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Can Information Technology Enhance Governance, Transparency And Accountability In Organisations? A Case Study Of The Campaign For Female Education, Zimbabwe.

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CAN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ENHANCE GOVERNANCE, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN ORGANISATIONS? A CASE STUDY OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR FEMALE EDUCATION, ZIMBABWE.

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ABSTRACT

The reciprocal action or influence between IT systems, people, processes and government can be of great value to organisations. IT systems have helped evolve new dimensions of governance, procurement, health, commerce and this has made people/organisations more functional and efficient in a rapid manner. The cost of adoption and implementation in governance varies with different governments. This research looks into the ways in which IT systems can enhance transparency, accountability and good governance in organisations seeking excellence. The issues surrounding this are explored through the case study of Camfed Zimbabwe. Outcomes are demonstrated that show it is possible to exercise better governance and transparency through IT.

Keywords:

Governance, Systems, Transparency, Accountability, Government

1. Introduction

The convergence of Information Communication Technology (ICT) is a driver for the information society, and with various players increasingly leveraging and applying ICTs amidst contending national, corporate and international interests, this represents a significant change for traditional distributions of power in the international system (Selian, 2002).

This study discusses how the use of IT Systems can enhance governance and therefore transparency, accountability and auditing. It presents the institutional and governance principles which are the foundations of Camfed Zimbabwe's model of best practices and further analyzes closely three IT systems: one that facilitates management of fund raising; one that enables transparent finance and accounting and one that tracks all program activity.

There is a body of literature on the governance of IT itself, in fact Webb et al (2006) state that "IT Governance is referred to as a subset of corporate governance". However, this work examines how good corporate governance can be achieved through the use of IT. The proposition of this study was to keep in focus that IT systems can enhance transparency, accountability and also audit ability if they are properly used. This potential is enhanced if appropriate good governance systems, processes and citizen participation are put in place.

Camfed Zimbabwe case study is used to illustrate how when the right technology is put in place, together with the right human participation, contextual governance processes and transparent and accountable systems and best practices, then IT systems can function as a critical tool in development and delivering programmes. The case study was chosen based on the criteria that their Governance system is transparent and accountable to the girls they support in Zimbabwe. They have achieved much of this through the use of IT Systems and have shown the outcomes through their impact reports. Funds are traceable right from the donor all the way to the beneficiary and then properly accounted for back to the donor. Thus providing an illustration of how IT systems can enhance governance and therefore transparency and accountability.

2. Literature Review

Perlman states “After you’ve done a thing the same way for two years, look it over carefully. After five years, look at it with suspicion. And after ten years, throw it away and start all over” (*New York Times*, 1958). So the question now arises in a resonance of thoughts, what is it that has aided the governments of the developed countries to relay better transparent and accountable systems? Is it the people, is it proven processes, good governance or technology or an affluent mix of all three? Are there reforms in place to check and constantly improve transparency and accountability? Contrastingly on the other hand why are their counterparts (developing nations) still struggling with accountability and transparency issues? Could this be an avalanche of poor governance systems, lack of citizen’s participation, or an issue of lack of insufficient embracement of technology?

There are no perfect routes to governance, and what in reality can we term as “good governance”? Just as there are many paths to a destination, good governance can also have various models and practices. Is there a way developing nations after so many years can stop and look with healthy suspicion on the governance models in developed nations and possibly mirror those back or mirror back with a localized context?

According to Bisoux (2004) although the necessity of good governance is unquestioned, what actually constitutes good governance and how that governance should be enforced is very much under debate. Bisoux’s article goes on to emphasize that good governance should be built on a code of country governance. The ultimate goal of good governance should be centred on people, resources and infrastructure.

A varied potent and differential view is that in which “good” governance is integral to economic growth and the whole fulcrum of governance ascribes to providing avenues to which the under-privileged can be heard: heard in terms of bare necessities of existence, their fundamental human rights, access to and freedom of information/expression. These provisions enhance human productivity, innovation and development (Ruth, 2009).

The Commission for Africa (2005) found out that a lack of good governance and management is a major problem in many institutions, organisations and countries the world over. Ruth (2009) goes on to say that the pillars of good governance are transparency, accountability and participation. For a system to encompass these three tripods of good governance and operate well in this day and age it is important to wrap it round with technology for a wider reach and accessibility. Good governance comes with information and knowledge; to accumulate and retrieve this information in a simple, clear and accurate form technology is paramount.

