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ELECTIONS AND \$MONEY: PERSPECTIVES FROM MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT IN ZAMBIA

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Elections and Money: Perspectives from Members of Parliament in Zambia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This cost of elections study sought to estimate the cost of winning the 2021 election as a Member of Parliament in Zambia, as well as to identify the cost drivers and collect perspectives of members of parliament on electoral reforms in Zambia. We used a carefully designed questionnaire: broken down into four different components, namely, pre-adoption; adoption and nomination; campaign; and post-election and interviewed 80 members of parliament (MPs) out of the 156 elected members.

Unlike other studies, we did not include cost information on candidates who lost the parliamentary elections in 2021, as this allowed for the collection of uniform information at all stages, including pre and post-election spending. However, we held three focus group discussions in Kitwe, Choma and Lusaka to gather additional qualitative information from a target of 120 unsuccessful candidates, former members of parliament and political party officials, in order to provide more context to the quantitative results.

We estimated the average cost of winning the 2021 election as a member of parliament, at K3.8 million (or USD 192,266.3), as the sum of the average cost at all the four stages of expenditure, and that the 80 MPs spent about K307.92 million (about USD 15.4 million) to win the 2021 elections. The majority of the cost that the candidates incurred was during the pre-adoption stage, accounting for over 55% of the total average expenditure during the 2021 elections. The second highest expenditure was during the post-election stage, even though this survey only considered the first 18 months after the election.

Though the campaign period accounted for the highest weighted expenditure per month, it accounted for only 18.4% of the total average, while the expenditure at adoption stage accounted for only 4.5% of the total average expenditure.

Overall, we established that male winning candidates spent more during the 2021 election as compared to female winning candidates, and that middle-aged (36-55 years) elected candidates spent more across all the stages, while younger candidates spent more during the campaign period and post-election. Further, we found that elected candidates with disability spent more to win the 2021 elections, while elected candidates with higher income also spent more as compared to winning candidates with less income. The study also established that elected candidates from the United Party for National Development (UPND) spent more as compared to winning candidates from the Patriotic Front (PF) and independent candidates due to higher contributions to presidential campaigns during adoption stage, and higher pre-adoption expenditure due to longer nurturing periods.

In order to identify the main sources of electoral expenditure, we asked the winning candidates to select their top sources of financing during the four stages. The results indicated that the top two sources of funding for elections were salary and savings, and income from business. The share of salary and savings increased from the pre-adoption stage to the post-election stage, while the share of business, as a source of financing, reduced from pre-adoption and nomination to the post-election stage.

Overall, salary and savings, and income from business activities account for nearly 81.14% of the total financing for winning the 2021 election as a member of parliament.

On political party and campaign financing reforms, an overwhelming majority of MPs, about 97.5%, indicated they would support regulation and reform on campaign financing in Zambia. However, more than half of MPs believed that there should be no limits on campaign spending though 56.96% believed that there is need for political parties and candidates to disclose all their sources of funding for elections.

On stemming the increasing tide of demand-driven cost of elections, an overwhelming majority of MPs, about 96.25%, agreed with the statement that voters and citizens should be educated in order to reduce the financial burden placed on candidates, with 81.35% strongly agreeing with the statement. Further, the sampled MPs also agreed, overwhelmingly, with the statement that political parties should fund and support marginalized or vulnerable persons who are unable to fund their campaigns, including viable female candidates (87.50%); viable candidates who are persons with disabilities (88.10%); and viable youth candidates (82.27%).

In light of these findings, Transparency International Zambia (TI-Z) calls on the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) to enhance their oversight and sanctioning of candidates for illicit expenditures such as cash handouts.

Political parties should embrace greater transparency in order to address the corruption risks at the adoption stage, during which the political parties select and adopt the candidates to stand for election. Further, TI-Zambia calls on the National Assembly of Zambia, the Electoral Commission of Zambia, and governance-focused CSOs to conduct countrywide campaigns to sensitize the electorate on the law-making roles of members of parliament.

The government should also make progress in the legislative reform on political party financing and campaign spending in Zambia, as there is urgent need to enact a law to regulate campaign and political party financing, as provided for by Article 60 (4) of the Zambian Constitution.

1 - BACKGROUND

1.1 MONEY AND POLITICS

Political contests cost a lot of money and, therefore, the ability to fundraise determines how effectively a party can compete in an election.¹ Indeed, there is evidence of an established relationship between campaign spending and a candidate's performance in an election. Although the candidate who spends the most money does not always win an election,² it is true that candidates with scarce funds often find themselves at a disadvantage.³

Given this situation, political parties across the globe have been using various methods to raise funds for both their operations and elections. Donations are a legitimate source of funding for political parties and campaigns, but often come with strings attached, as the bankrolling of political battles can open the way for big donors to wield undue influence over policy agendas. This risk is at its height when a few private donors contribute large sums of money, protected by opacity.⁴

The lack of transparency in political party funding also poses a high risk for the abuse of public⁵ funds. In escalated cases of abuse of public funds, such a situation of "state capture," private donors could potentially gain access to state funds as a means of recouping their investments in funding political parties.⁶ Further, grand corruption within the ruling parties may become a means of dominating elections.⁷ In the Zambian context, there have been allegations of ruling parties abusing state resources such as vehicles and thereby benefiting from an uneven playing field.

This discriminatory spending also extends to individual candidates. For example, youth and women candidates have continued to face serious financial, societal, and cultural challenges when participating in elections across Africa.⁹ In Ghana, male candidates outspent female candidates in an environment where the ability to spend the most money is a critical factor in successfully winning a seat in elected office.¹⁰ Similarly, in Kenya, the more a candidate spends, the greater their chance of electoral victory. Women candidates who win their race spend

Footnotes:

