



Local Government Association of Zambia



Electoral Campaign Toolkit for Women in Local Government



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

FCM Federation of Canadian Municipalities

ICT Information and Communication Technology

LGAZ Local Government Association of Zambia

PMI-WILL Partnerships for Municipal Innovation – Women in Local Leadership

PWDs Persons with Disabilities

Q&A Question and Answer

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

VAWE. Violence against Women in Elections

VAW-P Violence against Women in Politics

WDC Ward Development Committee

Foreword

Zambia proudly stands as a beacon of peaceful multi-party democracy and stable political transitions in Africa. Yet, our democratic journey remains incomplete. True democracy requires a governance system that reflects the demographics of the people it serves.

Women constitute 51 percent of Zambia's 19.6 million population and represent a decisive majority of the electorate. As of 2026, out of the nation's 8,786,300 total registered voters, women make up 4,665,431 of the electorate compared to 4,120,869 men, representing a powerful 53.1 percent. Despite this numerical strength, their representation in elected local leadership remains critically low. Prior to the nation's 2026 general elections, women held just 7.9 percent of local government positions - only 155 out of 1,974 seats; that is mayors/council chairpersons and councilors combined. Progress has stagnated, moving from 6 percent in 2011 to 8 percent in 2016, and dipping slightly in 2021. According to the Afro barometer data on women's political participation, Zambia lags significantly behind our Southern African Development Community (SADC) counterparts like Namibia, South Africa, and Mozambique, all of which have surpassed 20 percent female representation in local authorities.

This gap is not merely a statistical concern; it is a development crisis which calls for concrete action. Evidence shows that when women lead in local government - the tier of government closest to the community - governance becomes more responsive. Increased female representation leads to greater investment in social programs, poverty reduction, and public services that directly benefit marginalized groups women and children. Elevating women to these roles is a prerequisite for achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.5, which demands equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making.

To bridge this gender gap, the Local Government Association of Zambia (LGAZ), through the Partnership for Municipal Innovation – Women in Local Leadership (PMI-WILL) project, has been actively equipping women to run for, win, and excel in local office. Building on our previous election guides for aspirants and serving councilors, LGAZ is proud to introduce this new knowledge product: [The Electoral Campaign Toolkit for Women in Local Government](#).

This practical toolkit addresses the specific structural, financial, and cultural barriers women face on the campaign trail. It provides actionable strategies to navigate the political landscape, build effective campaigns, and mobilize voter support. We invite courageous women candidates to utilize this toolkit. Through your victory, we will build more inclusive, equitable, and resilient local government.

Mpatanji Namumba
Executive Director

Local Government Association of Zambia

Acknowledgement

The Local Government Association of Zambia (LGAZ) wishes to express its profound gratitude to the numerous individuals, institutions, and partners whose expertise, dedication, and shared vision made the development of *The Electoral Campaign Toolkit for Women in Local Government* possible. This knowledge product stands as a testament to collective action aimed at fostering an inclusive, gender responsive governance landscape in Zambia.

Special recognition goes to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) for their steadfast partnership and strategic technical support through the Partnership for Municipal Innovation – Women in Local Leadership (PMI-WILL) project. This initiative has been instrumental in driving systemic change and capacity development among women across the country.

We extend our deepest appreciation to the Government of Canada, acting through Global Affairs Canada (GAC), for providing the financial resources that powered this initiative. Their global commitment to gender equality and social inclusion remains a powerful catalyst for sustainable civic transformation in Zambia.

Our sincere thanks go to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) and the Gender Division under the Office of the President. Their proactive political will and policy guidance ensured this toolkit remains highly relevant within the broader Zambian legislative framework, specifically aligning with the Gender Equity and Equality Act.

We are heavily indebted to the Local Government Gender Equality Committee (LGGECC), civil society organizations (CSOs), political party leadership representatives, and individuals participated in the consultative sessions. Your shared lived experiences, triumphs, and field-tested strategies form the core substance of this practical toolkit.

Finally, we commend the LGAZ Secretariat and the dedicated PMI-WILL Project Staff their contributions and unwavering commitment to producing a standard-setting resource that will empower generations of women political leaders to come.

1.0 Introduction and Overview

1.1 Introduction

This toolkit provides the technical, tactical, and psychological architecture necessary to launch and execute a competitive political campaign for female Mayors, Council Chairpersons, and Councilors in Zambia. It bridges the critical gap between a candidate's vision for community development and the operational mastery required to navigate local government elections.

Recognizing the evolving dynamics of Zambia's political landscape, this toolkit incorporates digital transformation and online safety. Digital platforms like Facebook and TikTok have dismantled traditional political barriers, offering low-cost avenues for women to bypass established gatekeepers and connect directly with voters.

However, increased digital visibility frequently exposes women candidates to targeted Cyber violence, misinformation, and online harassment. To counter these threats, this toolkit moves beyond basic digital literacy to deliver robust protective strategies. It introduces operational mechanisms to safeguard a candidate's mental health and digital safety, and project a resilient public profile throughout the campaign cycle.

1.2 Purpose of the Toolkits

Running for local elected office is about more than winning an election, it's about building relationships, championing the issues that matter, and creating a lasting legacy of positive change. With actionable plans, practical examples, and comprehensive resources, this guide is your companion to navigating the challenges and rewards of public service in local government. Let this toolkit be the foundation of your campaign, empowering you to step forward confidently and make a difference in your district and ward.

1.3 Objectives of the Toolkits

The toolkit is designed to support female candidates (including youths and persons with disabilities) in building and managing an effective electoral campaign for local government elections in Zambia. The specific objectives of the toolkit are as follows:

- a) To assist female candidates in crafting a manifesto that considers local contexts, community needs, and existing gaps.
- b) To improve strategic messaging and provide practical hints for public speaking to better connect with voters.
- c) To utilize social media platforms, specifically Facebook, to engage effectively with the electorate.
- d) To provide strategies for dealing with Cyber violence, ensuring candidates can maintain a digital presence safely.

1.4 How to use the Toolkit

The Campaign Guide for female candidates is designed as an interactive and functional companion to your journey towards the local government elections. It is organized into thematic areas that allows you to focus on specific needs as your campaign evolves, whether you are drafting a policy pledge in your office or preparing for a community listening circle in the district or ward.

The toolkit is also intended to be a collaborative tool for you and your campaign team. You are encouraged to share the sections on strategic messaging and social media management with your media team and volunteers. By using the "Three-Filter System" and the "Rules of the House" together, your team can build a consistent digital firewall that protects your campaign from online harassment while ensuring your core message remains visible to voters.

By executing a clear timeline, a rigorous financial plan, a robust security strategy, and maintaining strict compliance with the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) regulations, you will build a resilient, highly organized campaign structured for victory.

Lastly, utilize the integrated templates for resource mobilization and stakeholder engagement. These resources are fully customized to fit your unique candidate profile and local governance context.