IT systems can be developed to support information systems with well managed derivation of knowledge, codifying and smooth and efficient transfer of this information between other functional systems (Alavi, 2001). Governments the world over must act as inherent catalysts to processes that will bring about these transparent systems. Change has come and it is crucial to sustainable development that failing or developing nations keep up with this constant change, a failure to do this would lead to a state of poverty and over-dependence on nations that have embraced this new era.

2.1 Governance

Governance has been defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1997) as: “the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences”. The UNDP report (1997) argues that there are two angles to this definition in terms of the role of stakeholders and secondly the institutions alongside the processes that come with them.

With the advent of technology all these forms of governance have evolved and mutated the world over. A new form of governance known as digital governance has evolved and is rapidly changing the face of governance in even the most remote developing nations (Torres *et al.*, 2010). Digital governance has gone beyond the everyday use of IT as a bare tool that assists the execution of routine tasks in the traditional way and move into new forms of governance that alter the relationships

between individuals and units within the organisation and its external environment (Bwalya, 2009). Digital Governance like any form of governance has barriers, inhibitors, forms and constraints. The adoption of digital governance can be and is often deterred by lack of funding, basic education, awareness of rights as a citizens' amongst many more Ruth (2009).

Bwalya (2009) argues on a different scale saying that deterrents to digital governance adoption are mild repugnance by the users due to usability, incompetence, limited ICT infrastructure, lack of trust and cultural awareness. However looking beyond these potential issues, accountability, transparency and adopting a strategic positioning of IT brings a robust form of governance. The context of this study has had to critically probe deeply and consequently ask what are the potential differences and approaches between developing and developed nations bearing in mind that there is no one perfect model.

Information availability and access to this information has been one notable leveraging tool used by the developed nations. Information is power and power leads to stability and dominance. An example of this trend is within the United Kingdom, where online access to government proceedings and data stored historically, recent data, are all kept open to the public which is used for operational, prudent and evidential conclusive choices. Developed nations have gone beyond just having information, on databases but have made this information available to the point where it has become "Live" data.

To further buttress the need for information access almost on the go, it is apparent that there is no time for information to go up the chain of command and decisions to come down" (Garson *et al.*,2004). Contrary to their developing counterparts, they are slowly beginning to build a database of information and beginning to adopt (ICT) as a way of life. This adoption of digital governance can be and is been deterred by lack of funding, basic education, awareness of rights as a citizens amongst many more (Ruth 2009).

Bwalya (2009) argues on a different scale saying that deterrents to digital governance adoption are mild repugnance by the users due to usability incompetence, limited ICT

infrastructure, lack of trust and cultural awareness. To have a successful government, it is essential to have the three tripods of transparency, accountability and citizenship participatory wrapped around technology is essential, this though would be dependant again on the level and context of governance adopted (Tolbert and Mossberger (2005) in Torres *et al* 2010).

Whilst Rossouw et al., (2006) states that state-owned enterprises often set a poor example of good governance as their boards do not display either the competence or independence that is required for good governance but rather board and senior management appointments are often made on purely political grounds. Making such appointments can only reduce the likelihood of talented individuals getting the opportunity to bring in innovative solutions for development. The Cadbury report (1992), for example has shown that board structures should be designed by putting them into context of the nation in focus bearing in mind their socio-economic and socio-cultural behaviours.

Rather than adopt governance structures and systems suited to other countries which are probably more transparent and have long gone past the threshold of setting up transparent practices, it is essential that every government needs to localize its legal structures to best suit its leadership and steer it towards meeting internationally accepted practices (Okike, 2007). Developing nations, according to transparency international, have shown tentative figures showing a low transparency level.

However, the definition that has had influence upon this work is that by OECD which states that governance includes ‘a set of relationships between a company’s management, its boards, its shareholders and other stakeholders’ (OECD, 2004). They have also established the following principles in 1998:

- Fairness – protecting shareholder rights and ensuring contracts with resource providers are enforceable.
- Transparency – requiring timely disclosure of adequate information on corporate financial performance.
- Accountability – ensuring that management and shareholder interests are kept in alignment.

- Responsibility – ensuring corporate compliance with laws, regulations and society norms (Davies 2006).

This study fairly agrees with these approaches to good governance and it would argue that these touchstones are fairly dependant on individual behaviours which would lead to an organisations culture either positively or negatively. It is essential to identify such conducts and help to build trust for users and customers. Trust is the basic currency of human intercourse; trust enables people to transact with each other at all levels (Davies, 2006).