1. International IDEA (2024). Election costs: Informing the narrative. Available at <https://www.idea.int/news-media/news/election-costs-informing-narrative>
2. Frimpong, J. O. (2018). Oiling the wheels of multi-party politics in Africa: How power alternation affects party financing in Ghana. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. 55(5), 666-682
3. Cheeseman, N., Lynch, G., & Willis, J. (2021). *The moral economy of elections in Africa: democracy, voting and virtue*. Cambridge University Press.
4. Transparency International (2024). Political corruption in Europe: A threat to more than public funds. Available at <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/political-corruption-in-europe-threat-to-public-funds-integrity-watch>
5. Bruno, S., & Alessandra, F. (2024). Milking the System: Fighting the Abuse of Public Resources for Re-election. Available at <https://www.u4.no/publications/milking-the-system-fighting-the-abuse-of-public-resources-for-re-election.pdf>
6. BBC News (23 June 2022). South Africa's Zondo commission: Damning report exposes rampant corruption. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-61912737>
7. Blechinger, V. (2002). Corruption and Political Parties. Available at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACT879.pdf
8. News Diggers (6 June 2022). 9 Out of 39 Vehicles Purchase by WCFBC are Suspected to have been used for Campaigns-DEC. Available at <https://diggers.news/local/2022/06/06/9-of-39-vehicles-purchased-by-wcfbc-are-suspected-to-have-been-used-for-campaigns-dec/>
9. The Carter Center (2024). Youth And Women's Consultations On Political Participation In Kenya: Findings And Recommendations. Available at https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/democracy/kenya-youth-and-women-political-participation-report.pdf
10. Westminster Foundation for Democracy (2022). Cost of Politics in Ghana. Available at https://www.wfd.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Cost_Of_Politics_Ghana.pdf

almost three times as much as those who are unsuccessful.¹¹ Further, youthful candidates (18–34 years) did not have great success in 2017. Out of 3,428 who contested, less than 10% won the election.¹²

1.2 LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Although not yet actualized, Article 60 (4) of the Constitution of Zambia, (Amendment) Act No. 2 of 2016,¹³ provides for the establishment and management of a Political Parties' Fund. The Article also provides for the submission of audited accounts in order to foster accountability, the declaration of sources of funding as well as the regulation of the maximum amount of expenditure for campaigns and elections. In order to actualize these provisions, Zambia developed the Political Parties Bill (2017)¹⁴ and presented it to parliament. However, the Zambian Parliament is yet to enact the bill into law due to some contentious issues or limited stakeholder consensus.

In Zambia, the legal framework that governs elections includes the provisions in the

Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No.2 of 2016;¹³ the Electoral Process Act No. 35 of 2016¹⁵, which also contains the Electoral Code of Conduct; the Electoral Commission of Zambia Amendment Act No. 5 of 2019¹⁶; and the Referendum (Amendment) Act No. 5 of 2015¹⁷. The management of elections is also guided by a number of regulations; including, the Electoral Process General Regulations (Part 1¹⁸ and Part 2¹⁹), and the Electoral process Registration of Voters.²⁰

As an independent and autonomous Electoral Management Body (EMB), the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) is responsible for organizing and conducting elections in Zambia. Under Article 229 (2) of the Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 2 of 2016¹³, the Commission has the mandate to implement the electoral process, conduct elections and referenda, register voters, settle minor electoral disputes, regulate the conduct of voters and candidates, accredit observers and election agents, and delimit electoral boundaries.²¹ The ECZ therefore has no legal mandate to regulate political party funding and campaign spending in Zambia.

11. Kanyinga, K., & Mboya, T. (2021). The Cost of Politics in Kenya. Available at https://nimd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/WFD_NIMD_2021_The-cost-of-politics-in-Kenya-1.pdf

12. Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (2017). Data Report of 2017 Elections. Available at <https://www.iebc.or.ke/uploads/resources/siEABKREDq.pdf>

13. Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No 1 of 2016. Available at <https://www.parliament.gov.zm/node/4831>

14. Political Parties Bill, 2017. Available at <https://www.parliament.gov.zm/node/6470>

15. The Electoral Process Act No. 35 of 2016. Available at <https://www.parliament.gov.zm/node/5232>

16. The Electoral Commission of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 5 of 2019. Available at <https://www.parliament.gov.zm/node/7945>

17. The Referendum (Amendment) Act No. 5 of 2015. Available at <https://www.elections.org.zm/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/zam2015ReferendumActAmend.pdf>

18. Electoral Process General Regulations (Part 1). Available at <https://www.elections.org.zm/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/EPA-general-regulations-1.pdf>

19. Electoral Process General Regulations (Part 2) <https://www.elections.org.zm/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/EPA-general-regulations-2.pdf>

20. Electoral process Registration of Voters. Available at <https://www.elections.org.zm/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2020-Voter-Registration-Regulations.pdf>

21. Electoral Commission of Zambia (2024). About. Available at <https://www.elections.org.zm/about-ecz/>

Since its establishment, the ECZ has delivered six (6) General Elections, two (2) Presidential Elections and several National Assembly and Local Government by-elections.²² The 2021 general elections was highly contested, with 16 presidential candidates, including one woman.²³ The elections also saw 21 political parties as well as independent candidates compete in the parliamentary elections.²⁴ During the 2021 elections, the opposition UPND candidate, Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, defeated the incumbent President Mr. Edgar Lungu.²⁵ At parliamentary level, the UPND garnered 86 seats while the Patriot Front (PF) won 56 seats out of the 156 seats. Further, the independent candidates won 13 seats while the newly formed Party National Unity and Progressive (PNUP) won one seat.²⁶

The 2021 General Election environment was characterised by pockets of violence and electoral malpractices coupled with the use of COVID-19 restrictions to disadvantage opposition candidates.²⁷ During the campaign period, TI-Z monitored 85 electoral events across the country, and identified 44 electoral incidents of abusive language; violence and bribery perpetrated by various political players.²⁸ Concerning the cost of

running for elections, TI-Z established that six (6) sampled presidential candidates spent about K10.366 million (or USD 513,168) in June 2021 on billboard advertising alone.²⁹ There was a wide variation in expenditure on advertising with the PF presidential candidate spending at least K6.05 million (or USD 299,505), followed by the Socialist Party presidential candidate spending at least K2.26 million (or USD 111,881) and the UPND spending about K1.31 million (or USD 64,851).²⁹

2 - OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the study was to estimate the cost of politics in Zambia. The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To determine how much it costs to win for an election as a Member of Parliament in Zambia.
- To identify the cost drivers and to collect perspectives from members of parliament on elections reforms in Zambia.

