and Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development.

Despite this context, the government has failed to craft concrete instruments and directives to guide the implementation of these gender equality provisions. Nevertheless, a quota system was implemented for the period of the two first parliaments of the new constitution, allocating 60 seats out of a total 270 to women in the National Assembly, proportionally representing the votes cast for political party candidates. This means that the quota system will expire for the upcoming election anticipated in 2023. Consequently, this will be a huge set-back for women’s numerical representation in parliament. The quota system was not unproblematic as there were no clear guidelines on how the political parties should select their candidates. According to the findings of IYWD and GA’s joint election observation (18-2232-MI-jun), the selection of women for the 60 reserved seats was not conducted in a democratic and transparent manner, as the women candidates were subjected to abuse by men in their parties’ leadership. The men determined which women should be part of the 60 in their parties and some of the women were removed from the lists without being informed of or agreeing with the decisions. Moreover, young women candidates or those perceived as a threat to the existing elite within the party, were often excluded.

Additionally, the women who are elected by the quota system are often not accepted by fellow parliamentarians as equally influential. Instead, they are accused of being tokens and not representing any constituency as they have not been elected by the people into power.. At the local level, no affirmative actions have been applied to ensure women’s participation in the local councils. The trend of women’s representation in local councils has continuously decreased since 2008. Enhancing women’s political participation is therefore, a key to strengthening the influence of more disadvantaged groups in decision making e.g. in rural communities and urban high-density areas.

1.2.3 Violence Against Women in Elections

Unfortunately, Zimbabwe elections have historically not lived up to the principles of free and fair elections that are transparent, inclusive and accountable. On the contrary, polarisation and violence has dominated the political landscape since independence. Killings, beatings, rape and intimidation have occurred at every ballot from 1999 to 2018. In 2008, human rights watchdogs reported that during the presidential run-off election, more than 150 people were killed, 20,000 people injured, 300,000 displaced and thousands of families suffered from hunger and starvation as their properties and homes were burnt or destroyed. Although the violence targeted both men and women, women have been found particularly vulnerable to political violence. Sexual violence has been used as a means to dehumanize women and target opposition supporters and leaders through their wives, sister and daughters.

The 2013 election was characterised by a significant decrease in overt violence. However, the full and free participation of citizens was curbed by intimidation and threatening reminders to “vote wisely” indicating that if not, they could be subjected to the same violence as in the 2008 election. Other methods of intimidating voters included assisting voters at the ballots, despite a literacy rate at 95 percent, and registering ballot serial numbers at polling stations, thus hampering anonymity.

The 2018 harmonised election was historic, being the first ballot without Robert G. Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai. Instead of the two long standing arch-rivals, Emmerson Mnangagwa and Nelson Chamisa, respectively representing ZANU-PF and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) Alliance respectively were the two major presidential contenders. Signaling a break from the past, international election observers from all over the world were invited for the first time since 2000 to observe the election. Observers included among others, The European Union Election Observation Mission and The Commonwealth Observer Group. Although the election was generally considered not violent, YWW faced different forms of violence before, during and after the election. The violence[[11]](#footnote-11) which mostly came from their families, community and political parties included forced evictions from their homes, being removed from their political parties’ nominations and reserved seats lists among others.

1.2.4 COVID-19

As of the 6th of September 2020, the country has confirmed 6837 cases and 206 deaths. However, health experts and analysts have argued that the country’s COVID-19 cases are under-reported owing to lack of infrastructure for robust testing and contact tracing. Due to the collapsed health care system coupled with rampant corruption of COVID-19 funds[[12]](#footnote-12), it is quite possible that COVID-19 cases and deaths could be way higher than official statistics.

The country has imposed strict 21-days national lockdowns since the 30th of March 2020. COVID-19 lockdowns have been used as a catalyst in the continued repression and deferment of citizen rights. This has severely affected the environment for civil society engagement, opposition parties and journalists who have been exposing corruption on COVID-19 aid and funds. Protests are banned, while arrests and victimisation of citizens in the name of violating lockdown regulations have escalated. CSOs that are speaking out against the increasing human rights abuses, are increasingly targeted. For example, on 14th of May 2020, three female opposition leaders were abducted for 16 hours and exposed to torture[[13]](#footnote-13). Also, IYWD is experiencing increased surveillance by state security agents following the published IYWD reports of army assaulting civilians[[14]](#footnote-14). The potential risks that the COVID-19 situation may pose for this intervention as well as mitigation strategies are described in detail in section 3.4.

1.3 Addressing the fragile context

Based on the above, it can be argued that Zimbabwe is a fragile context. A key tenet of political fragility is expressed in the many ways that YWW are excluded from participating in political spheres. Not only does the political instability and oppression of women maintain a political patriarchy, but inequality and limits of freedoms and rights of women also result in lack of security for women. Simultaneously, economic instability, droughts and food shortages further threaten the access of women to politics due to deeply patriarchal social structures in the country. A situation which is aggravated by the COVID-19 crisis, as it exposes the existing inequalities within society. Women are a marginalized group who are at risk of violence and repression when attempting to practice their political rights as citizens. As such, this intervention seeks to protect this group and further their rights by putting this issue on the agenda in a timely manner leading up to the 2023 elections.

To navigate and not least counter this situation, this intervention seeks to promote, normalize, respect and protect the rights of women to participate in the political sphere. Empowering YWW both as political candidates and as active citizens will serve to protect their dignity and increase respect for their rights as equals to men, while also ensuring that their voices are heard and legitimately represented in national politics. However, this work cannot be done in a silo focused solely on the women themselves, but must interact with society at large. To this end, this intervention also includes stakeholder engagement and advocacy from IYWD with several duty-bearers and groups that may otherwise seek to maintain the status quo.

1.4 Climate- and environmental conditions in the intervention

The proposed intervention takes place in areas which already suffer from large-scale environmental degradation and climate change impacts such as increasing droughts, floods and cyclones. In the targeted geographical areas i.e, Mashonaland Central, East and Midlands, environmental damage is already rife. In all provinces, the common commercial activities are mining and farming. The mining activities include illegal mining by artisanal gold panners and the agricultural activities are widely large-scale and industrial, with high inputs of chemicals and monocultures which result in the loss of ecological resilience and biodiversity, pollution from run-off as well as soil degradation. Furthermore, the districts already exhibit visible forms of environmental degradations such as gullies and polluted water, as the illegal mining is done within and along rivers and streams. Exacerbating these environmental conditions are the effects of climate change through the persistent El Nino-induced droughts and the more recent cyclone Idai. IYWD members, many of them rural women, are some of the most exposed groups when it comes to feeling the negative effects of climate change and environmental degradation. These effects directly impact their livelihood and ability to feed their families, which again can have the consequence of increased gender-based violence. Yet, IYWD members of these affected communities are poorly represented and rarely heard by policy and law makers. Their issues of concern around environmental degradation are almost invisible in national discourses. IYWD and GA will thus seek to respond to some of these issues through the proposed intervention. With the aim to provide YWW with better opportunities for political participation, YWW’s concerns for the consequences of climate change and environmental degradation can thus become politicised, advocated for and represented.