2.2 Transparency

Transparency is defined by Kolstad and Wiig, (2009) as public access to information, or more precisely “timely and reliable economic, social and political information accessible to all relevant stakeholders”. Another view to this definition which borders more on openness is given as the level at which partners can expect openness from their corresponding firms (Davidson and Olfman, 2004). Transparency is how public affairs are conducted in openly manner and giving free access to public scrutiny (Birkinshaw, 2006 in Grimmelikhuijsen, 2009). Transparency can also be the solution or answer to the problems facing good governance, and seen by policy makers as an enhancer of good governance (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2009).

Many reforms have been put in place to promote transparency and accountability, Non-governmental organisations like Transparency International have set up various indices to enhance transparency and even though it has increased in many instances it still has a lot of grounds to cover. (Kaptein (2004) in Vaccaro and Madsen, 2009) raised the issue of transparency being one of the most cited ethics principles in the code of conduct of companies related to transparency, honesty and fairness with frequencies of 55%, 50% and 45% respectively. Kolstad and Wiig (2009) noted that transparency is often seen as central to improving dysfunctions of resource-rich developing countries.

The international development community has pushed transparency in resource revenues through such initiatives as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

(EITI). Despite the popularity of the transparency concept, its role is poorly understood. It argues that transparency is insufficient in itself, and needs to be complemented by other types of policies. Transparency reform should focus on the area most important to curbing corruption and dig deeply into the role access to information can play in the development of Nations (Kolstad and Wiig, 2009).

Kolstad and Wiig (2009) stated that a lack of transparency attracts various negatives like making corruption attractive and less risky; Transparency measures can bring public and private sector organisations to a point where transparency becomes leverage for providing information that captures everything relevant to selecting credible leaders or processes, whereas, lack of transparency can produce further reticence. Transparency gives voters the opportunity to bring down governments and politicians, casting an eye on moral conducts for exposure (Kolstad and Wiig, 2009).

Transparency is a culture and thereby has ethics it therefore needs to be understood by the users through full awareness, e-governance and institutional reform instruments. Once this is achieved there are various benefits which it can bring to both the governance team and the users. Public or e-participation if imbibed builds trust and motivates the user's interest. People become more involved and become watchdogs leading to increased transparency.

Transparency also makes services accessible to more citizens on an equitable manner, increases revenues for government development, and lastly raises Governance standards for intending public servants at all levels (Kaptein (2004) in Vaccaro and Madsen, 2009). Again it is worthy to note that transparency in itself could be a potential problem in the sense that a focus on the activities to make information available to the public can be resource consuming. It may lead to confidentiality issues in some instances such as private personal matters (Kolstad and Wiig, 2009).

Transparency has been viewed from two interconnected points: one, as Bac, (2001) as cited by Kolstad and Wiig (2009) pointed out while transparency makes it more likely that organisations are trustworthy, it can also identify the possible points to bribe. In other words transparency reveals newer avenues to dishonest individuals to manoeuvre around once they understand the system.

2.3 The Role of Information Technology

What role does IT play in enhancing transparency, accountability and governance?

According to Wescott (2003) the proper introduction of information and communications technology (ICT) can improve the transparency of organisations by: improving the enforcement of rules, lessening the discretion of officials, thus increasing transparency” (pp 1). Furthermore, the power IT has and indeed permeated the structural workings of systems, often challenging (though not necessarily undermining) top-down ‘command and control’ power hierarchies by ensuring that there is a de-centralization of information vital to the governance models (Selian, 2002). Also a vast combination of various indices are needed to bring about a transparent organisation, the adoption of highly cultivated training, well grounded far reaching practices and policies, a healthy culture, processes and programs to improve competitive intelligence and finally a proper communication channel between all stakeholders (Oliver, 2004).

The adoption of IT systems has been argued in past and recent times to provide platforms useful to firms that pay attention to transparency (Tapscott and Ticoll, 2003; Vaccaro and Madsen, 2006; and Vaccaro and Madsen, 2009). With the revolution of the internet (a technology tool), people, businesses and governments have leveraged it to provide information accessible by all independent on time or place creating an information culture. (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2009), However, Lourdes *et al.* (2010) argue that, although the mere capacity of the Internet for the dissemination of information improves accountability and makes benchmarking easier, IT has not had much impact on local government accountability.

The recognition of the presence of IT systems is likely to invigorate user participations and bridge the gap between the governance team and the people without necessarily depending on a middle man (Batista, 2003). Increasingly, publicly traded organisations are turning to IT organisation to help automate many important SOX compliance requirements (Bisoux, 2004). IT systems have helped develop congruous solutions that help bring together the strategies of any organisations..