22. Electoral Commission of Zambia (2024). General Elections. Available at https://www.elections.org.zm/?page_id=4293

23. Electoral Commission of Zambia (2021). 2021 Presidential Election Results. Available at <https://www.elections.org.zm/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2021-PresidentialResultsPerConst.pdf>

24. Electoral Commission of Zambia (2021). 2021 National Assembly Election Results. Available at <https://www.elections.org.zm/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2021-ParliamentaryResults.pdf>

25. The European Union (2021). European Union Election Observation Mission Zambia 2021 Final Report. Available at https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eom-zambia-2021/eu-eom-zambia-2021-final-report_en

26. National Assembly of Zambia (2021). Members of Parliament by Party. Available at <https://www.parliament.gov.zm/members/party>

27. The Carter Center (2021). Zambia Final Elections Report 2021. Available at https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/zambia-final-report-2021.pdf

28. Transparency International Zambia (2021). Tenth 2021 Elections Project Update. Available at <https://elections.tizambia.org.zm/tenth-2021-elections-project-update/>

29. Transparency International Zambia (2021). Ninth 2021 Elections Projects Update. Available at <https://elections.tizambia.org.zm/ninth-2021-elections-project-update/>

3 - METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

3.1 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

This study on the cost of winning the 2021 elections as a member of parliament in Zambia collected quantitative data through face-to-face interviews with elected members of parliament (MPs). We used a carefully designed questionnaire broken down into four (4) different components, namely, pre-adoption; adoption and nomination; campaign; and post-election. Following stratification by gender, geographical location and political party, we interviewed 80 MPs out of the 156 elected members, or 51.2% of the population. This sample achieved a margin of error of about $\pm 8\%$ at a 95% confidence level, lower than that of studies conducted in Kenya,¹¹ which sampled 38 MPs out of 337 elected members or 11.3% of the population. It is also lower than a recent study in Zambia³⁰, which sampled 206 candidates out of the 682 candidates in the population, representing a sample of 30.2% of the population.

Unlike other studies, this study did not include cost information on candidates who lost the parliamentary elections. The exclusion of unsuccessful candidates allowed for the collection of uniform information at all the four (4) different stages, including pre and post-election spending. We also broke down the cost drivers into licit and illicit spending, with illicit spending also including illegal spending as outlined by the Electoral

Process Act No. 35 of 2016.¹⁵ In addition, we incorporated the views of the unsuccessful candidates into the study during the validation meeting, as we held three (3) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in Kitwe, Choma and Lusaka to gather additional qualitative information from a target of 120 unsuccessful candidates, former members of parliament and political party officials. Considering that the cost information from the 80 MPs was self-reported, the FGDs served as a way of correcting possible intentional or unintentional misreporting and providing deeper context for the quantitative information.

Despite this limitation, it is notable that self-reported data have become the global standard for estimating campaign funding in lieu of other forms of data.³⁰

3.2 DATA ANALYSIS

In analysing the data, we entered the cost information into Stata17, and generated appropriate summary tables and figures; indicating the average spending by demographic and socio-economic characteristics. Based on the average spending, we also attempt to project the total expenditure by all the 156 members of parliament during the 2021 general elections. In this report, we convert the Zambian Kwacha amounts to US Dollar (USD) for ease of comparison using the rate of K20.02 per USD- the World Bank official exchange rate (LCU per US\$, period average) for the year 2021.³¹

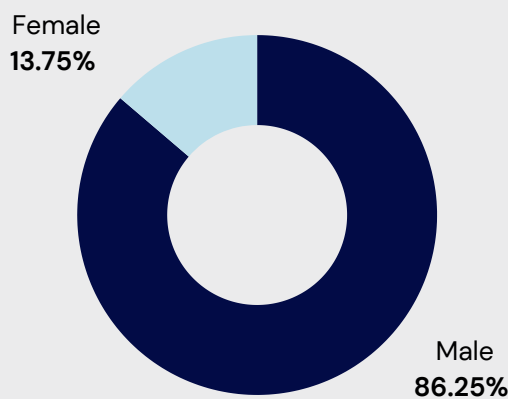
30. Wahman, M. (2023). The Cost of Politics in Zambia. Available at https://www.wfd.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/cop_zambia_-_230323.pdf

31. The World Bank (2021) World Bank Indicators. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/PA.NUS.FCRF?locations=ZM>

3.3 SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Gender: The majority of the sample candidates were male, accounting for 86.25% of the 80 MPs interviewed. However, since the Zambian Parliament currently has only 21 female elected members, the inclusion of 11 females in the sample represented over 52.38% of the female population, as compared to the 69 males, representing 47.59% of the male population. There is global and regional evidence of slow progress in female representation in parliaments across the world. At the beginning of 2024, the share of women in parliaments across sub-Saharan Africa was 27.3%, a mere 0.8-percentage-point increase relative to 12 months previously and the third highest among all regions in the world.³²

Figure 1: Distribution of Sample of Elected MPs by Gender



Age: The majority of the members of parliament in the sample were aged 36–55 years. This age group accounted for 76.25% of the sample, while 20.0% of the sampled MPs were aged above 55 and only three MPs were aged less than 35. This is consistent with a study conducted in Zambia,³⁰ which found that a majority of the candidates were in their 40s or 50s and that just 10.3% of candidates were over the age of 60, whilst only 11.8% were under 30. Further, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) estimates that only about 17.4% of the parliamentarians in Zambia are under 40; compared to 25.0% in Rwanda and 24.3% in Uganda.³³

Considering that Zambia has a youthful population, with young people accounting for more than one-third of the population,³⁴ there is a significant political underrepresentation of young people among elected members of parliament. This underrepresentation is due to perceptions such as a “lack of experience” and the age limit for holding elected office in most African Countries.³⁵ Further, young people face many socioeconomic challenges such as access to education, lack of skills to access to decent job opportunities, and unemployment.³⁴ This limited access to economic opportunity is therefore a barrier for young people wishing to run for elected office, given the high cost of politics.

32. United Nations Africa Renewal (2024). Women in parliament: Slow progress towards equal representation. Available at <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/march-2024/women-parliament-slow-progress-towards-equal-representation>

33. Inter-Parliamentary Union (2023). Data on age: By country. Available at https://data.ipu.org/age-brackets/?region=sub_saharan_africa&structure=&date_month=4&date_year=2023

34. UNESCO (16 December 2022). UNESCO supports development of national youth policy for Zambia. Available at <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-supports-development-national-youth-policy-zambia#:~:text=Youth%20account%20for%20more%20than,decent%20job%20opportunities%2C%20and%20unemployment>.

