



The Southern and Eastern African Regional Centre for Women's Law (SEARCWL) also known as Women's Law Centre at the University of Zimbabwe Faculty of law, in partnership with OXFAM Canada is one of the 15 institutions and organizations from around the world that was successful in its application for funding from the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to carry out research on the theme: Safe and Inclusive Cities: Reducing Urban violence, Poverty and Inequalities . This research ran from April 2013 and will conclude in March 2016.

The Zimbabwean study focused on law and policy based research drawing on lived realities in three main cities namely Harare (Mbare and Hatcliffe); Bulawayo (Makokoba and Nketa); and Kadoma (Rimuka and Ngezi). A field study was carried out and data was collected between 2013 and 2015.

As proponents of women's law, a legal research methodology that seeks to map women's and girls' (collectively females) lived experiences against the masculinities of law and/or its purported sex and gender neutrality, we immediately honed in on devising a research project that would allow us to examine whether there was direct or indirect discrimination against black females in relation to their inclusion in cities and their exercise of rights as urban citizens.

The aim of the study was to understand the causes and impacts of urban violence and inequality on women in Zimbabwe. The broader research explored how current laws and policies are being applied in practice and whether historic causes of exclusion continue to shape government policy. The research in Zimbabwe was primarily directed at understanding laws and policies that impact on the provision of urban housing and services [\[1\]](#) and the effect

of these laws on the lives of women and girls. Among the primary questions the research sought to address is the manner in which the state by non-implementation of some laws and selective and discriminatory application of other laws has failed to effectively address issues of urban housing especially for those who are reliant on the provision of accessible, convenient and affordable housing by state and municipal authorities.

In Harare the suburbs [2] selected were Mbare, the oldest 'black suburb', and Hatcliffe a post 1980 suburb. In both Bulawayo and Kadoma similar historical considerations influenced the choice of suburbs. The oldest 'black' citizens' suburb in Bulawayo Makokoba and Nketa a newer suburb were chosen. In Kadoma the oldest suburb Rimuka was identified as was a relatively new suburb of Ngezi. Both Nketa and Ngezi, in Bulawayo and Kadoma respectively, have both older and newer sections and reflect different policy regimes ranging from state provision of housing, employer financed and tied housing, self-financing, self builds and cooperative housing schemes. These suburbs reflect the various initiatives taken over the years to provide accommodation in cities for lower income groupings.

The research placed strong emphasis on bringing on board major players such as relevant policy makers, Ministries and implementing institutions, CBOs and NGOs as well as Communities themselves with the aim of creating a strong foundation for lasting solutions.

The research commenced with scoping or pilot studies of each city of Harare, Bulawayo and Kadoma in 2013. This was followed by feedback seminars in each city. This phase was followed by a Gap Filling exercise, Community Engagement and a Survey to validate the findings. The study is presently at the Information Dissemination stage.

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[1] Services are examined separately ...

[2] The term suburb will be used to describe the areas of study although historically they were known as 'native locations', then native townships, then black townships and

post-Independence as high density suburbs.