3. Background to Camfed Zimbabwe's Welfare Assistance Scheme

Since 1993 the Campaign for Female Education (Camfed), has been refining a programme strategy designed to shift some of the fundamentals that impede young, rural women in Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe from achieving their academic, employment, and leadership potentials. Volunteer community governance structures in partner districts, schools and nearby communities manage bursary and grant resources, address child protection issues, and provide a forum for young women to support one another in making positive life choices and giving back to their communities (Camfed Impact Report, 2010).

The programme started in Zimbabwe, which in many ways continues to be developed. The underlying rationale behind the Camfed Welfare Assistance Scheme and support for girls at secondary school is directed to girls joining Form One Girls who would be unable to make the transition to secondary school are identified in Grade 7 by the Camfed District Committee (CDC). Camfed then makes a commitment to support these girls through to the completion of Form 4, as this is a long-term commitment of four years. This support is speculated on the funds that can be raised in future. This commitment to girls has brought positive results – over the 10 years in which Camfed has been operating in Zimbabwe, the retention rate of girls supported in the secondary school programme has remained above 95% (Camfed Impact Report, 2010).

To this end Camfed developed the Welfare Assistance Scheme (WAS) and is essentially broken into two distinct structures-the Secondary School Safety Net fund (SNF) and Secondary School Bursary (SSB) scheme. SNF grants address the problems of girls who are in danger of dropping out by meeting the girls' immediate short-term needs. Some of the girls may also require longer term support.

The SNF grants will meet girls' immediate short term needs such as:

- Lack of funds to pay fees/levies which result in girls being sent away for non-payment;
- Lack of decent clothing which can undermine girls' school attendance and confidence;
- Lack of money to pay clinic fees which results in long periods of absenteeism due to ill-health;

- Lack of learning resources, including exercise books and pens, which by default puts children from poor families at a disadvantage and undermines their participation in school

The SNF covers the basic educational needs of the girl: School Fees and Levies, Exam Fees, Uniforms, Medical expenses, and Stationery (Camfed Impact Report, 2010).

Camfed's secondary school bursary programme takes a comprehensive and integrated approach, offering a commitment to all girls it supports through secondary school fully to cover their school-going costs for the four years of their schooling. This gives them the security of knowing that their school fees, uniform, shoes, supplies, and other necessities are provided so they can complete their education. This total package of support minimizes the visible economic distinctions, and minimizes the risk to girls in trying to secure further support through unsuitable or exploitative employment and transactional sex (LinkLaters Report, 2010).

This bursary program has been able to enhance and put as a fore-runner the child protection act. The whole process has made more girls go to and through school until they get to alumni level (Camfed report, 2010).

4. Research Method

This study used a case study approach attempting to examine the subject without changing their behaviour or systems. Yin (1993) argues that when process issues are involved multiple sources of evidence and case studies offer a holistic perspective allowing for a fuller exploration of the issues in question. This study however focuses intensively on one case (Camfed Zimbabwe) hoping to shed light on a much larger population (Gerring, 2007).

The primary method of data collection and analysis was qualitative by way of questionnaire with ten random members of the selected case study organisation, to provide an in-depth interpretation. Reports and various documents evidence from the programme and organisation were also used; these documents were employed to give adequate background information. Affirmation of the findings from other sources further lends strength to the findings (Yin, 2003).

The questionnaires were distributed via email and the respondents had no limitations in terms of filling and answering the questions themselves. Open questions included:

- What system is Camfed Zimbabwe establishing to ensure transparency and accountability in the government's administration of its support to Welfare Assistance Schemes for poor girls in rural Zimbabwe?
- How is IT used within the overall approach?
- What added value does IT bring to Camfed?
- In what ways can the underlying IT systems be improved to enhance transparency and accountability of the entire system (i.e. how can IT enhance good governance)?
- What is transparency? governance? and accountability?
- Should it be contextualised?

There were also numerous documents from Camfed analysed (www.Camfed.org) and three databases (Salesforce, Sun Systems & MS Access); their web-site www.Camfed.org, facebook & twitter, plus other journals, reports and articles obtained from them.

5. Findings

Camfed Zimbabwe was the pilot state and has become the proving ground for Camfed International. In 2008, when other development agencies left the country, Camfed Zimbabwe expanded its work into two new districts, bringing the total to 23. It also increased the number of girls receiving full support through high school by 35 percent. It's only because of the dedicated volunteer network and community support that this has been possible (Camfed Impact Report, 2010).