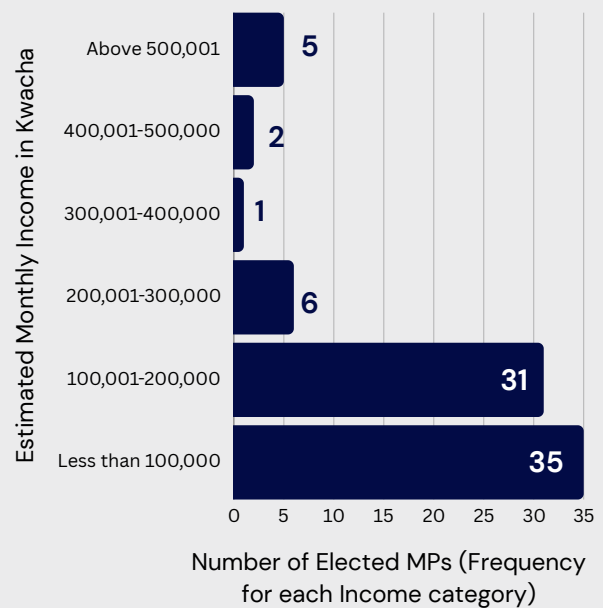
35. Inter-Parliamentary Union (20 September 2017). Young parliamentarians want to boost youth participation in Africa. Available at <https://www.ipu.org/news/news-in-brief/2017-09/young-parliamentarians-want-boost-youth-participation-in-africa>

Disability: The majority of the elected members of parliament had no disability. Only four of the sampled 80 MPs reported that they had a disability and thus accounting for 5.0% of the sample. Among the adults population (18 year and above), the prevalence of disability was estimated at 10.9% in 2015, and found to be higher in urban areas as compared to rural areas, and higher among females as compared to males.³⁶ Though poverty and other vulnerabilities are widespread across demographics and socioeconomic status, the majority of Zambians with disabilities live in poverty and generally have low literacy levels compared to persons without disabilities.³⁷ All these factors compound to limit the participation of persons with disability in running for election.

Income level: The majority of the sampled elected members of parliament had monthly income less than K200, 001 (or under USD10, 000), with a cross analysis of the data revealing that three out of the four MPs with disability had monthly income levels in the lowest category of less than K100, 000 (or under USD5, 000). The basic salary for a member of parliament in Zambia was K19, 708 (or under USD 1,000) per month in 2022, excluding allowances.³⁸ This distribution of income therefore suggests that MPs have significant allowances, as well as other sources of income over and above their parliament monthly salary. For instance, the budget allocation to personal emoluments for

members of parliament in 2024 was increased by about K546 million to cover the payment of mid-term gratuity.³⁹ This means that each member of parliament is paid about K3 million (or USD 164, 000) as mid-term gratuity.

Figure 2: Distribution of Monthly Income for Elected MPs



Education: The majority of the sampled elected MPs, about 63.7%, had bachelor's degrees while another 31.2% of the sampled MPs had educational diplomas as their highest educational attainment. A deeper analysis of the members of parliament with bachelor's degrees and post-graduate degrees reveals that the majority (about 70.9%) were first-time members of parliament while 21.8% were second-time members of parliament and only 7.3% were

36. UNICEF (2015). Zambia National Disability survey, 2015. Available at <https://www.unicef.org/zambia/reports/zambia-national-disability-survey-2015>

37. International Labour Organization (2013). Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Zambia.

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_emp/%40ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_115100.pdf

38. Inter-Parliamentary Union (2022). Zambia National Assembly. Available at <https://data.ipu.org/parliament/ZM/ZM-LC01/parliamentary-mandate/parliamentary-mandate/>

39. Ministry of Finance (2024). 2024 National Budget OBB: Yellow Book. Available at https://www.mofnp.gov.zm/?page_id=4096#

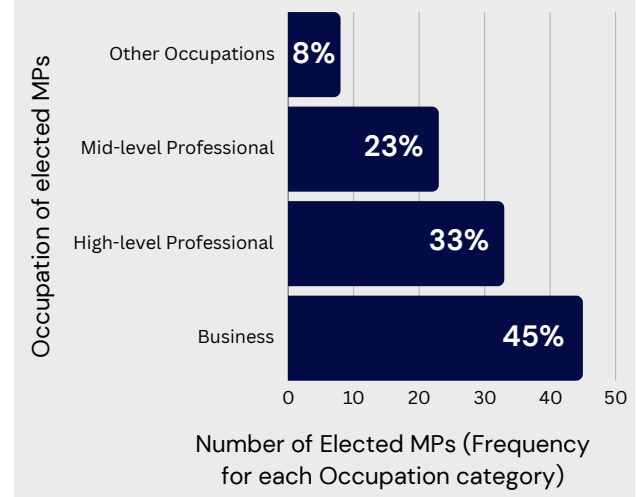
third-time members of parliament. This indicates that education attainment has been on the rise among members of parliament over the past decade. Further, among the elected candidates with highest education attainment of bachelor’s and post-graduate degrees, 83.6% were males and only 16.4% were female, indicating that educational attainment was lower among female members of parliament.

Stakeholders agreed that MPs are now more educated than previously thought, with the majority having tertiary education. There was, however, disagreement between the political party officials, concerning the Grade 12 Certificate requirement to run for electoral office. Some believed that this was a hindrance or an obstacle for candidates while others believed that this was necessary considering the work that elected officials perform. Some participant noted that uneducated MPs with limited education would not be able to comprehend the legislative process or effectively debate the national budget.⁴⁰

Occupation: The survey also found that the majority of the sampled members of parliament were business professionals and high-level professionals before joining politics. We found that about 45% of the sampled elected MPs were involved in business, while 33% were from high-level professions such as accountants, lawyers, engineers and doctors. This is consistent with other studies in Zambia,³⁰ which found that “apart from being a business owner, the most common profession was an upper-level

professional, such as a banker, doctor, lawyer, engineer, professor, or senior-level civil servant. The third most common category was mid-level professionals, such as teachers, nurses, and mid-level civil servants.”

Figure 3: Elected MPs Occupation before Joining Politics



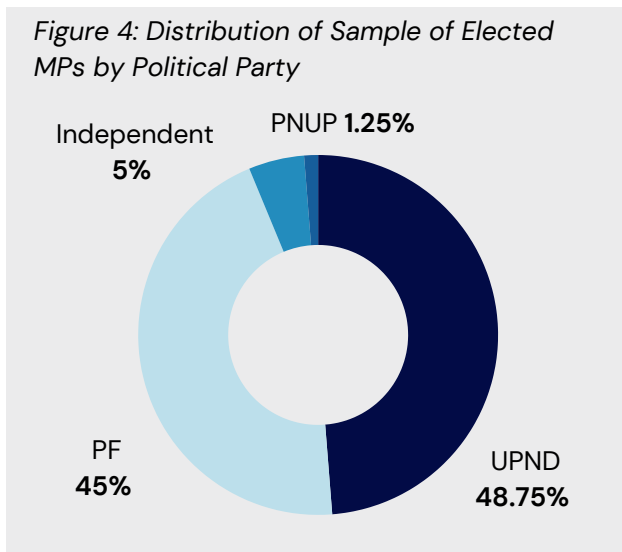
Political Party: The majority of the sampled elected MPs were from the United Party for National Development (UPND), accounting for 47.8% of the sample, and the Patriotic Front (PF), accounting for 45.0% of the sample. The sample therefore included 45% of the 85 UPND MPs and 62% of the 58 PF MPs. Further, we included the sole PNUP elected MP, as well as 30.1% of the 13 Independent MPs.²⁶ We did not attempt to balance the sample with respect to political party, as well as geographical coverage as we sought to reflect the characteristics of the population. Since 55% of the Zambian population is in rural areas,⁴¹ we sampled 73.8% of the elected MPs from rural constituencies, while the remaining 26.2% were from urban areas.