1.5 Organisation of the Toolkit

The guide begins with a foundational section that establishes the rationale and objectives of the toolkit. This introduction sets the tone for the entire document, framing the campaign not just as a race for office, but as a critical step toward gender-responsive governance and sustainable community development.

Following the introduction, the toolkit is organized into three thematic areas as follows: The first theme, 'crafting a manifesto for local government elections' focuses on defining a candidate's vision through manifesto development and strategic messaging. This module guides candidates through a three-stage writing process: planning and preparation, drafting and designing, and reviewing and revising. It introduces key communication frameworks such as "Self-Us-Now" storytelling and the "Three-Filter System" for strategic listening. This organisation ensures that candidates move beyond surface-level promises to create policy pledges that are grounded in the actual service delivery gaps of their districts and wards.

The second theme, 'social media campaign -digital engagement and online safety', addresses the digital and logistical realities of modern campaigning. This includes a comprehensive module on social media mastery, specifically focusing on Facebook and TikTok, alongside vital protocols for online safety and resilience against Cyber violence.

To complement this digital strategy, the guide provides an example of a detailed campaign schedule, as well as functional templates for resource mobilization and legal compliance. This section is designed to keep the campaign team organized, funded, and within the legal provisions – including the Electoral Process Act and the Public Order Act.

Fundraising can feel overwhelming, especially when competing against well-funded opponents, but theme 3, 'fundraising hints', breaks down resource mobilization into clear, doable steps. It will help you not to guess your budget. Find out what candidates spent in the last local election to set a realistic financial goal. This gives you a clear target to aim for.

2.0 Theme 1: Crafting a Manifesto

2.1 Understanding Communal Needs

This section helps candidates to systematically identify the specific needs of their local areas in the districts and wards. By understanding the local context, female candidates can develop a manifesto and service delivery plan that is both realistic and responsive to the people they are going to serve.

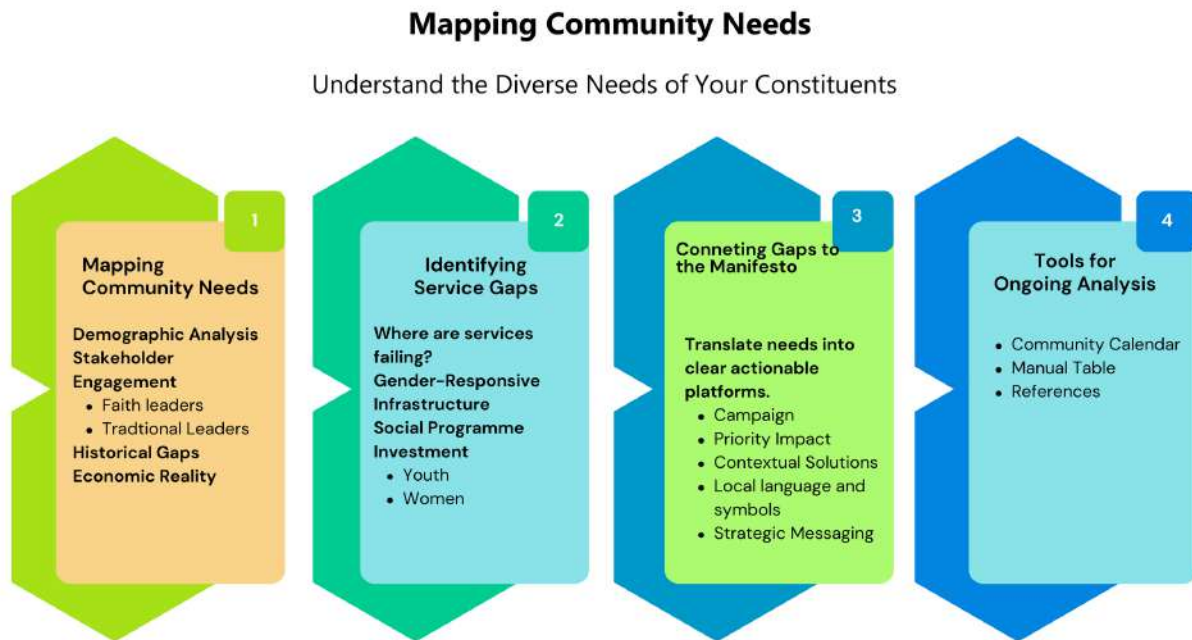


Figure 2-1 Mapping Community Needs.

2.2 Step-by-Step Guidance on Drafting a District/Community-focused Development Roadmap

A winning manifesto for a female candidate in Zambia must be more than a list of promises; it must be a community-focused development road map that reflects the specific needs of your ward or district. In areas where literacy levels vary and digital access is limited, your manifesto must be clear, culturally sensitive, and factually grounded. It is a word statement which tells voters who you are, what you hope to achieve whilst in the role and why people should vote for you. It's what people will see when they go to vote. A manifesto is a public declaration of policy and aims that female candidates can use to try and convince voters to vote for them.

The manifest usually contains information about:

- Who you are and what position you are running for.
- Why you want to win the election – why are you passionate about this role?
- What would you do if you won the election – what projects and policies would you introduce?
- What experience and skills do you have that make you a good candidate?
- Have you worked in the communities, wards and the district?
- Often it will include a slogan – to make your campaign more memorable.

2.3 Creating a Manifesto

When creating your manifesto, think about the following:

- It's a chance for you to 'talk' to the voters you might not meet while campaigning.
- How can you gain the support of voters on your side?
- What do the voters in the ward and district care about?
- Ask your friends!
- What would make people vote for you?

2.3.1 The Manifesto Writing Process

The manifesto writing process is a three-stage process.

1. The first stage of the manifesto writing process is planning and preparation.
2. The second stage of the manifesto writing process is drafting and designing.
3. The third stage of the manifesto writing process is reviewing and revising

Stage 1: Planning & Preparation

Before you try to draft and design your manifesto you first need to identify:

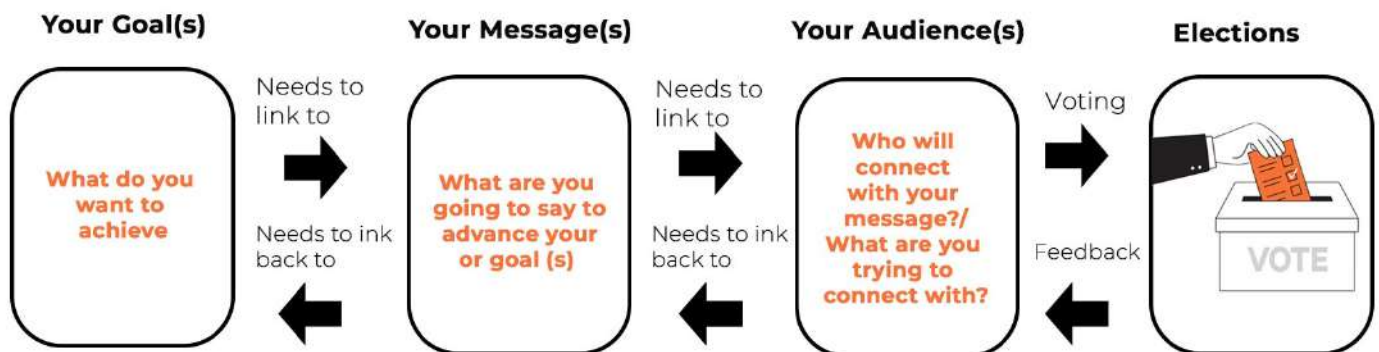


Figure 2-2 Planning and Preparation.