With Camfed's local partners, a team of 12 community members were trained to engage men in issues of gender-based violence. Through community-led awareness-raising sessions, 25,888 people have now been reached. The Camfed Association known as CAMA was developed in partnership with 400 girls who had completed high school with a primary aim to help other young women leaving high school to a safe livelihood. Despite being severely tested by economic and social turmoil, the

Cama Zimbabwe network has continued to serve as a critical support system for young women. With 6,458 members, Cama Zimbabwe has helped 2,751 women set up businesses. Camfed's work in Zimbabwe has stimulated high levels of local philanthropy and built several women into leadership positions even within Camfed. Mother Support Groups, a Camfed volunteer program for mothers and grandmothers, and CAMA members have supported 55,999 children go to school (Impact Report, 2010).

5.1 Camfed Zimbabwe's Welfare Assistance Scheme

The Welfare assistance scheme is the result of the funds raised by Camfed International, the United Kingdom section of the NGO and passed through Camfed Zimbabwe, the national Chapter, to ensure that the girls identified from some of the communities in rural Zimbabwe are supported to enter school, stay in school & succeed in school. Safety Net Fund grants and secondary school bursaries are administered through government schools and duly monitored by the local community (Linklaters Report, 2010).

Camfed's model is based on four strategies:

- Place girls and young women at the centre of action and learning;
- Complement existing power structures and systems;
- Link peer mentors across community and national boundaries; and
- Establish transparent financial systems (Camfed Impact report, 2010)

These strategies form the framework and pillar for the development process that catalyses rural regeneration carrying the democratic principles of inclusion, respect, fair trade and equality into every aspect of the model (Camfed Impact report, 2010).

5.2 Camfed's governance model

Camfed's governance model reinforces the foundation of all of its programs and was developed based on accountability to "the girl" by means of the encompassing principle of child protection and the organising principles of transparency and accountability, partnerships with government and community, activism and social capital, and a holistic long term approach. The governance model is designed to ensure that the right of girls to education is protected and promoted. It also provides

innumerable intangible deterrents against fraud because it instils from the “grassroots up” a culture of integrity in which participants at all levels work together to guarantee that a girl’s right to education and protection is respected, provided and supported adequately (LinkLaters Report, 2010).

For Camfed, governance is not just about the formal structures and corporate technicalities that Camfed as an organisation uses to deliver its programs. Governance is about who has influence; who makes the decisions; who controls the resources; and where and to whom accountability lies within the communities that its programs service. Camfed cannot over emphasize the importance of relationships, institutions and the recognition of structures by which people in rural communities organise themselves collectively to negotiate their rights and interests to Governance. The access to resources to which they are entitled and decision making steps to the arrangements that best enables them to achieve success. Camfed has managed to localise the context of governance to each community it serves (LinkLaters Report, 2010).

Bringing together the stakeholders, processes and the various supporting structures that influence a girl’s life in order to ensure that her right to education and the entitlements that follow from this right are protected and are accessible – such as her entitlement to the resources raised in her name and her entitlement to attend a school where she is safe (LinkLaters report 2010).

The key principles which drive the Camfed governance model are as follows:

1. Protecting the interests of the intended client
2. Transparency and Accountability
3. Partnerships
4. Social capital and activism

These principles have set the structure in an upright position thus ensuring that if one of them is weak or not followed it can lead to a collapse of the entire programme and also quick identification of the system failure points.

5.3 The place of IT in the overall system

Camfed is abreast with the latest technology to drive their vision, mission and objectives. A state-of-the art network infrastructure that serves all the branches in the

UK, US and Africa is in strong alignment with their vision and they have invested in various IT hardware and software to accomplish this. There has been great investment in the staff and the girls.

IT Systems are the fulcrum when it comes to information and data dissemination, retrieval and warehousing. Emailing and secure databases, alongside the websites and other technology tools that would be described below help relay transparency and accountability. Camfed has adapted a holistic model that is driven by technology in all their functional departments and has fully engaged all the stakeholders involved to participate in the programme. The Use of Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) to gather data from the field and directly feed back to their databases for analysis and synthesis sets them apart from the burdensome process of manual data collection and entry which can lead to data inaccuracy is overcome (Linklaters report, 2010).

5.3.1 Salesforce Donation Management

Camfed International has over the years increased in its operations to five African countries and due to this expansion, services and the information required has increased. Handling this information between offices in seven countries including the US and UK, is an organisational challenge. According to an Accenture report on high performance, non-profit organisations have a plentiful supply of data regarding the various stakeholders and this gives directors tremendous challenge. In so doing in terms of the traditional data management processes put in place in most non-profits organisations coupled with in-house technology constraints, make it even harder to provide services to both internal and external customers.