40. Validation Meeting-Lusaka

41. Zambia Statistical Agency (2022). Zambia 2022 Census of Population and Housing: Population Summary Report. Available at <https://www.zamstats.gov.zm/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2022-Census-of-Population-and-Housing-Summary-Report-Part-2.pdf>

constituencies.

Figure 4: Distribution of Sample of Elected MPs by Political Party

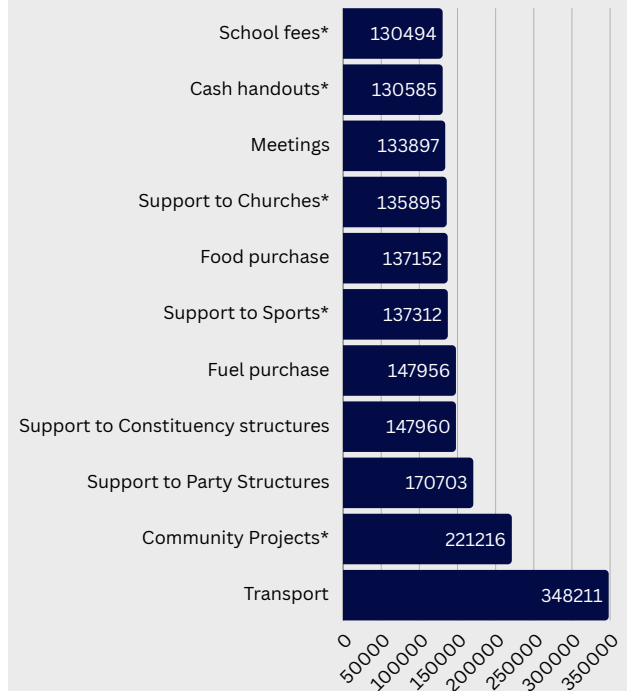


4 - FINDINGS - COST OF WINNING ELECTIONS

4.1 COSTS AT PRE-ADOPTION STAGE

Unlike other cost of politics studies¹¹ that postulate that spending during elections starts at party nomination or primaries, we included pre-adoption as the initial stage. We defined pre-adoption as the time spent “nurturing” the constituency before seeking adoption in the political party to run for election. We established that 95% of the elected MPs spent an average period of 39 months to nurture their constituencies. We also defined electoral activities during nurturing as any activity meant to make a potential candidate popular in the constituency before seeking adoption from the political party. The average cost expenditure, within the 39-month period, at pre-adoption stage, was K2.1 million (USD 106,235) per candidate. **Figure 5** presents the breakdown of this average expenditure by cost drivers.

Figure 5: Top Cost Drivers during the Pre-Adoption Stage (in Kwacha)



Note: Cost drivers marked * are illicit or illegal.

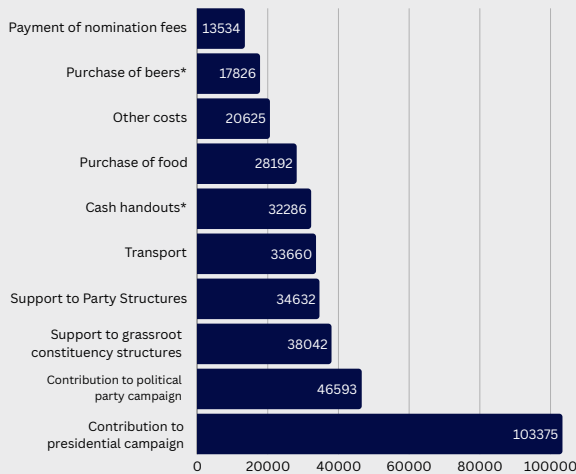
The top seven cost drivers at the pre-adoption stage included transportation; support to community projects, payments to party officials, payments to constituency structures, fuel, support to community sports activities and purchase of food. These seven cost drivers were comparable to 61.6% of the overall average expenditure at this stage. It is also notable that four of the top ten expenditures at this stage were illicit.

4.2 COSTS AT ADOPTION AND NOMINATION STAGE

We defined this stage as the period when a candidate seeks adoption from the political party up to the time of nomination by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ). The questions at adoption did not apply to the four Independent MPs in the sample. Out of the 76 MPs who stood on political party tickets, 96.1% noted that popularity was a key

determining factor in their adoption, while 80.2% added that they needed to demonstrate that they had the financial capacity to run for election. We estimated the average cost expenditure at the adoption and nomination state at K172, 910.4 (or USD 8,636.9) during a period of 1 month. **Figure 6** presents the breakdown of this expenditure by cost drivers.

Figure 6: Top Cost Drivers during the Adoption/Nomination Stage (in Kwacha)



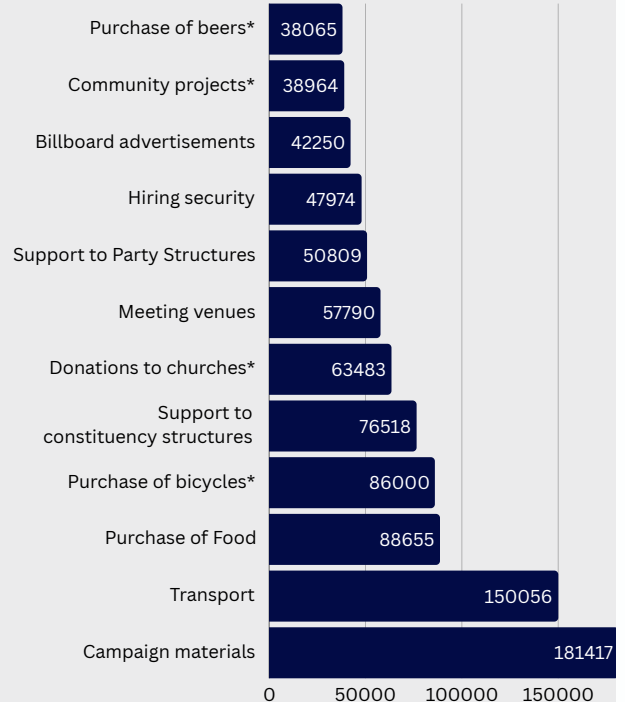
Note: Cost drivers marked * are illicit or illegal.