Gender inequality along with climate and environmental degradation are coupled problems in several ways. To respond to the current and potential climate change impacts, IYWD and GA will thus consider climate and environmental action at a strategic and operational level. At a strategic level, IYWD will through this intervention, encourage YWW to elevate some of these issues in the Feministo activities[[15]](#footnote-15) (2.1.1 & 2.1.2) as well as seek political representation in order to influence policy and laws on such issues for the good of their communities. In the proposed Feminist Transformative Leadership Schools (FTLS)[[16]](#footnote-16) (activity 1.1.1) and the feminist analysis of the intervention, IYWD will also expose YWW to additional knowledge as a way of raising political consciousness among the project participants on the importance of environmental care and climate injustice and its given effects on YWW’s gendered roles, their political participation and representation.

The organisation will mainstream environmental conservation and build climate resilience within all project activities including on travel and communication across all levels of the organisation and with stakeholders and partners. For instance, this will include combining trips to reduce carbon emissions. More importantly, IYWD will continue to raise awareness to target members on the need for environmental conservation and building climate resilience systems in their homes. At the offices, IYWD will make use of an existing pollution control facility where they have introduced disposal mechanisms that facilitate proper waste management aimed at facilitating environmental well-being.

In the GA-IYWD partnership, we work on the basis of a theory of change based on popular organisation and mobilisation. This implies creating a movement where people can meet, share experiences, network and mobilise. IYWD is therefore also involved in regional networking activities, which require the transportation of members from various regions. All of this is part of GA-IYWD’s common understanding that powerful movements, based on true solidarity, may only occur when members and partners are able to physically meet each other. As an active solidarity partner, a crucial aim in GA’s partnership approach is to acknowledge, address and work to minimize existing inequalities in the partnership as much as possible. GA seeks to avoid a division of roles in which GA activists merely become the ‘administrators’ of a project. It is thus essential for GA to ensure that the activists play an active role in the intervention and where possible, contribute to project implementation. To guarantee this, project visits by GA activists to the field are extremely important. Here, GA activists gain a direct understanding of the local context, they meet the target groups and aid in fostering good relationships. Furthermore, each GA activist fills out an essential role on such trips, one being responsible for financial monitoring, one being responsible for collecting Means of Verification, obtaining qualitative data from meeting target groups or observing activities and so on. Therefore, each trip should involve at least two people. Simultaneously, IYWD members meet the activists and are able to discuss issues face-to-face. In short, in the GA-IYWD relationship, it is vital for us to have a strong, long-lasting and sustainable partnership. Consequently, we have limited our flights to a minimum, but we do not see it as an option to have fewer partner visits, as this may negatively affect joint learning, the partnership, the continued work and commitment.

**2. The Partnership**

2.1. The experiences, capacities and resources of participant partners

The cooperation between GA and IYWD was initiated in 2011 and has developed over the years to become a strong partnership based on trust, honest dialogue with room to critically and constructively challenge each other and mutual learning.

2.1.1. Institute for Young Women Development (IYWD)

Since IYWD was founded in 2009, it has played an active role in the fight for women’s rights in Zimbabwe. IYWD has over the years developed into a well-established feminist movement with extensive contextual knowledge and experience in working with young women’s situations and issues. Over the years, IYWD has worked on issues falling under four broad themes and has attained significant results as follows:

1. Strengthening Feminist Leadership

IYWD has established and developed a robust feminist movement of more than 5000 registered young women who have been disrupting patriarchal and authoritarian systems of oppression. The movement has articulated and reclaimed young women’s rights and demanded fulfillment of their rights while holding local leaders accountable on public services delivery. Furthermore, traditional leaders have also ended up appointing young women village heads and traditional court officers. Through this pillar, IYWD has also focused on support and solidarity among young women through promoting self-care and wellbeing.

1. Young women’s political participation

IYWD has strengthened young women’s capacity to contest for elective positions in development committees at community level. More than 500 young women have been elected in these committees since 2013 to date. Through its flagship programme #VoteRunLead (2018), IYWD campaigned for young women to vote, contest for elections and provide feminist leadership after the elections. Three young women out of the 40 participants were elected, two in Parliament and one in local council.

1. Feminist Economics

Over the years IYWD has strengthened young women’s economic livelihoods through encouraging alternative entrepreneurial activities. This includes organic fish farming and more recently indigenous seeds and herbal gardens.

1. IYWD alliances and networks

The organisation’s work has grown and deepened as a result of building value-adding alliances and networks across different sectors and at different levels. Nationally, the organisation has established functional networks with the Alliance for Community Based Organisations (ACBOs) (which is represented in 8 out of the 10 provinces in Zimbabwe), Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ), Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), Elections Resource Centre (ERC), the Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust (YETT) and the National Citizens Manifesto.

IYWD has together with different organisations established their own network platform called the African Women Leaders Forum, comprising different African organisations in Southern, East, West and Central Africa. IYWD also continues cultivating relationships with global organisations such as the World Movement for Democracy (WMD). Furthermore, IYWD has managed to create and maintain working relationships with local stakeholders including traditional leaders, elected officials such as councillors, parliamentarians and government officials. This strategic multi-stakeholder engagement approach has been improved and optimised over the years by continuously conducting power analysis of the different authorities. IYWD’s approach and tactic has proven effective as it has enabled IYWD to conduct peaceful activism despite a challenging operating environment.

Through CISU funded projects in collaboration with GA (13-1291-MP-apr in 2013-2014 and 14-1618-SP-dec in 2015-2018), feminism has over the years become a central point of departure for the work of IYWD and has provided the members with a critical political consciousness, along with hope and solidarity, that has sustained young women’s active involvement and capacity to self-organise in response to injustices. Moreover, the approach has helped overcome suspicions of partisanship. By inviting local government officials to organisational meetings, IYWD has managed to uphold a transparent nature that shows how the organisation’s work is targeting women’s rights across the political divides. The building of trust between IYWD and relevant stakeholders is crucial for the organisation to carry out advocacy work and is also an important security measure in order for IYWD to continue their work in Zimbabwe due to the fragile political context. It is, however, imperative to note that IYWD is very cautious when engaging with various stakeholders, as to make sure that the engagement does not legitimise systems of oppression.

2.1.2. Global Aktion (GA)

Global Aktion is a solidarity movement with roots in the anti-Apartheid movement. GA, together with its partners, aim to change the political climate in the Global South into one that empowers those currently excluded from the political decision-making process. Capacity strengthening has historically been an essential part of GA’s work. This includes, but is not limited to, assistance in and facilitation of organisation- and leadership building; democratisation processes; monitoring and documentation; as well as financial and administrative capacity building, campaign and advocacy.