Stage 2: Drafting & Designing

The next stage of the manifesto writing process is to drafting your manifesto.

- To draft a manifesto, you will first need to convert your message(s) into a series of policy pledges and/ or story statements.
- A policy pledge is a section of text in a manifesto that outlines to the reader an action that you promise to do if elected.
- A story statement is a section of text in a manifesto that outlines a personal attribute(s) that is desirable to the reader.
- Policy pledges and story statements should be kept as short and simple as possible.

Stage 3: Reviewing & Revising

Once you have drafted your manifesto, the next and final stage of the manifesto writing process is to review and revise it before sharing it. The purpose of reviewing and revising your manifesto is to ensure that it...

- Is within any word count and/ or document specification limits
- Contains no spelling and grammar mistakes
- Contains no incorrect dates and times, or broken hyperlinks, or incorrect internet and email addresses.

Manifesto Writing Process

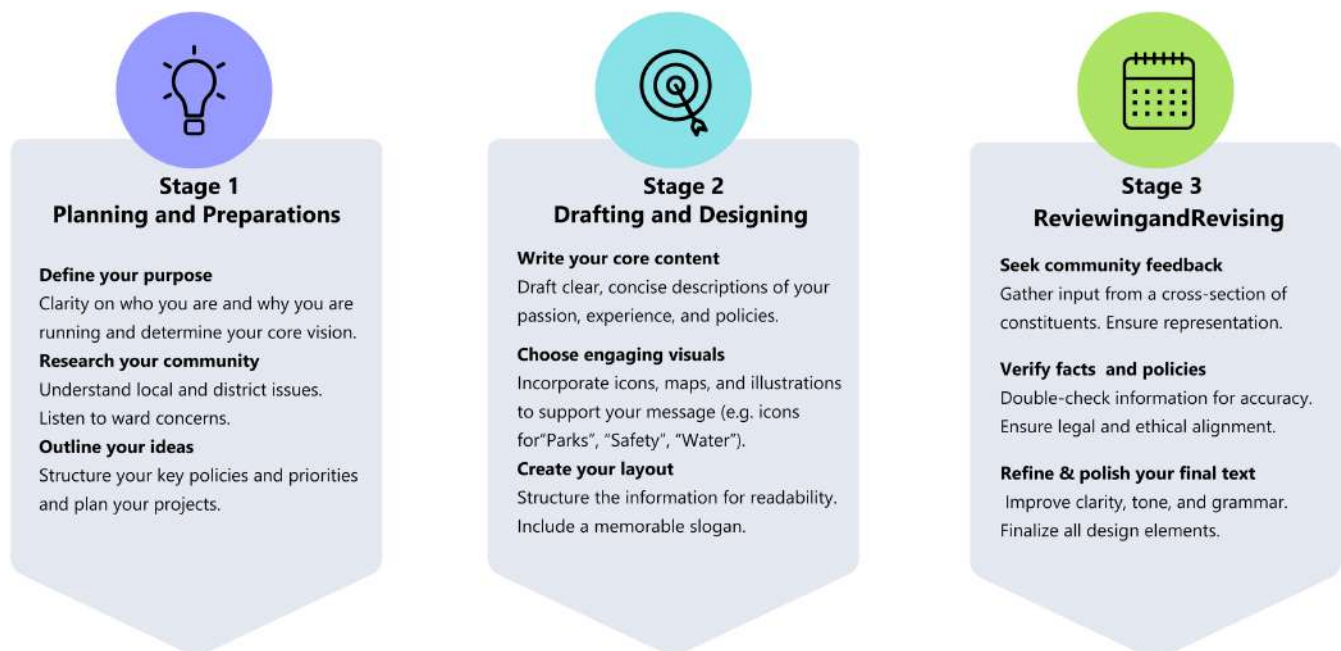


Figure 2-3 Manifesto Writing Process.

Manifesto Tips

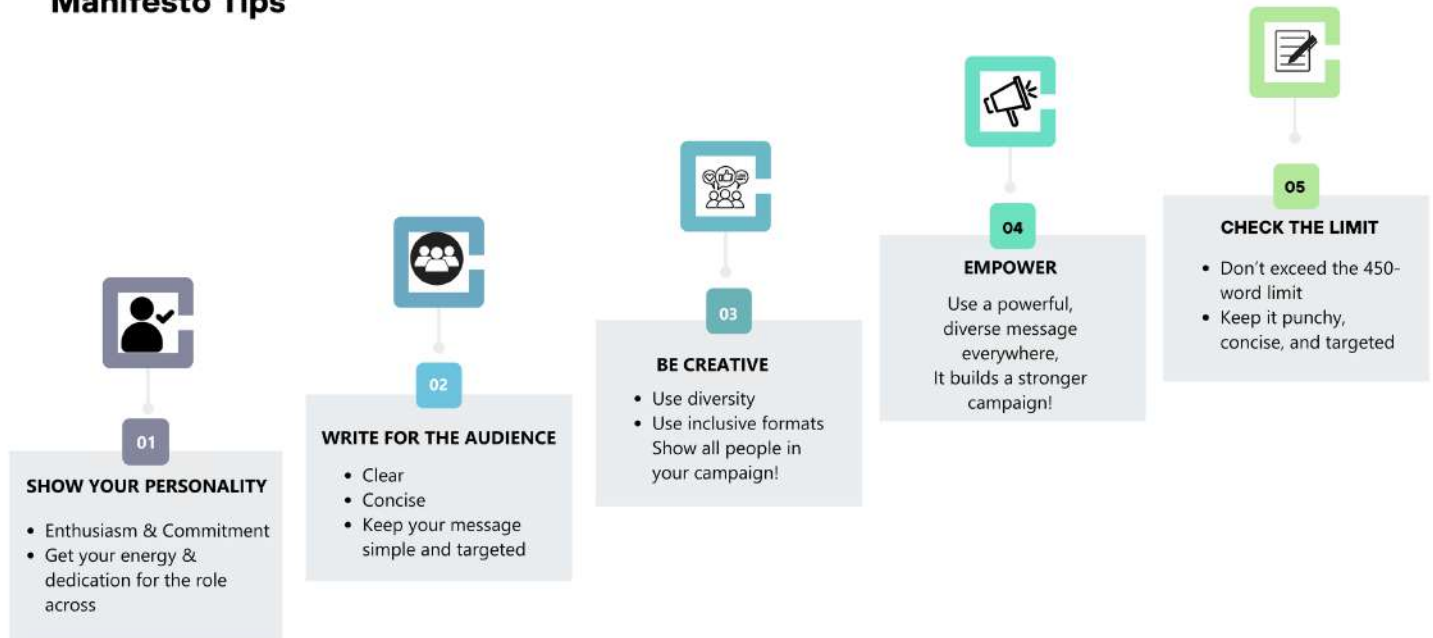


Figure 2-4: Manifesto Tips

To create an effective manifesto, begin by stating your unique personality to convey genuine enthusiasm and commitment to the position. It is essential to communicate in a clear, concise manner that resonates directly with your target audience, ensuring your message is easily understood by all voters. Standing out requires a creative and unique approach to distinguish your platform from others. Maintain strict consistency by ensuring the core message of your manifesto aligns with your broader campaign across all media platforms that you are going to use.