The top seven cost drivers at the adoption and nomination stage included contributions to the presidential campaigns and contributions to political party campaigns. Others were support to grassroots constituency and party structures, transport, cash handouts and purchase of food. The top two costs drivers were comparable to 86.7% of the overall average expenditure at this stage. We also noted that two out of the top ten cost drivers at this stage were illicit.

4.3 COSTS AT CAMPAIGN STAGE

We defined the campaign period as the period following the candidate's nomination by the Electoral Commission of Zambia, during which, he/she campaigned for election as Member of Parliament. All the sampled candidates incurred costs during the campaign period, and we estimated the cost of elections at this stage at K708, 578.3 (or USD 35,393) during an average period of three months. **Figure 7** presents the breakdown of this expenditure by cost drivers.

Figure 7: Top Cost Drivers during the Campaign Stage (in Kwacha)



Note: Cost drivers marked * are illicit or illegal.

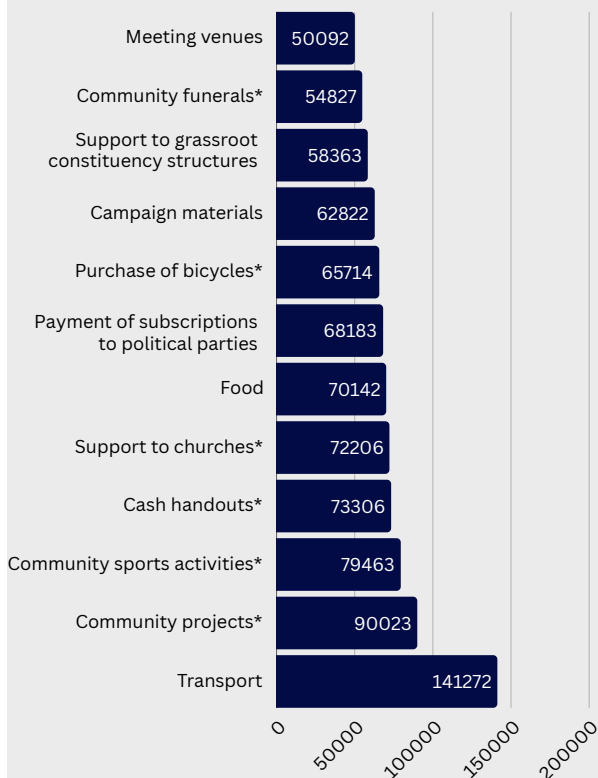
The top seven cost drivers at the campaign stage included purchase of campaign materials, transportation, purchase of food for campaign teams, purchase of bicycles, support to community structures, donations

to churches and payment for meeting venues. These seven cost drivers were comparable to 99.3% of the overall average expenditure at this stage, and two of the top ten cost drivers were illicit.

4.4 COSTS AT POST-ELECTION STAGE

We defined the post-election stage as the period after the election as Member of Parliament, during which the MP is in office for five years. Activities at this stage included the spending of personal resources on community needs during visits to the constituency and financial contributions to political parties. We estimated the cost of elections at this stage at K840,858 (USD 42,001) during an average period of 18 months after the 2021 general elections. **Figure 8** presents the breakdown of this expenditure by cost drivers.

Figure 8: Top Cost Drivers during the Post-Election Stage (in Kwacha)



Note: Cost drivers marked * are illicit or illegal.

The top seven cost drivers at the campaign stage included transport for visiting the constituency, support to community projects, and sports activities, cash handouts, support to churches, purchase of food and payment of subscriptions to political parties. These seven cost drivers were comparable to over 70.7% of the overall average expenditure at this stage, and five of the top ten cost drivers were illicit.

4.5 AVERAGE AND TOTAL COST OF WINNING THE 2021 ELECTIONS

We estimated the average cost of winning the 2021 election, as a Member of Parliament, as the sum of the average costs at all the four stages of expenditure. We therefore estimated the average cost at K3.8 million (or USD 192,266.38). **Figure 9** presents the share of the average cost expenditure across the four stages.

Figure 9: Distribution of Share of Average Cost Expenditure by Stage

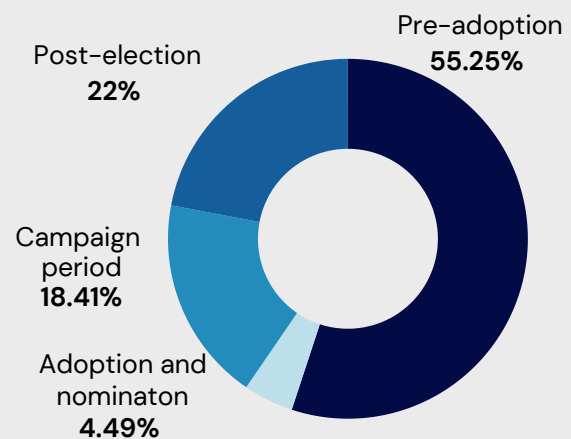


Figure 9 indicates that the majority of the cost that the candidates incurred was during the pre-adoption stage, accounting for over 55% of the total average expenditure during the 2021 elections. The second highest expenditure was during the post-election

stage, even though this survey only considered the first 18 months after the election. Further, even though the campaign period accounted for the highest weighted expenditure per month, it accounted for only 18.4% of the total average, followed by the expenditure at adoption stage, which accounted for only 4.5% of the total average expenditure. **Based on the average expenditure, we estimated that the 80 members of parliament spent about K307.92 million (about USD 15.4 million) to run and win the 2021 elections.**

There was consensus among stakeholders on the overall cost estimation for winning the 2021 elections. However, the majority of the stakeholders believed that there was an intentional underestimation of the cost at the adoption stage. They indicated that this underestimation is due to the illicit nature of spending at this stage, as Corruption is

a contributing factor to the successful adoption of candidates in many political parties. They added that candidates are forced to spend huge sums of money on bribing political party structures at the grassroots, district, provincial and even national levels in order to guarantee their adoption.⁴²

4.6 ANALYSIS OF DIFFERENCES IN AVERAGE EXPENDITURE

Gender: Overall, male winning candidates spent more on average during the 2021 election as compared to female winning candidates. We found that male elected MPs spent over K4 million on average, across all stages as compared to K2.8 million spent by female elected MPs. **Table 1** presents the breakdown of the average election expenditure across the four cost stages with respect to the gender of the winning candidates.