GA perceives feminism as a value system and a method to oppose patriarchy. The objective is to make feminism and gender considerations apparent in all of the organisation’s work and partnerships, such as in the analyses of root causes of inequality and poverty when developing interventions and campaigns with partners. Feminism has thus become a focal point in the most recent GA strategy for 2016-2020, which feeds well into the partnership with IYWD. GA believes that actively listening to our partners and their needs enables us to become better allies, which is something that GA prioritises. GA is currently in the process of making a new strategy for 2021-2025, which is set to develop and build largely on the current strategy and political objectives and analysis. The partnership approach which informs GA’s project work with partners in the Global South remains as is. Besides the GA secretariat, GA has more than 150 volunteers currently organised in 18 working groups. The role of the secretariat is to support the working groups and the board in their daily work and in larger organisational processes. Specifically, GA’s responsibilities in this intervention will be carried out by GA-Zimbabwe working group.

The GA-Zimbabwe working group currently consists of eight diverse young women, all with different backgrounds and qualifications. Some members have been in the group for a long time and are thus thoroughly familiar with IYWD. Other group members have joined the group recently providing new insights and perspectives. The binding factor is a great passion for women's rights and the political processes in Zimbabwe.

2.1.3 GA Partnerships

GA has partners in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Western Sahara, Mauritius and Swaziland. GA collaborates with a range of global networks and alliances such as World Forum of Fisher Peoples, Western Sahara Resource Watch, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Network, La Via Campesina, Seattle to Brussels and many others. GA’s project-based partners are organisations which are built and consolidated on democratic structures, and which promote and support the active participation of their members in the decision-making processes. If this is not the case, we assist them in introducing and upholding such structures. Furthermore, GA encourages partners to enter into regional and international networks with other organisations in South and North.

Over the years, GA has to an increasing extent linked the content of our collaboration with partners to the global political struggle against inequality and lack of democracy. GA will continue to do so, by ensuring that there is a link between the local focus of the project and the political and global structures of inequality.

2.2 Previous cooperation

In the collaboration between GA and IYWD, we continue to learn from each other’s skills and knowledge as well as receive inspiration from each other’s perspectives and approaches to peaceful activism and mobilisation. The partnership is based on reflections on lessons learned and has since the initiation of the partnership, acknowledged and made use of the different capacities of the two organisations. IYWD has contributed with their vast experience in navigating in the fragile context of Zimbabwe, whereas GA has contributed with vast experience of working with movement building as well as advocacy and campaign work.

The IYWD’s and GA’s ten year-collaboration has yielded positive results that have helped transform the lives of marginalised young women in Zimbabwe. The collaboration has amplified calls for an end to politically motivated violence against women (PMVAW) in Zimbabwe’s democratic and political processes. This has been executed through former CISU funded projects (journal nr: 10-803-SP-apr, 12-1228-AF-dec and 13-1291-MP-apr). The joint intervention on this subject culminated in the establishment of Peace Committees which strengthened community-based mechanisms against PMVAW in the run-up to the 2013 harmonised election. Furthermore, the collaboration has strengthened the organisation’s grassroot movement-building and members’ involvement in areas of concern. Through decentralising the organisation’s structural power and establishing better democratic structures, the members are exercising their agency by actively self-mobilising and self-organising. Due to this, the number of registered members have increased from 2500 in 2017 to 5000 as at December 2019[[17]](#footnote-17).

Additionally, as previously mentioned, the partners have worked on the 2018 joint elections observations (CISU journal nr.: 18-2232-MI-jun). The publication of an observation report provided IYWD with an opportunity to contribute to the Zimbabwe Elections Commission’s Inclusion Policy. The collaboration on this initiative also strengthened IYWD’s 2018 #VoteRunLead campaign. The campaign strengthened the partnership through collective activism and new capacities as trained election observers. The intervention was a unique experience for the partnership as both worked closely together in the field and provided a common understanding of the root causes and challenges for women’s participation in decision-making, and thereby enhanced capacity in observing elections according to international standards for democratic elections. Moreover, IYWD and GA mutually benefited from the insights into the different strengths, capacities and work methods. It was especially valuable for GA to directly observe the challenges that hinder women’s political participation in Zimbabwe in order to gain greater insight. The proposed intervention builds on the cumulative insight gained through the IYWD and GA collaboration, as described in section 1.

2.3 Roles and responsibilities

The implementation of the proposed intervention will be a shared responsibility between GA and IYWD. The responsibility for day-to-day implementation of activities and administration will be managed by IYWD. The GA working group will support the implementation by sparring to ensure strategic planning and provide inputs for key activities, i.e. the curriculum for the Feminist Transformation Leadership School (activity 1.1.1) and the development of the Long-Term Election Observation Mission (activity 2.3.2). The overall responsibility for the intervention lies with the board of GA. The daily tasks in Denmark are in the hands of the working group, which is responsible towards the GA Board in terms of intervention implementation, including financial management and day-to-day contact with IYWD. Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out continuously in collaboration between the GA working group and IYWD[[18]](#footnote-18). The role of the GA secretariat is mainly to capacitate the GA activists through trainings in e.g. financial management, assistance with reporting, preparation for monitoring visits as well as assist with campaign work and work on IYWD’s feminist strategy and organisational development.

2.4 The intervention’s contribution to developing the relationship and collaboration between the partners

During the ten years of collaboration between IYWD and GA, IYWD’s organisation and its role in civic engagement has developed exponentially. This has occurred due to the organisation’s results-oriented, hard work and innovative approaches to remain effective despite Zimbabwe’s volatile context. GA, whose strength lies with building the capacity of partners, in movement building of grassroots and strategic planning, thus believe that IYWD is reaching a level of growth in which the organisation can sustain its work going forward without being contingent on the role and contributions of GA. We have, therefore, agreed that the proposed intervention should be a concluding project, which phases out the project-based partnership in a sustainable manner whilst ensuring that IYWD is not left in a vulnerable position (see section 3.5 Sustainability). IYWD has over the years managed to diversify their sources of funding independently of GA through multiple partnerships. However, during the three years of this intervention, GA can support IYWD in making a fundraising plan and seeking new funding streams, so IYWD is prepared for the end of the project-based partnership. Moreover, during the course of this intervention, we will seal the achievements we have reached together by taking extra time to evaluate our gains and shortcomings in order to ensure that the vast accumulated knowledge and learnings that this partnership has produced will be firmly anchored in both organizations which is central to the future strategic and organizational work of both organisations. Although this is a phaseout project, it is vital for IYWD and GA to maintain the strong and effective partnership while implementing this proposed project. We can then transform a long-lasting partnership into new ways of working in the future without project funding e.g. through joint campaign and advocacy work.

2.5 The intervention’s contribution to strengthening the partners’ relations to other actors

For a successful implementation of the proposed intervention, building strategic alliances across sectors and levels is a prerequisite. IYWD will use its strategic relationships with other grassroot organisations through the ACBOs, national level CSOs including but not limited to Women in Law and Southern Africa-Zimbabwe (WLSA), Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe, Elections Resource Centre and Network (ERC) and Zimbabwe Elections Support Network (ZESN), all who are working on women’s rights and electoral processes respectively. For the safe and effective participation of YWW in elections in the volatile political situation in Zimbabwe, the organisation will continue to use strategic networks of local authorities, government Ministries of Women’s Affairs, Youth and independent national institutions such as the Zimbabwe Elections Commission (ZEC), the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) and political parties.