Manifesto for Council Chairperson

A new vision for the District: bridging the gap, empowering the people



Vote for Nalishebo Lubinda
13th August, 2026.

01

WHO AM I? MY NAME IS NALISHEBO LUBINDA.

- Rural Development Professional.
 - Lived Through the Unique Challenges:
 - Vast Village Distances.
 - Seasonal Zambezi River Crossings.
 - Experience in Community Service & Governance.
- Ready to Lead with Empathy & Expertise.
Ready to Lead as COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON.

02

WHY AM I RUNNING?

- Running to Fulfill Local Government Act & Ensure No One is Left Behind.
- Running to Fulfill Local Government Act & Ensure No One is Left Behind.

PRIORITIZING ROAD DEVELOPMENT:

- Feeder Roads & Safe Water Crossings, Support Farmers and Safe School Routes.

BRINGING COUNCIL SERVICES TO YOU:

- Mobile Service Points & Ward Engagement.

ADDRESSING CRITICAL HEALTH GAPS:

- Equipped Rural Health Centers & Maternity Services.

PROVIDING A VOICE FOR THE 51%:

- Promoting Women in Leadership.

03

WHY VOT FOR ME?

- Council Chairperson's roles are a Sacred Trust.
- Focus on Local Economic Development;
- Supporting small farmers, youths and marketeers

COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON FOR EVERYONE:

- Ensuring a Seat for Persons with Disabilities & Marginalized Groups
- ADVOCATING FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION**

LET LET US CHOOSE A LEADER WHO KNOWS THE WAY, GOES THE WAY & SHOWS THE WAY. VOTE FOR INCLUSIVITY

Figure 2-5 Example of Manifesto for the Council Chairperson.

A structured, community-centered campaign is highly effective for local government elections because local politics is deeply personal, immediate, and practical.



Figure 2-6 Example 2 Manifesto for the Council Chairperson

Manifesto Examples

This is an example of what you include in your written manifesto for Mayor/Council Chairperson.

Manifesto For Mayor: Mitete 2026

"A New Vision for Mitete: Bridging the Gap, Empowering the People"

Who am I?

My name is Nalishebo Lubinda. I am a daughter of Mitete, a leader who understands the resilience of our people, and a professional dedicated to rural development. I have lived through the unique challenges of our district, from the vast distances between our villages to the seasonal difficulties of crossing the Zambezi. My background in community service and governance has prepared me to lead with both empathy and expertise. I am running for Council Chairperson because I believe that the people of Mitete—especially the adolescents, women, the elderly and youths—deserve a leader who is present on the ground, not just in the office.

Why am I running?

Mitete is a district of immense potential, yet we remain one of the most underserved areas in our province.

1. I am running to fulfill the core mandates of the Local Government Act while ensuring no one is left behind.
2. I am running to prioritize the development of feeder roads and safe water crossings, ensuring that our farmers can get their produce to markets and our children can reach schools safely. Currently, many of our residents travel long distances to access basic council services.
3. I aim to address the critical health security gaps in our district, advocating for better-equipped rural health centers and gender-responsive maternity services.
4. With women making up less than 7.9% of elected leaders in Zambia, I am running to provide a voice for the 51% of our population whose perspectives are often missing from the Council chamber.

Why vote for me?

A vote for me is a vote for a Council Chairperson who understands that the roles and responsibilities of the office are a sacred trust to serve the community.

1. I will focus on local economic development programs that support our small-scale farmers, fishers, and marketeers, helping to improve livelihoods right here in Mitete.
2. I will be a Council Chairperson for everyone.
3. I will specifically work to ensure that persons with disabilities, the elderly and marginalized groups have a seat at the table during our strategic planning sessions.
4. I will advocate for digital transformation and improved ICT infrastructure for our district, ensuring that Mitete is no longer cut off from the national conversation and the modern economy.

Let us choose a leader who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way. Vote for a stronger, more inclusive leader.

This is an example of what you include in your written manifesto for Councillor.

Manifesto: Your Voice, Our Progress

Who am I?

My name is Belinda Mulenga Mwansa. I am a dedicated member of this community, a mother, and a local advocate who has lived and worked alongside you in Chifunabuli. I understand the ward—from the challenges faced by our fishing communities on the lake to the needs of our small-scale farmers. I am a leader who believes that the strength of Chifunabuli lies in the hands of its people. I am standing for Councilor because I believe that for our ward to prosper, we need a representative who is not just a title-holder, but a tireless worker for the common good.

Why am I running?

1. I am running because I believe our ward deserves active, visible, and inclusive leadership. As your Councilor, I will focus on the core responsibilities that matter most to our daily lives.
2. I will ensure that the issues we face—whether it is the state of our feeder roads or the lack of clean water—are presented in the District Council Chamber.
3. I am running to ensure our WDC is functional, transparent, and truly representative of every zone in our ward.
4. With women making up only 7.9% of elected leaders in local government, I am running to show that when women lead, the whole community benefits.
5. I am running to advocate for better-equipped local health posts and to ensure that our public spaces are clean and safe for everyone.

Why vote for me?

A vote for me is a vote for Accountability, Transparency, and Community-Led Development. 1. I don't just want your vote; I want your partnership. I commit to holding regular community meetings to report back on Council decisions and to listen to your evolving needs.

2. I will fight to ensure that municipal services are accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities and the most vulnerable members of our ward.
3. I will lobby for training and social programs that help our local entrepreneurs, fishers, and farmers access the funds and skills they need to grow their businesses.

Let us choose a leader who hears your voice and acts on your behalf. Vote for Progress. Vote for Service.

2.4 Developing Persuasive Campaign Slogan

A slogan must be a "concise" summary of your vision that even a voter with limited literacy can remember as illustrated in the example below.