Camfed has overcome this hurdle by using IT to support operational transformation and realize lasting process efficiency—so they can direct more effort toward achieving their missions (Accenture, 2010). Salesforce.com CRM is one tool which has helped achieve this using the technology of “cloud computing” where the hardware costs are virtually removed from the organisations and all the technical components reside on the web. Salesforce is a CRM tool designed to support business-to-business organisation the world over. It uniquely organizes communication and information between businesses or clients over the internet.

One of the strategic uses of the Salesforce CRM is the way the organisation manages its knowledge derivation, donor interactions and contents development. It becomes so transparent to all internal staff needing to use it and a constant dialogue with all the external customers. It has been tailored to serve as the donation/management database. This powerful and effective tool helps to track all donors, volunteers and stakeholders within the database.

Salesforce is also used by Camfed to integrate external events through Camfed's social websites, including Facebook and Twitter to highlight news around their beneficiaries, an example is the recently concluded event on African leaders with President Obama at the White House where one of Camfed's own beneficiaries, Abigail, featured expressing her desire to see her people do well economically (news.camfed.org/uk, 2010).

5.3.2 Monitoring and evaluation systems

Camfed's monitoring and evaluation system (M&E) is a detailed database tracking system, it is used to monitor every beneficiary who receives support to attend school with details about personal histories as well as what has been received from Camfed. The database sits on Microsoft access which very much performs the job even though it can only contain so much in terms of data capacity as compared to other types of databases today. MS Access is also known for bugs. This bespoke database captures every client activity from all the various stakeholders. As much as monitoring and evaluation focuses on prudence to funds received the database greatly enhances potential internal processes and for the beneficiaries, it also helps to set the organisations strategic planning to motion in a well structured manner (Ellis, 2009).

The database also monitors training activities, details about local structures through which Camfed will deliver its work, and information about local advocacy work. The database was re-designed in 2008 to better respond to programme management requirements and facilitate greater in-country analysis of programme effectiveness, including the retention rates of girls in the bursary programme (Camfed Documents, 2010).

Camfed database captures all the processes involved and keeps track of events. The Monitoring and Evaluation system has been able to strengthen Camfed's Strategic planning and accountability required for the program. To this effect staff have been trained to consciously use the system and there is a constant expansion and a deepening understanding which brings out better use of reporting through the M&E system. The use Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) to effectively collect data has massively reduced cost and also improved confidence in users in rural areas. While the programme database has significantly improved the area of manual data collection in the field, delivery of this data back to the central database still has some issues in trying to meet the increasing demands of the organisation. In particular, Microsoft Access still has some minor bugs and its flexibility in meeting the new projects embarked upon by Camfed (LinkLaters Report, 2010).

5.3.3 Accounting database

Camfed ensures that all their transactions are as accountable and transparent as possible. The accounting system tracks the finances and resources as it moves from the donor to the girl. To this end Camfed has made several positive steps with their accounting systems to ensure in-depth reporting on their accounting processes both internally and externally. As defined by various political scientists it is the act of holding people accountable for the impact they can have on the lives of other people, it is therefore not restricted to public servants but to every sector including non-profits as well (Camfed Impact report, 2010).

As identified by Spiro (2001) NGO accountability is the guided distinction between internal and external practices that afford NGOs. Reporting filed formal information to national and international institutions required by regulatory agencies. On internal accountability, disclosure of detailed information on initiatives and activities to stakeholders is done simply by being accountable to those who have assigned you the tasks, while external accountability stems from external political decisions (Druke, 2007). Camfed's computerised accounting IT Systems have been shared across all countries of operation to gather, manage and pass accurate information using Internet and Networking technologies with no frivolity or complacency and with strict adherence to standards and codes of practice.

Camfed uses Citrix solutions, a cloud computing platform software to make their accounting accessible from every branch office helping to centralize the accounting database. This helps reduce cost and is done in a very secure manner to all Camfed staff irrespective of location. On each client computer Citrix XenApp is installed and this tool fetches the accounting database and allows users to work on them.

To augment the qualitative research carried out and to provide better insight, the use of ordinal variables in a sequential order ranging from low to high were employed (D’Cruz, 2004). Due to the nature of the number of users, a proportional distributional method has been used as well to find out the number of people that responded in particular ways to give us absolute frequencies. The relative percentage of getting the percentages of different respondents in relation to the total was used as seen below (D’Cruz, 2004).