As part of solidarity building and for effective lobbying of the regional organisations on elections and democratic participation, IYWD will work with its partners in the African Women Leaders Forum (AWLF), including getting representatives to observe the election. These different collaborations will strengthen IYWD’s relations with these stakeholders and alliances. Consequently, IYWD will act as a catalyst, by providing more opportunities to enhance women’s political rights, and strengthening women’s resolve to participate politically through its multi-stakeholder engagement approach.

**3. Target groups, objectives, strategy, and expected results**

3.1 Target groups

The subsequent sections will go into further detail about the primary and secondary target groups.

3.1.1 Primary target groups

This intervention focuses on two primary target groups. The first target group consists of 700 out of IYWD’s 5000 members, in the ages between 15 and 35. The IYWD members reside in rural, farming and mining communities in the three provinces of Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East and the Midlands and are organised in 45 women’s groups. The 700 IYWD members emanate from these groups and will participate as representatives for their respective groups. This target group will participate in the project as political active citizens that will be involved in the election processes through the creation of a Feministo (activity 2.1.1, 2.1.2 & 2.2.1) that subsequently will be used for advocacy to advance and create awareness of YWW needs and political demands. In addition, among the 700 IYWD members, 30 will be identified to engage in the intervention as long-term election observers.

The second primary target group consists of 80 YWW who aspire to contest as candidates in the 2023 harmonised election including political party candidates and independent candidates. This target group will be engaged in the intervention through the Feminist Transformative Leadership School (FTLS) (activity 1.1.1) and the Peer-to-Peer Mentorship and Experiences Sharing Session (activity 1.1.2). These female candidates will come from various areas in the country and contest for political office at either local or national level as Local Councilors or MPs respectively. 50 % of the 80 female candidates will be young women in the ages of 21-35 years with limited experience in politics, where the other half of the women will be older women with prior experience in politics. An additional 10 high profiled female politicians will participate in the Peer-to-Peer Mentorship and Experiences Sharing Session as mentors (activity 1.1.2). These politicians are not necessarily contesting for the election but have vast experience in navigating in the political environment. The reason for this is to facilitate cross learning, alliance building and experience sharing across age and political affiliations. YWW compose one of the most marginalised groups in Zimbabwean politics because they often lack support and network in their political parties and are often faced with challenges and resistance from their families. Thus the network is intended to foster emotional support and experience sharing between the candidates as well as alliance-building between the younger and older generation of women in politics to push the women’s right agenda in politics.

The 40 experienced women will consist of female politicians that IYWD engaged with during the 2018 election. The 40 young candidates will be selected through an open call that will be advertised on social media platforms and through the national networks of the ACBO alliance, to identify women from all over the country. Applicants will be selected based on their motivation. As there are some risks related to elections and politics in Zimbabwe it is important that only women who are highly motivated. In this sense, we are not recruiting women to engage in politics but facilitating training and providing a support network for women who have already decided to engage in political activities.

3.1.2 Secondary target groups and stakeholders

Secondary target groups of this intervention include the remaining 4300 IYWD members, who were not consulted on the Women Feministo (activity 2.1.1, 2.1.2 & 2.2.1). Out of the 4300, an estimate of 3300 are young women between the ages of 15 to 35 years, while an estimate of 1000 are women older than 35 years. The 4300 YWW are also located in the three provinces of operation including five districts in Mashonaland Central, one district in Mashonaland East and one district in Midlands. They participate in the organizational structures in IYWD’s 45 women’s groups at community level. As the first primary target group consist of 700 YWW carefully selected from each of the 45 groups, they will represent their group members and incorporate the interest of the larger membership base in activity 2.1.1 - 2.2.1. Through representation by the first primary target group, the 4300 women have the opportunity for their issues to be discussed in a larger forum (activity 2.1.1).

Additionally, the general public will be targeted through different types of media coverage and policy briefs. Moreover, key stakeholders including traditional leaders, public officials, political parties, and independent commissions will be targeted and engaged in the intervention (see the stakeholder analysis beneath).

3.1.3 Stakeholder analysis

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Who** | **Interest** | **Action for/against** | **Mitigation/ inclusion strategies** |
| Family members/ Spouses of female political | Patriarchal orientation    Fear of political violence | May deny YWW from participating in politics | IYWD will target this issue by including members from the ‘peer-to-peer Mentorship and Experiences Sharing Session’ (activity 1.1.2) to share skills and strategies on navigating family politics. This increases the chances of acceptance of young women participating in politics |
| Traditional Leaders | Patriarchal orientation  Party partisan  Interested in peaceful elections | The traditional leaders are in general interested in peaceful elections but are sometimes affiliated with party politics despite their neutral position | IYWD have established a good working relationship with the traditional leaders and will use the platforms of the Peace committee to gain support for this intervention and to aid in promoting a peaceful political environment |
| Police | Biased towards the ruling party's interests | May deny rights and freedoms of assembly and expression through partisan conduct | IYWD will continue to engage the police as part of its Strategic Stakeholder Engagement  and remind them of their non-partisan responsibilities in protecting citizens |
| Political Parties | Patriarchal orientation  Maintain power | May exclude YWW from their party  May disrupt the occurrence of certain activities | IYWD will engage with political parties on the importance of promoting youth participation and gender equality |
| Zimbabwe Gender Commission /Independent Commissions | Want to see gender equality | May support the initiatives being conducted under the project | IYWD will engage the Commissions as allies in the project |
| Civil society organisation and networks including ACBOs, ZESN, Election Resource Center and GA’s other partner Zimbabwe Smallholder organic Farmers Forum – ZIMSOFF | Democracy and effective participation of young women | May support the initiatives being conducted under the project | IYWD will engage with them as allies in the project  They can support the project by creating awareness of the Feministo (activity 2.2.1) beyond IYWD’s operational areas  Will help sharing the advertisement for female political candidates |

IYWD’s vision and mission is to advance young women’s participation in decision making and political processes. IYWD has supported young women from mining and rural communities in exercising their agency and fighting for their rightful space in social, political and economic life since 2009. IYWD’s legitimacy to champion the cause of young women in Zimbabwe is rooted in their democratic and member based organisational structures that facilitate the inclusion and participation of young women in IYWD’s operations. These democratic structures are a result of previous CISU-funded interventions carried out in the collaboration between IYWD and GA, as mentioned in section 2.2.

Therefore, IYWD’s members will constitute a key role in the implementation of the project activities. The members have informed the development and design of the intervention, by continuously expressing and sharing their challenges and needs through the democratic channels of IYWD.

3.2 Strategy

The proposed intervention takes a two-pronged strategy entailing an ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ approach to include YWW in the electoral process. The insider approach aims at strengthening the supply side of YWW candidates to enhance their political representation in Parliament and Local Councils and relates to objective one. The outsider approach seeks to advance women’s participation in the electoral process as active citizens who vote, observe the election and use the same window of opportunity created by the election to engage and influence the political agenda to be more responsive to women’s needs and rights hence relating to the immediate objective two.