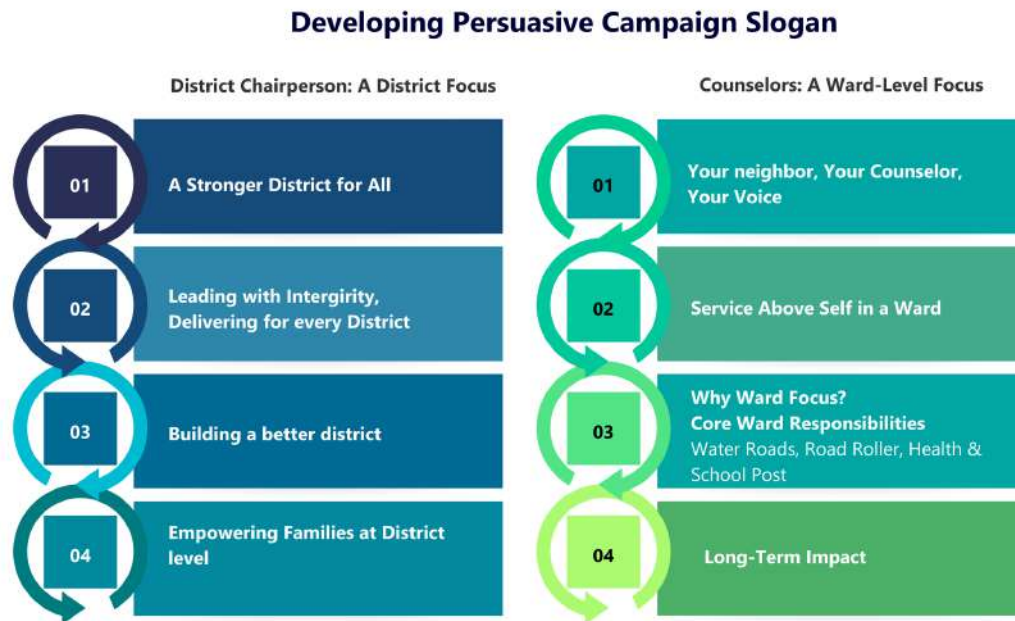


Figure 2-7 Developing Persuasive Campaign Slogans

2.5 Storytelling as A Campaign Tool

People forget statistics, but they remember stories. Use the **"Self-Us-Now"** framework to connect with voters.

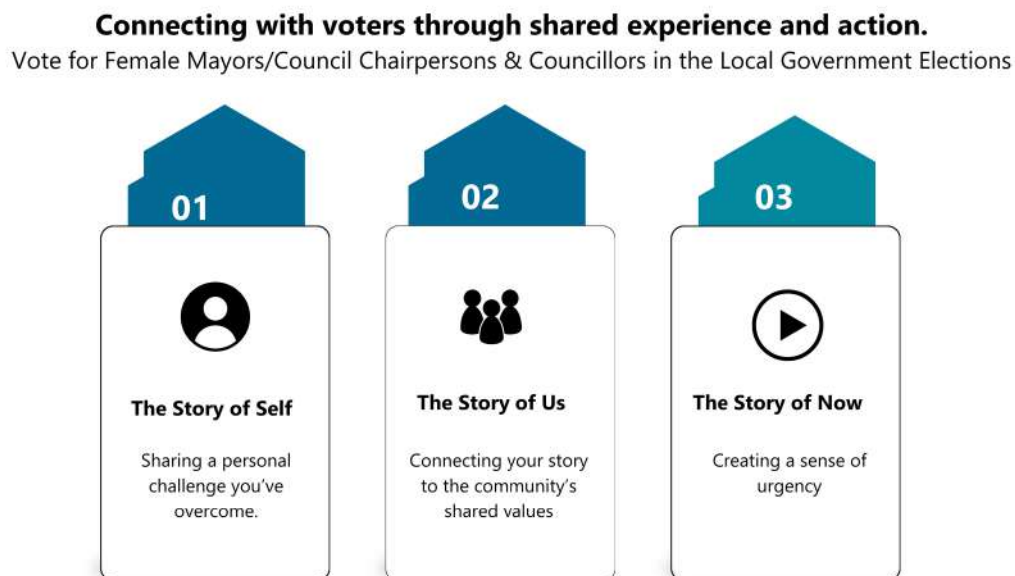


Figure 2-8

The Story of Self: Example: "As a mother in this ward, I remember the nights when the local clinic was closed when my child was sick. I know your frustration because I have lived it."

The Story of Us: Example: "In Chifunabuli, we are a community of hard workers. Whether we are fishing or farming, we value a day's work and fair pay. We deserve a council that works as hard as we do."

The Story of Now: Example: "We have lived with 7.9% representation for too long. August 2026 is our chance to ensure our daughters grow up in a district where women lead the way to better services."

2.6 Persuasive Talking Points

Your talking points should be issue-based, moving beyond personal attacks to focus on community-led change.

Vote for Dignity and Service August 2026

Issue Area	The Problem (The Gap)	Your Persuasive Talking Points
	Poor sanitation and lighting in markets.	"Our marketeers are the backbone of this economy. I will ensure our markets have 24-hour solar lighting and clean sanitation so we can trade with dignity and safety."
	Long distances to the nearest health post.	"Health is not a luxury; it is a right. I will advocate for the Ward Development Fund to prioritize a local health post so that no mother has to travel hours for basic care."
	Lack of women in decision-making	"Decisions about our schools and water are being made without us. I am running to bring the perspective of female and youths to the Council chamber."

Figure 2-9 Issue-based Talking Points.

2.7 Strategic Listening

Strategic listening involves filtering out the high volume of "political noise" - such as personal attacks, rumors, or minor distractions - to focus on concerns that matter and priorities of the electorates. Personal critiques regarding age or marital status should be categorized as "noise" and excluded from primary messaging to maintain focus on real issues that affect the community. For a female candidate, this practice is essential for maintaining a focused campaign and delivering a manifesto that truly addresses communal aspirations.

The Three-Filter System: Identifying the "Signal"

To distinguish important information from noise, run every piece of feedback or data through these three filters:

