

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AS A PATHWAY TO TRANSFORMED AND PEACEFUL SOCIETIES

GOVERNANCE AND
DEVELOPMENT IN ZIMBABWE

KEY INSIGHTS





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May 2022

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This document shares the key insights of a research paper by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Read the full paper [here](#).

A publication by the Inclusive Economies Project

SYNTHESISED DISCUSSION OF THE FUTURE OF INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT AND STABILITY IN ZIMBABWE

This analysis has illustrated that principled and strong governance in Zimbabwe over the past two decades resulted in an enabling environment for inclusive development, with resultant benefits for peace and security. Not only did governance indicators improve (Figure 2) during the period of relatively improved governance under the GNU, but it also increased revenue (Figure 4) and facilitated progress in human development (Figure 1). Additionally, working poverty decreased (Figure 6) and trust in institutions improved, as did political stability (tracked in Figure 3 through both civic collective action and violence against civilians). This highlights the crucial role that strong coordinated governance can play in securing a more peaceful and inclusive Zimbabwean society.

Unfortunately, the important gains made under the GNU have not been sustained. As a result, Zimbabwe has taken a path of deteriorating governance, economic decline and growing instability. The impact of these developments has been a deterioration in key metrics for human development in areas such as health and education. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a further crippling effect

on these underperforming spheres. At the same time, the prospects for employment growth are limited, forcing workers into a growing informal, and frequently illicit, economy.

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The constraints on growth have left youth, and society at large, with few options to secure stable income. Consequently, Zimbabweans are flocking to areas like Kwekwe and Mazowe where artisanal and illegal mining opportunities offer them a lifeline to offset their poverty. The unregulated nature of these activities has allowed extortion rackets and unsavoury politicians to exploit profits. This has resulted in a growing number of conflicts and fatalities. Not only are considerable amounts of commodities like gold leaving the country through covert channels, but

KEY INSIGHTS

the social and environmental damage being incurred is likely to have its own ripple effects on society and thus on stability.

Without meaningful opportunities for society, and youth in particular, pockets of instability might continue to absorb those being pushed to the margins of economic inclusion. A recent skills audit illustrated the chasm of mismatch in the labour market (Table 1). In abundance is the supply of skills related to commerce and business, a factor wholly necessary to support market-driven growth. As such, policy interventions must consider how to harness these skills through stimulation of business activities, useful not only for creating income opportunities, but also for strengthening the private sector and thus creating a positive feedback loop for inclusive development. The skills audit also lays bare the shortage of medical and health science professionals (a 95% deficit), clearly necessitating

investments into education in this field, where there is a strong potential to absorb youth into work streams. This also points to the importance of budgetary considerations for the healthcare sector, so that skilled professionals in public healthcare jobs can be certain of remuneration, thus preventing further skills drain. The decreased expenditure in healthcare hurts both the quality of life of Zimbabweans and the prospects for offsetting skills deficits in the labour market, which sets off its own chain of positive developments.

If anything, scarcity lies at the heart of threats to stability, and it is crucial that the state facilitates an environment for private sector development and human development. This means that it ought to concern itself with improving governance so that its core function is service to society. Without this, scarcity will continue to threaten the social fabric of society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of Zimbabwe

- 1. Improve transparency and accountability mechanisms.** Efficient and predictable governance lies at the heart of the nexus between inclusive development and peace. As such, the government should prioritise outcomes-based performance management and evaluation, captured in law to ensure transparency and accountability. To ensure the effective functioning of the rule of law, prioritising the separation of powers will be essential.
- 2. Consider macroeconomic policy that can help finance social safety nets for the informal sector.** The size and extent of dependence on the informal sector by society necessitates proper consideration of macroeconomic policy that can after some time facilitate the development of social safety nets for households whose main source of income is derived from informal trade. For example, developing employment-intensive industry with a focus on niche areas in the global value chain, from which state revenues can over time be leveraged to introduce a social security net.
- 3. Targeted and informed investments in skills development are necessary to offset labour market mismatch.** This includes working with the private sector to create opportunities for the oversupply of business and commerce graduates, who can in turn stimulate growth. It also necessitates greater investment in healthcare education and healthcare systems so that skilled professionals are incentivised to work in public healthcare facilities that face skills deficits.
- 4. Partnerships to end illegal mining in a safe and sustainable manner.** Measures and incentives to contain illegal mining need to be developed in partnership with key stakeholders, such as government, Fidelity Printers and Refineries, miners and organised labour.

KEY INSIGHTS

- 5. Proper investigations into state officials who abuse their power and participate in corruption related to illegal mining.** The government must investigate and hold accountable politicians and police officers who are complicit in illegal mining operations and the resultant violence in areas like Kwekwe and Mazowe, so that appropriate strategies can be crafted to help regain control of the associated mining activities.
- 6. Urgent action is needed to both improve infrastructure and prevent the degradation of water quality.** Water supply and quality is now a major concern in Harare and areas where artisanal mining affects bodies of water.

To civil society

- 1. Civil society organisations can play an important role in studying and facilitating research into the unfolding illegal mining situation.** Research must play an integral role in the crafting of pragmatic policy solutions.

To the international community

- 1. Hold the Zimbabwean government accountable to standards of good governance, which is also critical in the long term for regional prosperity and peace.** The Southern African Development Community (SADC) in particular, as the most immediate

regional body, should actively advance this agenda.

- 2. Seek ways to empower civil society and civil society organisations to advocate for themselves.** This is especially critical at a time when the civil space is becoming increasingly restricted.
- 3. Donor aid priorities must be informed by the skills audit.** Targeted training and education will advance the inclusive economic development prospects for Zimbabwe.
- 4. Support research and fact finding related to the illegal mining operations.** Urgent attention and further research are required to better understand the circumstances and impacts of the ongoing and escalating illegal mining across the country.
- 5. Consider targeted sanctions against the trade in illicit gold.** This, coupled with human development programmes for youth forced into the trade due to a lack of other options, can help offset the illegal trade and its impact on youth.
- 6. In instances where chemicals like mercury are impacting water quality, immediate action is needed to safeguard people, aquatic life, wild animals and farm animals.** Environmentalists and affected communities must be supported to work towards sustainable solutions.

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