In the following, the strategy for achieving the immediate objective 1 and 2 will be outlined. All the activities stated are planned so that they can be implemented in a context like the current corona situation in Zimbabwe. This means that all gatherings are planned with a maximum of 50 participants and sanitisers and facemasks will be accommodated to promote a safer environment. However, the regulations for assembly under COVID-19 are currently being more relaxed. For instance, the activities under the immediate objective 1 have 80 participants. However, in accordance with the current COVID-19 precautionary measures, we will split the activities (1.1.1 & 1.1.2) up in two groups of female politicians so that there will be 40 participants in each, 20 young female politicians and 20 experienced politicians. In the event that the COVID-19 situation worsens and regulations change, it is possible to shift the implementation of the activities to online platforms by allocating some of the funds towards acquisition of data.

**Immediate Objective 1:**  *Feminist leadership has been fostered among female political candidates and YWW political representation has increased*.

In pursuit of the immediate objective 1, the so-called insider approach will be employed to enable YWW to demand their rightful space in formal political spaces through political representation at both local and national level. The idea is moreover to develop YWW candidates’ capacities in feminist leadership to promote accountability towards their peers once they are in power. This will be done by creating a national network of 80 female aspiring candidates that will be engaged in the Feminist Transformative Leadership School (FTLS) (activity 1.1.1) and Peer-to-Peer Mentorship and Experiences Sharing Sessions (1.1.2). These two activities will take place at the same time and will supplement each other. As the school treats different thematic themes, the Peer-to-Peer Mentorship and Experience Sharing Sessions (activity 1.1.2) will be a platform for the candidates to share challenges and experiences around these themes.

The selected candidates will be composed of a group of minimum 50% young aspiring candidates in the age group of 21-35[[19]](#footnote-19) and 50% experienced female politicians to facilitate mentorship and experience sharing. The design of the Feminist Transformative Leadership School (FTLS) (activity 1.1.1) and the Peer-to-Peer Mentorship and Experiences Sharing Sessions (1.1.2) are informed by IYWD and GA’s experiences from the 2018 election and building on the recommendations of our joint election report[[20]](#footnote-20). From experience, IYWD appreciates time for reflection and re-energising in between the convenings to ensure the participants will gain the maximum benefit providing them time to translate learning into practice, reflect on their political journey and share their experiences as well as accommodate for a debrief when they meet again. Therefore, the trainings will be conveyed over a period of 1 year and scheduled in accordance to when they need the different skills in the electoral process.

The curriculum of the FLTS (activity 1.1.1) will cover four themes. The first theme will be on Feminist Leadership & Accountability to equip them with feminist leadership skills. The second focus will be on campaigning and will support the female candidates to develop and package their political vision that may also include issues raised in the Feministo (see below) (activity 2.1.1, 2.1.2) as well as in how to run cost-efficient and climate friendly campaigns. The third will be on security in order to minimize danger by supporting the candidates in how to tackle unsafe situations for example, if they experience intimidation and threats of violence during their candidacy. The fourth training will focus on Electoral Requirements and Procedures to ensure that the candidates are informed on technical and procedural requirements necessary for them to file their nomination. A key learning from the 2018 election was that many first time contestants ended up being disqualified because they were uninformed on the requirements.

To supplement the FTLS (activity 1.1.1), a key component of the strategy for achieving objective 1 is the facilitation of a Peer-to-Peer Mentorship and Experience Sharing Sessions (1.1.2) where the female candidates can relieve and support each other in the challenges they face along the way as well as creating a space for mentorship- and alliance-building between young female candidates and more experienced former/current politicians. IYWD will focus on promoting self-care and wellbeing and creating a safe space where women can share their experiences and challenges despite their different political affiliations. Hence, the creation of a good environment and psychosocial support during the experience sharing and mentorship sessions, will be accommodated by the presence of a trained counsellor.

With consent from the participants, IYWD and GA will use the female candidates’ personal stories for advocacy and information work. In connection to this, IYWD will promote the YWW candidates visibility by boosting their public profiles online on social media platforms to outline their capabilities and emphasize the importance of voting for female candidates (activity 1.2.1).

**Immediate objective 2:** *Young women have demanded democratic spaces for electoral participation of young women*  
  
In pursuit of the Immediate Objective 2**,** an outsider approach will be employed to engage women in the electoral process through civic participation and advocacy.

A Women’s Manifesto called Feministo (activity 2.1.1, 2.1.2 & 2.2.1) will be drafted based on women’s needs and policy demands. In order to come up with an inclusive manifesto that captures diversity among women, community consultations will be conducted in the seven targeted districts. The Feministo (activity 2.1.1) will be a key advocacy tool for young women to engage with local candidates and push for an issue-based election. The 700 participants of the first primary target group will bring inputs from their respective women groups so the rest of the IYWD members can influence the content of the Feministo. The consultation will end with a validation workshop (activity 2.1.2) where the Feministo will be adopted, publicized and presented.

Hereafter, a Feministo campaign (activity 2.2.1) will unfold through a series of public meetings in the seven targeted districts where candidates representing all the political parties and key stakeholders will participate. These gatherings will serve multiple purposes; firstly, YWW will be able to articulate their demands and influence the political agenda. Secondly, the candidates will be provided an opportunity to articulate their (party’s) political visions and YWW will be given the chance to assess their preference of candidates’ according to their compliance with the demands outlined in the Feministo. Thirdly, the female candidates, who participated in the TFLS (activity 1.1.1) and running for election in the seven targeted districts will be provided with an opportunity to profile themselves in front of a public audience. Fourthly, the Feministo can be used by the IYWD members to hold their elected political leaders accountable after the election and beyond the given timeframe of this intervention.

Due to the fragile nature of politics in Zimbabwe, theatrical sketches, i.e. Community theatrical performances will be used to create a relaxed environment to talk about political issues. This strategy allows communities to share their views on issues deemed to be sensitive especially on the political and cultural fronts given the patriarchal nature of communities.

Learnings from IYWD and GA’s Strength Through Election intervention (18-2232-MI-jun) have shown that it is key to engage in the election process well beyond election day, as the election is shaped by events and processes that occur both pre- and post- the election. This is especially the case when it comes to assessing the election through a gender perspective since processes of (de)selecting candidates as well as registration of the voter’s roll happen prior to election day. Therefore, 30 IYWD members will be identified and trained as Long-Term Election Observation Mission (activity 2.3.2) and contribute to a gender assessment of the 2023 election, which will be compiled in an election observation report. IYWD will coordinate with their network and draw on local resources by engaging The Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (ZESN) and the Elections Resource Centre (ERC) as allies who will convey the Training in Long-Term Election Observation Mission (activity 2.3.1) of the 30 participants in the mission, at no financial cost for the intervention. The Long-Term Election Observation Mission (activity 2.3.2) will span over ten months, five months before and five months after the election. This time span includes the actual election day.