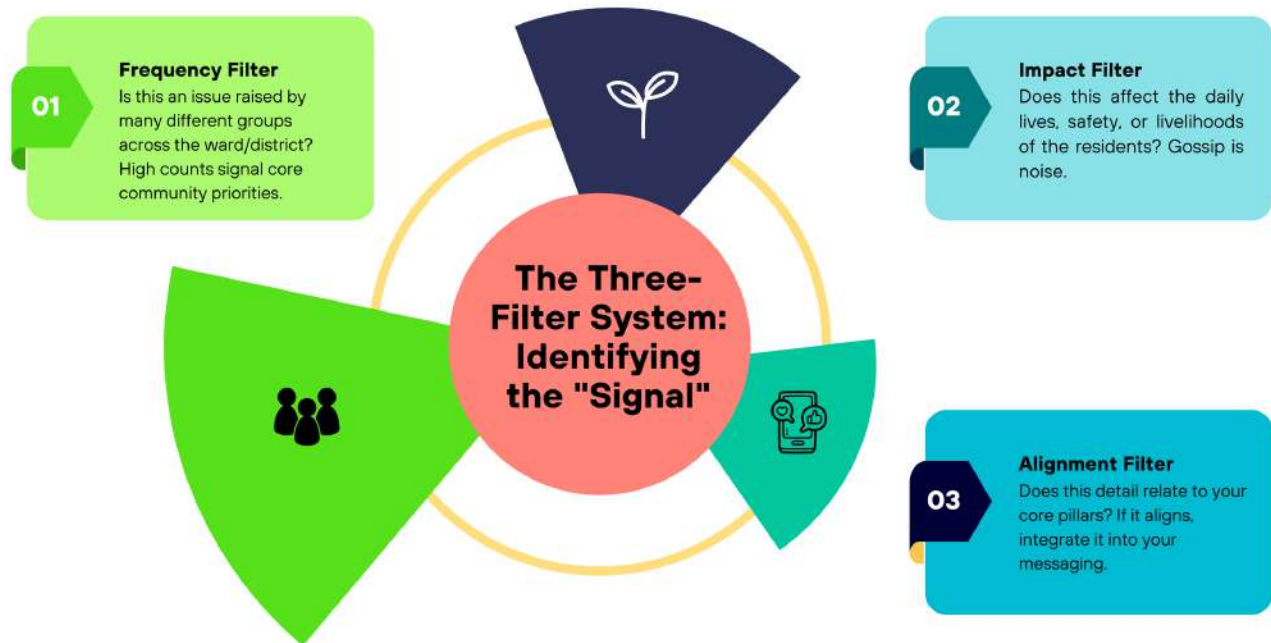


Figure 2-10 A Three-filter System to filter political noise.

The Three-Filter System will help you to distinguish essential signals from background noise. It determines if an issue is a widespread priority by checking if it is raised by many different groups across the district rather than just a single individual.

01

Conduct 'Deep Listening Sessions'

Host small listening circles with various groups in the district. Use open-ended questions like "What is the one thing that would make your daily work in the market easier?"



02

Note-Taking and Categorization

Have a campaign assistant record all the points raised and categorise them into immediate needs. (e.g broken pump), Long term goals (e.g new road) and noise (e.g complaint about an opponent character)



03

Validate with Marginalized Groups

Specifically seek out persons with disabilities, the elderly, and youth. Their participation is vital but they provide important information on service delivery gaps that other candidates may overlook.



04

Monitor the Digital Signal

Look beyond negative comments on Facebook or WhatsApp and focus on recurring questions or information requests about your roadmap, as these help shape and strengthen your key online talking points.

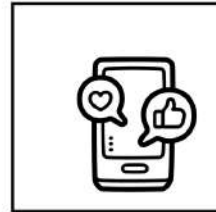


Figure 2-11 Steps to Strategic Listening.

The four-step framework for strategic listening represents a methodical approach to grassroots political engagement, shifting the campaign focus from traditional broadcasting to inclusive data collection and responsive governance. This approach fosters a sense of ownership among the people and ensures that the campaign's priorities are grounded in the lived realities of the voters in the district and wards.

The framework prioritizes "Deep Listening" sessions. By utilizing open-ended questions within small "Listening Circles," the female candidates can move beyond surface-level grievances to understand the core challenges of the community members and various stakeholders in the district and ward.

Turning Information into Messaging

Effective campaign communication requires transforming specific data into persuasive messages while systematically ignoring personal attacks.

Turning Information into Messaging

Use the crucial details to sharpen your campaign story

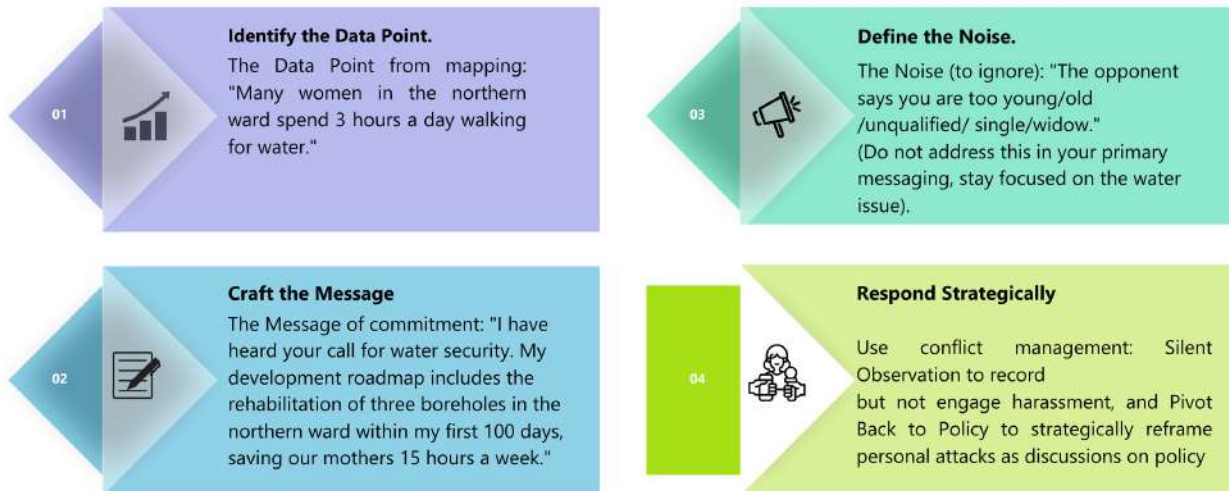


Figure 2-12 Sharpening your campaign story.

2.8 Public Speaking: Hints on delivery, body language, and managing public debates

To succeed in local government elections, as a female candidate you must command the stage. Public speaking in local governance is about more than just words; it is about projecting the authority of a leader while maintaining the accessibility of a neighbor

Mastering Delivery, Body Language & Debate



Delivery

Projection Over Shouting. Breathe from Diaphragm. Projections sends the authority



Power of the Pulse

After stating Key Manifesto points Pause for a second to allow information points to sink



Vary your Pace

Don't be too slow or too fast

Figure 2-13 Public Speaking Hints.

To master public speaking as a female leader, you must utilize your voice as a powerful tool by projecting from the diaphragm rather than shouting, which establishes authority and protects your vocal cords. Integrating strategic three-second pauses after key manifesto points allows your message to resonate, while varying your pace between slow, deliberate policy explanations and more energetic personal stories maintains audience engagement.

Always prioritize factual accuracy and use closing statements to reinforce your development road map rather than engaging with an opponent's "noise". If faced with hostility, maintaining a calm demeanor and slightly lowering your voice can effectively quiet a disruptive crowd and refocus the environment.

3.0 Theme 2: Campaigning through Social Media

3.1 Digital Engagement and Online Safety

As a female candidate you should leverage on social media to build a digital presence. In a context where women are significantly underrepresented in political leadership, Facebook offers a direct, low-cost channel to bypass traditional gatekeepers and speaks directly to the voters.