Table 1 shows in percentages the various ways IT systems enhance transparency accountability and governance in the project.

IT Systems	Ease of use (%)	Access to Information (%)	Job enhancement (%)	Real time accurate - Information (%)
	100	80-20	80-20	90-10
Governance	Understanding (%)	Empowerment (%)	Influence of Government Policies (%)	Camfed’s Hierarchy approach and best practices (%)
	80-20	70-30	40-60	80-20
Transparency and Accountability	Feedback (%)	Tracking and Documentation (%)	Adequate Stakeholder capture (%)	
	80-20	90-10	90-10	

Table 1: Comparison of low rating to high rating

Table 1 was derived from the questionnaire and shows notably that most of the users found it easy to use and this implies user acceptance of technology. It further buttresses the fact that users are most likely not to sabotage an IT move when the systems are easy to use. With the principle of inclusion used by Camfed, it has helped all stakeholders irrespective of class or gender and there is a feeling of ownership, worth and contribution to society: The feeling that ‘I’ or ‘we’ count and matter.

70% of the users reported that they found it easy and simple to use. IT systems have further enhanced job performance through ease of use. From the findings 80% found that compared to other jobs they had done Camfed's systems aid job performance.. As access to information is a fore-runner to transparency and as Camfed has been known for transparency their IT systems has enhanced this in this respect.

90% of Camfed Zimbabwe users suggested that they do get real time access to information as well. With the infrastructure built to support on the 'go' access it makes access to information smooth and fast. Information needed for stakeholders in terms of reports and impact as needed can be reached instantly. This gives a good image to users and grant donations made. 10 percent of the users still felt that this was not so and implied that there is a need for improvement.

80% of the staff had a solid understanding of the Camfed governance model with regards to the role government policies can and do play on the governance model of Camfed, 20% felt they did not know or have the full details of Camfed's governance model and how government policies can affect them. Nearly all staff felt that Camfed has best practices and standard approach to governance and this would account for the success in the performance in the field of NGOs operating in Zimbabwe (Camfed report, 2010) as they operate a system that allows participation and collaboration with all stakeholders.

With respect to transparency and accountability, findings demonstrate that 80% felt that the rate of feedback from every department and other country offices was near perfect. They reported that transparency and accountability is guaranteed with the IT systems and also helps relay feedback to all stakeholders which is very critical to maintaining various trust levels with donors and the girl. The use of Salesforce to capture and give feedback to stakeholders' real time gives reliability and trust to donors and other stakeholders. This is further enriched with the strength the system gives with relation to tracking and documentation of information internally and externally. This helps ensure data integrity and thus leads to audit ability and tractability. The staff have also on a 90%-10% scale said that reporting is easily understood with the systems which is critical to any form of information as this aids readability and simplicity of information and data. The integration of the IT systems

in alignment with the organisational vision, mission and processes was buttressed with their responses as 90% agreed with its alignment and integration.

The capture of all stakeholders is critical to this business and the systems scored a 90% in its ability to capture stakeholders. Its inability in the extra 10% not agreeing to the system being able to capture all stakeholders can lead to a transparency issue. Training of staff on IT systems as it relates to their job description is done periodically to ensure that staffs are technically equipped to be efficient in their service delivery. The more equipped they are the less frustrated they would be.

These findings appear to demonstrate that it may be possible for IT systems to help enhance transparency, governance and accountability but, it needs proper management and participation from all stakeholders to achieve this. A reliance on the IT systems alone would not solve the problems of transparency, accountability and good governance.

5.3.4 High-level integration of all three systems

Camfed's systems are built to work closely and to be coherent in terms of interaction. To achieve the full potency of information power the level of information sharing between the geographically spaced offices needs to develop speed and a prompt sharing mechanism that is secure as well.

In every industry, new technologies can either be disruptive or constructive, changing very fast thus making it difficult for an organisation to keep up. In Camfed's position an integration of the three systems would pave the way for increased usability and functionality of all the three databases. Those that keep up are recognized as the pace setters often showing others the way (NCVO, 2009). (Boettcher, 2008) describes that there are two vital levels of a secure system design: the policy level and the resource sharing level. At the policy level the virtual system is decomposed so as to identify the possible backdoors to security loops and also trusted components of the system. The resource sharing level considers how the implementation of components and how they are further allocated to physical devices. This would also help Camfed have live data on the go as highlighted earlier in this study

Virtualization has become the technology employed by various organisations at the moment. It promises to make applications more portable with a projected increase in flexibility and efficiency in offsite and onsite support infrastructures (Creeger, 2010). As Camfed moves towards the virtualization era in binding most of its infrastructural services to physical services there is no longer a reason for the presence or the utility of a service function to be physically bound to a device and its relationship to a specific workload (Crosby, 2010 in Creeger, 2010). With much of Camfed's work moving around an integration of the systems to bind in one platform for ease and speed of access is almost un-avoidable.