3.2.1 Objectives, activities, expected results and indicators

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Overall Objective**  Young women and women have equal access to local and national political decision-making spaces as active citizens including as voters, election observers and political representatives. | | | |
| Immediate Objective | Indicators & Means of Verification | Activities | Outputs |
| 1.By 2023, feminist leadership has been fostered among 80 female political candidates | 1.1 80 participants of activity 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 are equipped with knowledge and skills to run for office and express confidence in using these.  (MoV: baseline and endline survey distributed to participants of the FTLS)  At least 50 % of the participants have filed their name with the nomination court or contest for primary elections in their parties.  (MoV: number of participants in the nomination court, number of participants filling their CV for primary election in political parties, number of participants elected into office)  1.2 80 % of the political candidate participants in activity 1.1.1 have been promoted through at least three social media platforms and reached at least 50.000 potential voters  (MoV: Social media posts; SoMe interactions including views, likes, shares, retweets, comments per post) | 1.1.1 Feminist Transformative Leadership School (FTLS)  1.1.2 Peer-to-Peer Mentorship and Experiences Sharing Sessions.  1.2.1 Promotion of female political candidates’ public profiles | Development of a training curriculum for the FTLS  80 young women have participated and completed the Feminist Transformative Leadership Training Programme  Establishment of a peer-to-peer and experience sharing network  At least 60 electronic flyers profiling the female political candidates are shared on social media platforms |
| 2. By 2023, YWW have influenced the electoral agenda by pushing forward their policy demands and participating in the election | 2.1 By July 2021, at least 700 young women have contributed to the development of a Feministo  (MoV: list of participants and activity report for activity 2.1.1)  2.2 By 2023, the Feministo Campaign has reached at least 14 political candidates for Parliament and 14 candidates for Local Councils through public meetings and at least 30.000 Zimbabwean citizens through social media, and been featured in at least 4 national media outlets (Radio, Newspaper print/ online, television)  (MoV: Participant lists from public meetings, SoMe interactions including views, likes, shares, retweets, comments per post and mentions in established medias including radio, television and newspaper)  2.3 By 2023, at least 30 YWW have assessed the gender sensitivity and credibility of the harmonised election and electoral environment  (MoV: Election observation report) | 2.1.1 Feministo consultations  2.1.2 Feministo Validation Workshop  2.2.1 Feministo Campaign  2.3.1 Training in Long-Term Election observation  2.3.2 Long-Term Election Observation Mission | Development and adoption of Feministo  Development of an election observation template  30 YWW have been trained in long term election observation  A report has been published on the findings of the  Long-Term Election Observation Mission |

3.2.1 The development triangle

In this intervention, IYWD and GA can reap the benefits of our long-term collaboration on building IYWD's democratic structures, which allows us to focus less on organisational capacity development and more on capacity development of the target groups, advocacy and strategic deliveries.

Thus, the design of this proposed intervention facilitates interlinkages and synergy between capacity development, advocacy and strategic deliveries. The **capacity building** aspect of this intervention is mainly directed towards the female political candidates. The Feministo Transformative Leadership School will ensure that female candidates are well prepared for the election, by providing them with tools and training through workshops to increase their capacity and strength, which will empower them to run for office and raise their chances of being elected. The workshops; 1) feminist leadership workshop; 2) Electoral Requirements and Procedures; 3) Campaigning workshop, provide the female candidates with tools and support to ensure that they can encounter possible challenges from communities and other candidates etc.(see Section 3.4: Risk analysis). Furthermore, as part of Long-Term Election Observation (activity 2.3.2), 30 YWW will be trained and capacity built in election observation, empowering them with the tools and knowledge to hold the political system accountable. Finally, the Feministo also entails capacity building elements, as 700 YWW will be capacitated to contribute to this by formulating and putting forth their demands. In a country that devalues the opinions and needs of women, participating seriously in such a process can be an empowering and capacity building experience.

**Advocacy** in the intervention does not only consist of improving the number of female political candidates in the political system in Zimbabwe, but also in changing and normalising womens’ participation in the political landscape by bringing about “a lasting change'' for YWW’s rights and empowerment. It is important to spread the advocacy of women’s issues and rights so it reaches and mobilises greater support from citizens. In order to promote the women’s Feministo and create awareness, we will use various campaigning methods such as different types of media coverage and policy briefs. At the same time, advocacy will be promoted by influencing stakeholders at the local level such as traditional chiefs, local government, political parties’ structure, ZEC among others.

**Strategic deliveries** in this intervention consist of the final Feministo in itself, which can be used by YWW and female political candidates for advocacy, mobilization and policy-making going forward. Furthermore, the intervention provides and facilitates an election-based forum, providing the female political candidates and YWW voters with a space to communicate their respective political programs and demands, and search for alignment to the benefit of all women. The mentorship platform itself can also be seen as a strategic delivery, as the 40 selected female candidates will receive mentorship from 40 previous candidates to provide support, experience and knowledge sharing through both pre-election and post-election meetings. These networks and the relationship building that they facilitate are designed to last long after the intervention period, helping YWW support each other in politics throughout their careers. Finally, all trainings provide concrete tools and knowledge that in itself can be seen as strategic deliveries.

Thus, capacity development, advocacy efforts and strategic deliveries are directly interlinked in the intervention. For example, the Feministo (activity 2.1.1 & 2.1.2) will be a strategic delivery that facilitates civic mobilization and provides a channel for young women to formulate their needs and a common women’s rights agenda. With the Feministo, the YWW are better capacitated to push for an issue-based election, as they can use the Feministo as an advocacy tool to influence the candidates through the feminist campaigns (activity 2.2.1) and hold them accountable once they are elected even beyond the scope of this proposed intervention. Furthermore, the FTLS (activity 1.1.1) and the Peer-to-Peer Mentorship and Experiences Sharing Sessions (1.1.2) both entail components of capacity development and strategic deliveries as the target group will be equipped with knowledge and tools to ensure their effective political participation and preparedness for the election.

3.3 Monitoring, evaluation and learning of the intervention

The monitoring of the project implementation and results will be a shared responsibility between GA and IYWD. The responsibility for the day-to-day implementation, monitoring of activities and administration will be managed by IYWD. This includes budget spendings and the management of the implementation plan, as well as the systematic and timely collection of data for ‘means of verification’. IYWD will compile the information in quarterly narratives and financial progress reports to GA who will provide oversight on progress, financial controlling, as well as feedback and sparring for continuous strategic planning including mitigating strategies for challenges occurring during the implementation. The quarterly reports will moreover serve as a basis for assessing the progress of each indicator and the immediate objectives. GA’s working group will be in charge of reporting to CISU through the status reports and will consult with CISU on crucial challenges and changes of the intervention.

Throughout the project, GA and IYWD will continually be in contact on how the project is moving forward using email as the main means of communication supplemented with communication through Whatsapp allowing for a quick response on urgent matters. Normally, skype/zoom meetings are conducted whenever there is a need to discuss something more in-depth, which is approximately on a quarterly basis. This will however, be more frequent and systematised due to travel restrictions caused by COVID-19 to ensure that the partnership remains on the right track.

In addition, because of COVID-19, IYWD will continuously make sure to implement safety measures to ensure a successful and safe implementation following the do-no harm principle. This entails following the developments of Zimbabwe’s government regulations in relation to public gatherings including the number of people allowed in meetings and requirements on facemasks.