Establish a professional presence across diverse social media platforms, this will allow you to reach different segments of the voters in the district or ward, from youth on TikTok to professionals on LinkedIn. Each platform requires a specific strategy to be effective.

3.2 Social Media Campaign

In the modern Zambian political landscape, a strong digital presence is essential to amplify your voice and connect with voters across all demographics.

Digital Engagement or Political Candidates in Zambia: A Strategic Guide

 Facebook	 WhatsApp	 LinkedIn	 TikTok
Description: Facebook remains the popular platform for political engagement in Zambia. Used for digital for details manifesto and community engagement. Setup: Use a Public Figure Page (not a personal profile). Ensure your "About" section includes your development roadmap and clear contact information. Content: Post photos of field missions, "Live" Q&A sessions, and detailed policy explanation. Engagement: Respond to comments within 24 hours to build trust. Use the "Pinned Post" feature to keep your core manifesto at the top of your feed.	Description: WhatsApp is essential for direct, "locally rooted" communication and organizing campaign teams. Setup: Utilize WhatsApp Business for its automated greeting and labeling features. Organize contacts by ward or zone. Strategy: Create Broadcast Lists instead of large groups for general updates to respect privacy and prevent "group fatigue". Use groups only for core campaign volunteers. Content: Send "Voice Notes" in local languages. These feel personal and are accessible to voters with varying literacy levels. Safety: Never add people to groups without their consent, as this can lead to being reported as spam or banned.	Description: LinkedIn is used to engage with stakeholders, NGOs, and the professional diaspora who influence local development. Setup: Ensure your profile reflects your professional background. Use a professional headshot. Strategy: Focus on thought leadership. Share articles or information on district or ward development, health security, food security, maternal and child health or education. Content: Post about your attendance at technical workshops, meetings with various partners & stakeholders or your progress on your engagement academic studies you are pursuing. Networking: Connect with other local government officials and development practitioners to build coalition support for your campaign.	Description: TikTok is the fastest-growing platform for reaching younger voters through short-form, authentic video. Strategy: Focus on "Behind-the-Scenes" content. Show the reality of campaigning—the long walks, the community meals, and the story of self. Content: Use popular local sounds but keep the message political. Use the "Stitch" or "Duet" features to respond directly to community questions. Visual Style: High production value is not necessary, authenticity and direct-to-camera delivery are more persuasive on this platform.

Figure 3-1 Digital Platforms for Engaging the Electorates

Regardless of the App, your digital presence must reflect your values and your Development Road map.

- **Prioritize Authenticity:** Be yourself; voters connect with people, not robots.
- **Consistency is Key:** Regular updates build a narrative of momentum and reliability.
- **Clear Communication:** Ensure your message is easy to understand and visually accessible.

3.3 Managing Your Online Community

Managing online communities represents a sophisticated shift from passive social media usage to active digital governance, specifically tailored for the political environment of the Zambian general elections.



Figure 3-2 Hints on Managing your Online Community.

By prioritizing safety, inclusivity, and data-driven engagement, you will be able to handle the challenges faced by female candidates while maximizing the democratic potential of digital tools.

As a female candidate, you should come up with the "Rules of the House" and define gendered harassment as a red-line violation, this way, you will exert psychological and administrative control over your digital territory.

Identify "Digital Ambassadors" as a strategic move that decentralizes the campaign, allowing supporters to defend your road map within their own private networks. The grassroots digital organization is effective because it leverages peer-to-peer trust, which is often more persuasive than top-down political messaging.

With the varying levels of connectivity and literacy, as a female candidate you are encouraged to use diverse formats—such as voice notes and simple graphics to ensure that no voter is left behind due to technical or educational barriers. The inclusive approach will transform the digital platform into a tool for broad-based civic education rather than an exclusive club for the elite only.

3.4 Dealing with Cyber Violence: Online harassment and Digital Safety

Digital platforms are essential tools for reaching the electorate, but they also carry the risk of Cyber violence. Under **The Cyber Crimes Act of 2025**, Zambia has strengthened its legal framework to protect individuals from online harassment, but as a female candidate you must also implement your own safety protocols to remain resilient during the elections.

Dealing with Cyber Violence

Recognizing Online Harassment and Implementing Safety Protocols for Digital Protection



Figure 3-3 Dealing with Cyber Violence.

A critical component as a female candidate is to focus on preventing silent withdrawal—this is when you exit the race to avoid abuse.

Use the Filter Teams to moderate comments and digital screenshots for legal evidence, this will help you to remain visible while protecting your mental health. This approach shifts the focus from individual endurance to structural and institutional defense for you participate in the politics and elections as a female candidate.

4.0 Theme 3 – Fundraising

4.1 Budget preparations

The foundation for effective resource mobilization across local election campaigns begins with detailed budgetary preparations. Female candidates should establish their financial targets by researching historical campaign expenditures, using spending from previous election cycles as a baseline.

4.2 Sources of funding and In-kind Support

The campaign funding should expand outward from an inner circle towards broader institutional and community groups. Personal income and direct contributions from personal networks such as friends serve as the baseline funding for your campaign. Beyond personal networks, female candidates can actively engage local businesses, grocery shops, and community entities to solicit non-monetary or in-kind support.

4.3 Asking for Funds

- Securing financial commitment requires a disciplined communication strategy rather than general or vague appeals.
- Female candidates must maintain a proactive mindset and adopt a highly professional public persona when asking for funds.
- To ensure efficiency, female candidates must compile targeted call lists of prospective high-, medium-, and low-value donors, highlighting alumni networks, former workplace colleagues, and community associations.

4.4 Traditional and Innovative Event-Based Fundraising

- Faced with systemic financial constraints, female candidates must utilize the community-driven events to pool low- to medium-sized voluntary donations.
- On the grassroots level, female candidates can host small, intimate gatherings such as home-based "meet and greet" sessions where attendees pay a small entry fee.
- Combine community service with resource mobilization by organizing neighborhood clean-up days that can result in a paid group meal.
- A highly successful, innovative model involves hosting a "Chitenge Day" event, which combines traditional meals and community solidarity to raise funds for the campaign.
- For urban and younger demographics, candidates can adapt this strategy by hosting modern 'cocktail mixers' with an admission charge to engage various networks, youth activists and organisations that support female candidates.