Table 1: Average Expenditure by Spending Stage and Gender (in million kwacha)

Expenditures	Pre-adoption	Adoption/ nomination	Campaign	Post-election	Overall mean
Male (69)	2.26*	0.18*	0.74*	0.83	4.02*
Female (11)	1.29	0.11	0.48	0.92*	2.80
All (80)	2.13	0.17	0.71	0.84	3.85

Note: *indicates the expenditure above the average at that spending stage

In addition to the higher overall election expenditure by male winning candidates, **Table 1** indicates that male elected candidates spent more during the pre-adoption, adoption, nomination, and campaign stages, as compared to female elected candidates. This finding is consistent

with a study in Ghana¹⁰ that established that women candidates were unable to match the spending of male competitors in three out of the four areas, including campaigning, paying party workers and donations, during the 2016 parliamentary election. The stakeholders noted that female candidate spent less as

42. Validation Meeting-Lusaka

compared to male candidates because they are mother figures in society, and thus face lower financial demands from their electorates and campaign teams.⁴² On the supply side, other studies⁴³ have suggested that this lower expenditure by female candidates is due to disadvantages in accessing political financing as women have less access to financial resources than men. This may explain the higher expenditure of female candidates at post-election stage as most candidates at this stage use income

from parliament as a source of financing.

Age: Overall, we established that middle-aged (36–55 years) elected candidates spent more on average across all the stages and that their expenditure was higher at pre-adoption and adoption/nomination stages, while younger candidates spent more during the campaign period and post-election. **Table 2** presents the breakdown of average election expenditure during the four stages with respect to the age of the elected candidate.

Table 2: Average Expenditure by Spending Stage and Age (in million kwacha)

Expenditures	Pre-adoption	Adoption/ nomination	Campaign	Post-election	Overall mean
18-35 (3)	1.50	0.16	1.51*	0.94*	4.10*
36-55 (61)	2.49*	0.18*	0.66	0.79	4.12*
56+ (16)	0.85	0.13	0.76*	1.03*	2.78
All (80)	2.13	0.17	0.71	0.84	3.85

*Note: *indicates the expenditure above the average at that spending stage*

Table 2 indicates that younger candidates spent almost twice as much as older winning candidates (above 56), on average, and more than twice the expenditure of middle-aged candidates during the campaign stage. Stakeholders at the validation meeting noted that this significantly higher expenditure is due to inefficiencies in allocating funds because of limited political experience. They reasoned that younger candidates usually lack the experience to understand which aspects of political expenditure are critical for winning an election. A deeper analysis of the overall average expenditure validated

this assertion as candidates who won elections once or twice spent more to win the 2021 elections as compared to candidates who won elections more than twice in the past.

Disability: Overall, elected candidates with disability spent more to win the 2021 elections as compared to other winning candidates with no disability by over 9.1%. **Table 3** presents the breakdown of average election expenditure during the four stages with respect to disability status of the elected MPs.

43. Ballington, J. (2003). "Gender Equality in Political Party Funding." Available at <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/speeches/Gender-Equality-in-Political-Party-Funding.pdf>

Table 3: Average Expenditure by Spending Stage and Disability status (in million kwacha)

Expenditures	Pre-adoption	Adoption/ nomination	Campaign	Post-election	Overall mean
Yes (4)	1.65	0.37*	0.77*	1.42*	4.21*
No (76)	2.15*	0.16	0.71	0.81	3.83
All (80)	2.13	0.17	0.71	0.84	3.85

Note: *indicates the expenditure above the average at that spending stage

Table 3 indicates that candidates with disability spent more on average at all other stages except the pre-adoption stage. The highest difference in expenditures was during the adoption and nomination stages, followed by the post-election expenditure. Stakeholders during the validation meeting noted that there was a disability premium on electoral expenditure as candidates with disability spent more money in order to overcome stereotypes and discrimination.⁴²

Income level: Overall, elected candidates with higher income spent more on average to win the 2021 elections as compared to winning candidates with less income. Candidates with income less than K100, 000 (USD 4,995) spent less on average at all stages except for the post-election stage. This suggests that candidates with limited resources are only adequately able to meet their electoral financing needs at post-election stage, when they gain access to

Table 4: Average Expenditure by Spending Stage and income level (in million kwacha)

Expenditures	Pre-adoption	Adoption/ nomination	Campaign	Post-election	Overall mean
Below 100,000 (35)	1.14	0.17	0.58	0.85*	2.74
100,001-200,000 (31)	3.23*	0.18*	0.77*	0.77	4.95*
200,001-300,000 (6)	1.04	0.13	0.66	0.89*	2.72
300,001-400,000 (1)	-	-	-	-	-
400,001-500,000 (2)	2.31*	0.47*	0.59	1.29*	4.66*
Above 500,001 (5)	2.53*	0.11	1.32*	0.99*	4.96*
All (80)	2.13	0.17	0.71	0.84	3.85

Note: *indicates the expenditure above the average at that spending stage

other sources of political financing such as remuneration from parliament. **Table 4** presents the breakdown of average election expenditure during the four stages with respect to the income level of elected MPs.

Political Party: Overall, elected candidates from the United Party for National Development (UPND) spent more as compared

to winning candidates from the Patriotic Front (PF) and independent candidates, even though we noted higher PF expenditure at presidential level.²⁹ **Table 5** presents the breakdown of the average election expenditure during the four stages with respect to the political affiliation of the elected MPs.

Table 5: Average Expenditure by Spending Stage and Political Party (in million kwacha)

Expenditures	Pre-adoption	Adoption/ nomination	Campaign	Post-election	Overall mean
UPND (39)	2.85*	0.22*	0.74*	0.91*	4.71*
PF (36)	1.39	0.13	0.67	0.77	2.96
PNUP (1)	-	-	-	-	-
Independent (4)	1.92	0.16	0.75*	0.75	3.59
All (80)	2.13	0.17	0.71	0.84	3.85

Note: *indicates the expenditure above the average at that spending stage

We attributed the higher expenditure by UPND candidates at all stages to several factors, including higher contributions to presidential campaigns during adoption stage, with 15 out of the 39 UPND candidates contributing to the presidential campaigns as compared to only 3 out of the 36 sampled PF candidates. Further, we attributed the higher pre-adoption expenditure to higher nurturing periods among UPND candidates, as the party was in opposition at 41 months on average as compared to PF and Independent candidates at 37 months on average. At campaign stage, the UPND candidates spent more towards food as compared to the PF winning candidates and at post-election stage, the higher expenditure went to

supporting community projects. This expenditure pattern is therefore indicative of the financial disadvantage of being in opposition as a political party. It is also notable that Independent candidates spent above the average during the campaign period, due to the lack of political party support.