Online monitoring and monitoring visits

The visits planned during the intervention are a central part of the collaboration and monitoring and evaluation. Normally, we conduct start up, finalisation and 1-2 midterm visits depending on the length of the project. These in person monitoring visits are important as they supplement the regular quarterly monitoring by creating room for in-depth discussions and a deepening of the partnership, as well as allowing GA to join in some of the activities to get an active understanding of how these are carried out. However, we are taking into account that COVID-19 might be a barrier for physical visits to Zimbabwe for an uncertain period of time. We are therefore preparing for online monitoring visits. The GA secretariat is currently developing a methodology for online monitoring based on experiences from other Danish CSOs and adapted to fit the GA partnership approach. This methodology will be followed in this event and may include novel methodologies for GA such as ‘Most Significant Change’ or similar approaches to obtaining and systemasing experiences. Similarly, in this event, financial supervision will be carried out online, including sampling of transaction records, bookkeeping excerpts and so forth.

However, given the current status of the COVID-19 situationen, we do not deem a physical start-up visit in Zimbabwe to be realistic. Thus the start-up visit will be conducted online. However, due to the importance of carrying out physical monitoring visits (as explained in section 1.5), as well as the relatively long time frame of this intervention, we plan for the two midterm monitoring visits and the finalization visit to be carried out physically. Nevertheless, we will monitor the development of the COVID-19 situation and assess the feasibility of the visits, when they become relevant. Should it not be feasible, we will carry these out as online monitoring visits following the methodology described above.

Furthermore, this intervention will include an external evaluation by a professional consultant from Zimbabwe or the surrounding region. This will serve to provide a technical overview of the achievements of the intervention and collect learnings and systematize experiences based on a sound methodological approach. Furthermore, it will take into account the entirety of the partnership’s development and accumulated achievements as a basis to provide recommendations for future project-related work for both partners as well as recommendations on how IYWD and GA can transform the partnership into a non project-based partnership.

3.4 Risks and mitigating strategies

As mentioned in section 1, Zimbabwe faces an extremely unstable economic situation, which in the worst case can lead to a liquidity crisis. The inflation rate in Zimbabwe has increased over the last couple of years which means that IYWD faces a decrease in purchasing power, increased prices of goods and services, because of the failing value of the Zimbabwe Dollar. In June 2019, the Zimbabwean government banned the usage of foreign currency for the purposes of transacting in Zimbabwe. However, the US dollar is still the most attractive currency because of the higher value, which has decreased the exchange rate of the Zimbabwean dollar in formal as well as informal markets. It is still legal to receive aid in US dollars, but in order to ensure that this intervention will succeed despite the economic challenges, IYWD has established an offshore account in Botswana to minimise the impact of the economic crisis and security of organisational funds in the country.

There is the risk of continued shrinking of political space in Zimbabwe. However, in order to demonstrate non-partisanship, IYWD has profiled itself as a feminist organisation. IYWD will also maintain their stakeholder approach by cautiously working with all political parties to ensure that they are familiar with IYWD’s non-partisan approach. Additionally, IYWD has obtained a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) from the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs. The MoU signals an imminent contract between the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and IYWD, which not only indicates an acknowledgement of IYWD’s political work but it also reduces the risk of controversies against IYWD’s political sphere. IYWD will also maintain a non-partisan position in regard to the activities of the intervention by ensuring that mobilisation is inclusive of YWW across the political spectrum. The non-partisan approach aids in mitigating the risk of harassment by state agencies and political parties. However, IYWD and GA acknowledge that the shifting nature of the political climate instills a constant threat of a worsened situation, thus, risk assessments will be conducted throughout the implementation of the intervention.

The current COVID-19 pandemic is also highly likely to persist in at least the first year of project implementation. As such, this will also affect the implementation of physical activities and require the observation and compliance with the World Health Organisation (WHO)’s practices of sanitising, wearing masks and social distancing. The lockdown and curfew times also imposed by the government of Zimbabwe will also affect the starting and finishing times of project activities as well as the numbers of participants per activity. Additionally, the fear of needing to contain spreading the disease through attending project activities may discourage some of the YWW from participating in the project hence, negatively affecting its successful completion. However, IYWD will make sure to continuously adapt to the safety requirements by WHO to follow the no-harm principle by navigating and monitoring the different activities so they correspond to the COVID-19 situation in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, to ensure coordination and regular communication between members and staff due to the COVID-19 imposed travel restrictions, a sum of money is allocated to monthly mobile data support.

IYWD and GA are aware of the potential risks which may occur during the 2023 Elections, based on prior experience from election observations through the ‘Strength through election’ intervention (journal nr:18-2232-MI-jun). Zimbabwean elections bring about a heightened threat to citizens, with women in particular, facing the potential severe dangers of gender targeted violence. The most immediate risk related to election observations is the limited cooperation by military parties, state agencies, political parties and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). However, the status of officially accredited observers coupled with the legitimacy of IWYD as a non-partisan organization, significantly reduces this issue. Moreover, the risk of violence against women in politics will be mitigated through security training as part of the FTLS (Activity 1.1.1). In addition, IYWD’s support and help to targeted members during the intervention, will not only instill trust towards its members in cases of risks and threats, but it will also help in maintaining IYWD’s legitimacy as a protector of human rights. In addition, GA’s ‘Mandela fund’[[21]](#footnote-21) is available to help in the accumulation of funds for further assistance for legal aid if necessary. The intervention will strive to ensure that no civil, IYWD members, stakeholders or any other persons directly or indirectly involved in the intervention will be exposed to any harm, physically and mental. Despite that, possible conditions and risks can eventually hinder or delay the fulfilment of the objectives.

Based on earlier experiences, women face insecurities when traveling or going out at night to search for food etc. To mitigate security risks during the activities of the Feminist Transformative Leadership Schools (FTLS) (activity 1.1.1) and Training of Long-Term Election Observers (activity 2.3.1), as they will take place over several days, funds for the intervention will be allocated to hotel accommodation and meals at the hotel due to the necessary long distance travels for the participants and the risk of searching for food at night.

3.5 Sustainability and phase-out strategy

3.5.1 How can the strengthening of partners’ and other actors’ capacity be continued when the implementation period expires?

The purpose of the overall intervention is to ensure that the two primary target groups are well prepared and equipped for the 2023 harmonised election and to promote a democratic culture that promotes and respects women’s right to participate in the political sphere. To ensure an even stronger impact and sustainability in this intervention, we have learned through, Strength Through Election (journal number: 18-2232-MI-jun), that it is important to begin the preparation for the harmonized election of 2023 as early as possible, to have a longer intervention period and to scale up on activities and strategies that builds female candidates’ capacity to engage with local communities, develop issue-based alliances and campaigns and run for election (activity 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 2.1.1 and 2.1.2). The knowledge, skills and expertise that the YWW will gain from the project will continue to be useful after the end of the project. IYWD and GA will also be in a position to harvest learnings from the project for their future programming.