5.0 Reference Materials

Astons Student Union (2025) Guide to writing a Manifesto. Retrieved from <https://www.astonsu.com/pageassets/voice/elections/autumn/Guide-to-writing-your-manifesto.pdf>

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Template 1: Mobilisation and Campaign Planning Schedule

Month	Activity	Target Audience	Communication Mode	Status	Comment
October – March	Pre-Campaign Planning				
October – March	Foundation Building & Strategic Planning	Inner Circle, Family, Trusted Allies	Face-to-Face, Diary Logging	Completed	Secure family support, vet personal past, and emotional check readiness
January – March	Build a campaign team	Professional networks, Youth Activists, Volunteers	In-person meetings, WhatsApp Groups	Done/ Completed	Recruit a paid or highly trusted Campaign Manager and a Social Media Manager
December – February	Mapping the community needs	Ward constituents, Market vendors, Farmers, PWDs	Ground mapping, Polling station visits	Done	Calculate the strict "Win Number" based on 2026 ECZ registration statistics.
December - February	Ongoing engagement with the community	Local groups, Women's savings/village banks	Market visits, Attending community funerals & events	Done	Maintain authentic, humble, and highly visible community presence.
January – March	Crafting the manifesto	General Electorate	Simple printouts, Braille options for inclusion	Done	Translate abstract policies into practical solutions for market safety, roads, and water.
January – March	Crafting a campaign message	Specific targeted demographics	Fluent local languages (e.g., Bemba, Tonga, Nyanja)	Done	Keep messages simple, short, and issue-focused to prevent overpromising.

January – March	Personal branding & strategies	Ward voters, Party gatekeepers	Consistent professional attire, clean headshots	Done	Project a capable, stable brand "as if already elected".
January – March	Fundraising				
January – March	Develop a campaign budget	Campaign Team, Core Donors	Budget tracking software/templates	Done	Baseline costs on 2021 spending adjusted strictly for inflation and fuel prices.
January – March	Develop a fundraising strategy	Diaspora, Local business owners, NGOs	Formal pitch letters, Crowdfunding links	Done	Set up dedicated, transparent mobile money accounts separate from personal funds.
January – March	Identify potential partners	Traditional leaders, Market associations, Churches	Professional networking events, Showcases	Done	Seek both direct funding and "in-kind" resources (transport, food, printing etc.).
January – March	Approach the partners	High-, Medium-, and Low-value prospects	Direct, specific financial support	Done	Pitch directly, establish immediate urgency, and issue rapid gratitude messages
January – March	Media Strategy				
January – March	Develop a media strategy	Media consumers (Age 25–34 dominant)	Hybrid: Social Media & Community Radio	Done	Use local radio stations and social media channels.
January – March	Develop media content	Digitized youth, Local community radio listeners	Short video reels, Interactive call-in shows	Done	Create "before and after" visuals documenting community problems and your solutions.

April – January	Campaign Kick-off				
April	Announce campaign goal & message	General public, Ward constituents	Public launch, Community meetings	Planned	Roll out personal story, slogan, and core developmental message to the public.
April – July	Gaining Momentum & Public Engagement				
April – July	Engage in extensive door-to-door	Grassroots households, Rural village residents	Direct face-to-face canvassing	Planned	Deep community engagement to listen to voter concerns and distribute campaign cards.
April – July	Social media campaign	Gen Z voters, Urban demographics, Allies	Facebook ads, TikTok clips, WhatsApp Status	Planned	Utilize strategic social media content to expand visibility and bypass tech boundaries
July – August	Nomination & Final Push				
July – August	Official Candidate Nomination	ECZ Vetting Officers, Party structures	Strict administrative submission	Planned	Finalize all grade 12 and ECZ papers; secure adoption certificates securely.
August	Election Day	Registered Voters & Campaign Machinery	Direct Mobilization & Monitoring	Critical Window	Execute robust on-the-ground operational monitoring and protection mechanisms.
August	Voter turnout mobilization	Undecided and verified supporters	Door-knocking, Direct peer reminders	Planned	Mobilize maximum turnout early in the day; coordinate transport for elderly or PWD voters

August	Polling agent tracking & safety	248 Polling Agents (Ward specific)	Secure mobile chat, In-person structural checks	Planned	Deploy trusted polling agents to every stream; track parallel voter totals securely.
August	Post-Election	Donors, Volunteers, Electorate, Peer Networks	Accountability, Growth & Follow-Through	Strategic Window	Transition safely into council leadership or build a progressive foundation for the future.
August 2026	Accountability & Follow-Through	Campaign contributors, High-to-low donors	Post-election transparency reports, Letters	Planned	Issue a formal final campaign report and clear remaining debts safely.
August 2026	Community gratitude	Ward residents (Supporters & non-supporters)	Thank-you graphics, Community clean-ups	Planned	Maintain your local profile, thank the voters, and never burn bridges.
September onwards	Sustainable governance or future planning	Local government structures, Mentorship spaces	Peer support networks, WDC meetings	Planned	If elected, enact gender-responsive service delivery; if not, immediately prepare for the next elections

Template 2: Budget and Logistical Plan

This layout is structured to track income sources alongside specific operational, ground, and digital expenses to maintain complete transparency and fiscal control.

Line Item	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6 (Election Day)	Total
Income / Contributions							
Own Savings (Base support)							
Family							
Political Party							
High Donors							
Medium Donors							
Low Donors							
Total Income							
Expenses: Office Requirements							
Mobile phones							
Talk time and bundles							
Supplies (paper, pens, etc.)							
Toner							
Tea bags							
Sugar							
Coffee							
Bread							
Markers							
Stapler and staples							
Expenses: Printing / Photocopying							
Flyers/Leaflets							
Stickers							
Invitations							
Photocopying							
Cards							
Expenses: Fundraising Events							
Venue							
Music System							
Musicians							
Master of Ceremony							

Drinks							
Snacks							
Expenses: Door to Door & Community Logistics							
Door to Door awareness							
Church event/meeting							
Fuel							
Vehicle							
Chitenges							
T-Shirts							
Caps							
Coffee mugs							
Expenses: Media and Communication							
Radio							
TV							
Community Radio							
Billboard Ads							
Website development and maintenance							
Total income							

Net Balance Summary

Master Balance	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Total
Total Monthly Income							
Total Monthly Expenses							

Template 3: Logistical Planning & Security Checklist

Note: Strategic Note: Female candidates in Zambia often face specific logistical hurdles. Prioritize safety and visibility in your route planning.

Mobility & Movement
☐ Identify 'Campaign Hubs' within the Ward/Constituency. ☐ Secure a reliable 4x4 vehicle for rural terrain (August is dry/dusty). ☐ Secure bicycles and motorbikes ☐ Establish a fuel account with a local filling station to ensure consistency
Personnel & Polling Agents
☐ Recruit at least 2 agents per polling station (1 main, 1 reserve). ☐ Schedule training on the Electoral Process Act (Rights and Duties of Agents). ☐ Prepare 'Volunteer Kits': Torch, pens, notebook, water, and copy of the Voter Register.
Regulatory Compliance Checklist
Ensure all activities comply with the 90-day campaign regulations to avoid petitions. ☐ Notify local police of all public rallies (Public Order Act compliance). ☐ Ensure all branding (posters/flyers) includes the candidate's official ECZ name. ☐ Verify that no 'Corrupt Practices' (as defined by the Act) occur during mobilization ☐ Track all donations received for transparency reporting.

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