With networking technologies now needing to up their innovation against the backdrop of users equalling devices and ports, the new paradigm of virtualisation has arrived. Nease (2010 in Creeger, 2010) has a different proponent to this saying that you can never remove the physical presence of hardware networking devices as the further away you are from your bandwidth point the consumption becomes diminished and latency reduces the shorter you get to your focal point. Casado says that it is either companies invest in this technology now or wait a little longer, if one of these steps is not taken then they would most likely be left behind. It is essential that Camfed takes into consideration these innovations (2010, in Creeger, 2010).

Camfed needs to get a holistic view of all the functions and map them together so as to create smoother functionality and faster response times to issues with the view of integrating all three databases mentioned earlier (donor, monitoring and evaluation, accounting) seamlessly to help improve the already existing processes. Other areas of improvement would be in terms of IT auditing and accounting, the emphasis on how to be accountable should be made through the systems present. It is crucial that organisations ensure that they adequately manage costs and utilization of all IT resources. This would be useful in resource use, allocation and management. Tools such as the AIX can be used for this process. It is important to be able to audit the IT systems as well so as to record security issues that could possibly arise and prevent them. It is pertinent to note the concept behind auditing as it relates to this study, which is to principally find any occurrence on systems and information and be able to audit trail and generate reports to aid transparency (Lascu *et al.*, 2004).

6. Conclusions

This research has attempted to demonstrate that IT systems can greatly enhance and impact upon organisational transparency by drawing on the proponents of IT systems as being “transformative technology”. There is vast potential to increase both transparency and good governance; by using digital governance which could lead to a direct interaction with all stakeholders.

In this case study it was not the IT systems alone that did the magic, as it needed to include all the elements discussed above. Good governance must be developed in context with the situation, following proper practices and allowing full participation from all stakeholders. Human participation is an immense enabler to securing appropriate governance models.

As much as IT systems have been described as transformative, human elements can hamper such progressive moves. Proper systems of transparency with good organisational culture, good ethical codes of practices and an appreciation for trust sets the scene for transparency to be a watchdog. Leveraging on technology needs senior management support, understanding and direction.

The case study Camfed, has been instrumental in opening this debate as the findings congruently indicate that governance, transparency and accountability can be IT driven, creating a process of dynamic dialogue between the organisations and the external environment (Vaccaro, 2009). Much more work needs to be done in this field of study to show how far this can go in terms of IT systems being an enabler to having true transparency with particular regards to its ability to metamorphose with its powers, any organisations or governance system. Until management teams adopt a genuinely standard ethical code of practice within the governance, transparent and accountable systems, the embracement of these practices by people and those working with the IT systems, all the efforts to facilitate enhancement through the use of IT will be totally fruitless or at the least productivity will be close to poor. In order to encourage the use of IT systems as enhancers to transparency, management and users must be able to forego old traditional governance methods and fully embrace the digital era or paradigm but recognizing the essentially standards of practice.

In terms of initiatives that can encourage user participation and trust using IT systems like Camfed has done with the deployment of technology and data collection using the various human elements. In this way user involvement becomes innate and the whole system becomes everyone's system and not just management's. User involvement would mean user training as well. The need to be properly trained to understand the entire processes and operations is one which cannot be over emphasized. Users should be able to access accurate information. To access these, the necessary infrastructure needs to be the best but also user friendly and affordable. Furthermore, opportunities to engage users and all stakeholders should be encouraged by appropriate IT enabled systems examples are: interactive websites, blogs and the likes. Camfed has been able to use social networking sites, Salesforce to engage donors and clients.

A focus on IT Systems as being able to transform organisations and how people treat transparency, governance and accountability alone has been shown to be insufficient within this study. Using IT alone as the sole path to implementation of the issues discussed raises a digital divide scenario, a term that connotes the gap between those that have access to Internet based tools and accessibility or those who are incapacitated with use of ICT become disconnected to information (Vaccaro and Madsen, 2009) Any attempt to rely solely on IT systems to check these issues would only leave the system in jeopardy.

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