Moreover, the development of the Feministo (activity 2.1.1 & 2.1.2) is a central sustainability strategy of the project. The Femisto aims to create local consistency by facilitating dialogue between the YWW citizens and the political candidates contesting in their constituency including some of the female political candidates participation in the FTLS. Thus, there is a unique opportunity to foster feminist leadership among the female political candidates once elected into power and thereby enhance the substantive representation of YWW’s needs and demands well beyond the intervention period. Furthermore, the Feministo not only ensures the ability for IYWD members to speak on their own behalf but also creates sustainable organisational legitimacy for the target groups to act and conduct advocacy.

The Feministo activities will contribute towards a sense of community, solidarity and interconnectedness among the YWW ensuring strong long-lasting social networks. The Feministo will also be used after the 2023 election as an accountability and advocacy tool to uphold the elected candidates on their promises.

Moreover, the targeted YWW will be equipped with knowledge, strengths and skills that they can use not only at the harmonized election in 2023 but also in future elections, in analysing political processes and in taking part in local decision-making processes.

The activities that build knowledge, skills and expertise of YWW for conducting the election observation, empower these women and they will be able to draw on this when engaging in local and national political decision-making processes after the end of the project. The design of the election observation component and the election observation report will help IYWD in engaging in national dialogues on the conduct of the election and help deepen and widen engagement with national authorities and civil society organisations. IYWD will also be able to draw on learnings from this election observation programme that they can share with their alliance partners in Zimbabwe and on the continent.

IYWD’s stakeholder strategy to inform men, local chiefs and other local stakeholders that could be against work done by this intervention, is expected to give sustained focus on shared responsibilities towards supporting women’s right to participate in decision-making processes and their right to express their opinions and run and vote in elections for political positions in the future.

3.5.2 How will it be ensured that neither local partners nor target groups are left in an inappropriate relationship of dependency when the intervention period expires?

Throughout this intervention, GA will ensure independence by strengthening alliances, networks and introducing IYWD to new potential partners. This will limit the financial dependency between GA an IYWD when the intervention period expires. Additionally, the capacity building and networks created through the activities of Feminist Transformative Leadership School (FTLS) and Peer-to-Peer Mentorship and Experiences Sharing Sessions will provide the YWW with skill and capabilities that are persistent and long-lasting and will continue to benefit them beyond this intervention.

As described in section 2.4, this intervention is planned to be the final consecutive CISU-funded intervention within the GA-IYWD project-partnership. Accordingly, a consistent focus of this intervention will be to ensure that IYWD’s financial capacity and future work is secured beyond this intervention. This includes timely strategic planning, entailing e.g. meetings with other potential partners and donors, as well as GA acting as a sparring partner on the future strategic and organizational plans of IYWD. As IYWD has developed into a strong and capable civil society organization and has strengthened its ties to other actors throughout the last years, we deem this three year intervention period to be a sufficient and responsible amount of time to ensure this.

Furthermore, we intend to make use of this period to thoroughly evaluate the project partnership and ensure that accumulated learnings and best practices are firmly rooted and translated to actionable plans in both organizations and to find ways to transform the partnership into a non project-partnership. To this end, an external evaluation will be carried out (as described in section 3.3) and, among other things, used actively in an evaluation workshop for IYWD staff and members and GA, during the finalization visit.

4. Intervention-related information work in Denmark

4.1 Integration of local projects and global campaignsAll GA’s projects automatically feed into GA’s campaign and information work. GA’s strategy for 2016-2020 underlines that there must be a clear connection between the themes in our projects and campaigns. The aim is to link local struggles and issues to broader regional and global structures of inequality and injustice.

Based on previous successful reversed project visits, GA will host a visit from two female political candidates from the ‘Vote Run Lead’ network as part of the information work in Denmark. During the visit, a public event will be hosted to create awareness about the 2023 Harmonised Election in Zimbabwe and in particular the experiences of female political candidates. In addition, during the visit, GA will set up meetings with key stakeholders including Danish MPs, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs not only to inform them about the political situation in Zimbabwe but also to inform them about IYWD’s, GA’s and CISU’s essential work and impact. Moreover, if there is interest, a meeting will be arranged for CISU’s Zimbabwe Network.

4.2 Purpose: Inform to take actionThe purpose of GA coordinated information and campaign work is to inform and engage the Danish target group to take action and actively participate in the campaigns. This can be anything from signing a petition, sending letters to politicians, or participating in street actions, conferences and workshops. The overall target group is Danes who are interested in global issues and concerned about issues such as inequality and sustainability, but each activity always seeks to address a more specific target group related to the concrete interests and themes addressed. Furthermore, other target groups are typically defined for specific calls to actions, such as politicians, companies, and other stakeholders. Based on good results from previous campaigns GA has developed a number of fixed elements and channels that we use in our campaigns:

* Production of articles and interviews with partners used for the GA homepage and Facebook;
* Monthly newsletters sent out to more than 7.000 subscribers;
* Social media updates and stories on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook;
* Development of the campaign site on GA’s website with background information, cases and calls for action;
* Production of graphic elements, small videos or infographics to create attention and understanding around complex issues, articles and debate sections in relevant media (magazines, websites, newspapers and local radio, etc.);
* Public meetings, films screenings and workshops, street based actions and creative happenings, production of fact based reports and primers.

1. The seven districts are Guruve, Shamva, Mazowe, Bindura, Rushinga, Hwedza, Zvishavane. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Section 2.4 and 3.5 for elaboration [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://kubatana.net/2019/03/05/free-for-all-but-not-free-for-52-a-feminist-analysis-of-zimbabwes-30-july-2018-harmonized-election/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.youngwomeninstitute.net/index.php/herstory/168-meet-the-candidates-2018-voterunlead-alumni-2> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. All activities are referring to the LFA, which can be found on page 18-19 in the application [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Refer to Section 1.2.2 for elaboration on the exclusion of women in political parties. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. http://kubatana.net/2019/02/07/on-the-days-of-darkness-in-zimbabwe-an-updated-report-on-the-human-rights-violations-committed-between-14-january-2019-to-5-february-2019/ [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Report of the Public Hearings of the Constitutional Amendment Bill No.2 written by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. World Food Programme (WFP) Report, April 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/zimbabwe/overview [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <http://kubatana.net/2019/03/05/free-for-all-but-not-free-for-52-a-feminist-analysis-of-zimbabwes-30-july-2018-harmonized-election/> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/zimbabwe-health-minister-fired-over-60m-covid-19-graft/1902926 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <https://www.dw.com/en/in-zimbabwe-dissent-can-lead-to-disappearances-and-torture/a-53862165> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. <https://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-national-byo-187459.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See section 3 and the LFA, for a description of the activity [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See section 3 and the LFA, for a description of the activity [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The 2020 assessment is to be completed by the end of November 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Section 3.3: Monitoring, evaluation and learning of the intervention, for more details. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Citizens are first eligible to contest for election from the age of 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. <http://kubatana.net/2019/03/05/free-for-all-but-not-free-for-52-a-feminist-analysis-of-zimbabwes-30-july-2018-harmonized-election/> [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. <https://globalaktion.dk/mandelafonden/> [↑](#footnote-ref-21)