Region: Overall, we established that elected candidates from urban constituencies spent more on average as compared to winning candidates from rural constituencies due to above average pre-adoption and campaign expenditure. This is in conformity with previous studies in Zambia,³⁰ Kenya¹¹ and Malawi⁴⁵ that detail how the cost of cam-

45. Wahman, Michael. 2019. "The Cost of Politics in Malawi" London: Westminster Foundation for Democracy. Available at https://www.wfd.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/WFD_CoP-Malawi_2019_final.pdf

paigining is higher in urban rather than rural locations. **Table 6** presents the breakdown of the average election expenditure during the

four stages with respect to the constituency type of the elected MPs.

Table 6: Average Expenditure by Spending Stage and Region (in million kwacha)

Expenditures	Pre-adoption	Adoption/ nomination	Campaign	Post-election	Overall mean
Rural (59)	1.90	0.17*	0.68	0.89*	3.65
Urban (21)	2.75*	0.17	0.78*	0.70	4.40*
All (80)	2.13	0.17	0.71	0.84	3.85

Note: *indicates the expenditure above the average at that spending stage

Table 6 indicated that the average expenditure for winning candidates in rural constituencies was higher during adoption/nomination stage as well as during the post-election stage, while winning candidates from urban constituencies spent more on average during the pre-adoption and campaign stage. We attributed the above average expenditure of candidates in urban areas during pre-adoption and campaign stages to higher cost of supporting community projects and higher cost of living in urban areas, respectively. Further, we attributed the above average expenditure of winning candidates in rural areas during the

adoption/nomination stage and the post-election stage to higher candidate expenditure in supporting the presidential campaign and higher cost of transportation to visit the constituents, respectively.

4.7 SOURCES OF FUNDING

In order to identify the main sources of political expenditure, we asked the winning candidates to select their top sources of financing during the four stages. **Table 7** presents a breakdown of the top sources of electoral expenditure at each of the four costing stages.

Table 7: Main Sources of Political Expenditure for Winning candidates

Source of funding	Pre-adoption	Adoption/ nomination	Campaign	Post-election	Average contribution
1. Political party	2.56%	7.79%	18.42%	2.50%	7.82%
2. Salary and Savings	48.72%	35.06%	23.68%	75.00%	45.62%
3. Sale of Personal Assets/Property	2.56%	1.30%	7.89%	-	6.49%
4. Business	39.74%	44.16%	38.16%	20.00%	35.52%

Table 7: Main Sources of Political Expenditure for Winning candidates

Source of funding	Pre-adoption	Adoption/nomination	Campaign	Post-election	Average contribution
5. Loans from Financial Institutions/Money Lenders	-	1.30%	-	-	1.30%
6. Contributions from friends/family (local)	1.28%	3.90%	3.95%	1.25%	2.60%
7. Contributions from friends/family (abroad)	-	2.60%	2.63%	-	2.62%
8. Contributions from Private Companies	-	-	-	-	-
9. Contributions from social groupings/well-wishers	-	-	-	-	-
10. Other Sources	5.13%	3.90%	5.26%	1.25%	3.89%

The top two sources of funding for political expenditure are salary and savings, and income from business. The share of salary and savings tends to increase from the pre-adoption stage (at 40.72%) to the post-election stage (at 75%) of total political financing. Further, we observed that the share of business as a source of financing tends to reduce from pre-adoption and nomination (at 39.74% and 44.16%, respectively) to post-election stage (at 20%). Overall, salary and savings, and income from business activities accounted for nearly 81.14% of the total financing for winning the 2021 election. The finding that 45% of the winning candidates had businesses activities prior to joining politics validates these results.

4.8 POLITICAL PARTY AND CAMPAIGN FINANCING REFORMS

On political party and campaign financing reforms, an overwhelming majority of MPs,

about 97.5% indicated that they would support regulation and reforms on campaign financing in Zambia. However, more than half of the MPs (58.75%) believed that there should be no limits on campaign spending, though 56.96% believed that there is need for political parties and candidates to disclose all their sources of funding for elections. On stemming the increasing tide of demand-driven expenditure, an overwhelming majority of MPs, about 96.25%, agreed with the statement that voters and citizens should be educated in order to reduce the financial burden placed on candidates, with 81.35% strongly agreeing with the statement. Further, the sampled MPs also agreed overwhelmingly that political parties should fund and support marginalized or vulnerable persons who are unable to fund their campaigns, including viable female candidates (87.50%); viable candidates who are persons with disability (88.10%); and viable youth candidates (82.27%).

On political party and campaign-financing reforms, stakeholders agreed with the sampled MPs on the need to educate voters in order to control the scale of financial demands placed on politicians. They also agreed with the statement that political parties should support viable candidates who are unable to run for elections due to financial limitations. The stakeholders, however, disagreed with the statement on the state funding political parties. They held the view that the statement needed clarification as to which political parties qualify for state funding. Further, they recommended that TI-Z should work closely with political parties to address corruption at the adoption stage, strongly opposing the idea of involving the Electoral Commission of Zambia in intra-party elections.⁴⁰

5 - CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This cost of election study has estimated the average cost of winning the 2021 election, as a member of parliament, at K3.8 million (or USD 192,266.38), as the sum of the average costs at all the four stages of expenditure. The majority of the cost that the candidates incurred was during the pre-adoption stage, accounting for over 55% of the total average expenditure during the 2021 elections. The second highest expenditure was during the post-election stage, even though this survey only considered the first 18 months after the election. Though the campaign period accounted for the highest weighted expenditure per month, it accounted for only 18.4% of the total average and followed by the expenditure at adoption stage, at only 4.5% of the total average expenditure. Further, based on the average expenditure, we estimated that the 80 members of

parliament spent about K307.92 million (about USD 15.4 million) to run and win the 2021 elections. In light of these findings, Transparency International Zambia makes the following recommendations:

- 1.** The Electoral Commission of Zambia should **enhance its oversight and sanctioning** of political parties and candidates for **illicit expenditure** such as cash handouts.

- 2.** Political parties should embrace **greater transparency** in order to address the corruption risks **at the adoption stage**, during which the political parties select and adopt the candidates to stand for election.

- 3.** The National Assembly of Zambia, the Electoral Commission of Zambia, and governance-focused CSOs should conduct countrywide campaigns to **sensitize the electorate on the law-making roles** of Members of Parliament.

- 4.** The government should also make progress in the **legislative reform on political party financing and campaign** spending in Zambia, as there is urgent need to enact a law to regulate campaign and political party financing in Zambia.



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