



Chairperson

- Convene and chair all BEC (Branch Executive Committee) and branch meetings
- Draw up the agenda for BEC and branch meetings with Administration Secretary
- Represent ZANU PF at a public level
- Build a strong and united branch
- Together with the Finance Secretary take responsibility for branch money.
- Represent the organisation on other structures and in public
- Deal with conflict, disciplinary issues and problems members may have with the organisation.
- Spend time on strategising and planning as well as monitoring progress of the organisation.

The deputy chair has the same role and plays it when the chair is not available. It is good to give the deputy chair some specific responsibilities so that person remains active and stimulated. The deputy chair could for example be responsible for sub- committees on campaigns, or could represent the organisation on the development forum.

Chairperson's guide

The chairperson has a number of key responsibilities. They are:

- Running good meetings
- Building membership
- Promoting ZANU PF image and profile
- Dealing with conflict

Running good meetings

The way your branch meeting is run is very important for the participation of members. If the meetings are badly chaired, long and boring, people will stop coming. If you allow complicated debates between individuals that exclude everyone else most people will not participate. It is your role as the chair to run meetings in such a way that all your members feel comfortable and empowered to participate and that no one, including you, is allowed to dominate.

Here are some tips for chairing meetings:

- Always explain the agenda to everybody and make sure the procedures that will be followed in the meeting are clear so that people do not bring up points under items where they do not belong. It is a good idea to allocate a period of time to each point on the agenda so that people are aware that they cannot spend too long on one item.
- Ask people to keep inputs, reports questions and anything else as short as possible and where necessary, sum up what has been said. It is not necessary to sum up if somebody has given a clear report. This only makes the meeting repetitive and boring and wastes time.

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- The chair's role in the meeting is not just to organise the order of speakers. You must try and facilitate good, democratic decision making and a clear process. It is very important that you do not just point from one person to the next indicating who has to speak next but that you sum up by example saying that there are now 2 positions on the floor and outlining them. Remind people that they have to reach a decision. Try to structure the discussion in a way that helps decision-making.
- The way you chair the meeting will set the tone for how people participate. Be friendly, warm, open and at the same time, be firm. Do not be too tolerant of people who are wasting time and pursuing their own agendas when other people are no longer interested. Close the discussion in a firm and friendly way. Do not cut people short simply because you disagree with what they are saying. Let them have their say.
- When people go off the point be gentle when you try to bring them back to the point. Never humiliate or undermine someone in public.
- When you are dealing with complicated issues it is best to get somebody to give a clear and short explanation and if you need to have a thorough debate about it break people into small groups so that everyone can participate.
- Even if you start meetings late try to finish at the time you promised people. Remember that people have commitments and responsibilities and that you make their lives very difficult if you keep them later than they said. This applies to women especially as they have more responsibilities with children.

Building membership

As the leader of the branch you have a very important role to play in extending the membership of ZANU PF and building our cadres. The way you relate to members of the branch is a key part to this. For many people you will be a role model and your behaviour will influence the way they behave as cadres.

As the local leader of ZANU PF you are also a very powerful person who can destroy people's confidence or belief in the organisation. Therefore a serious responsibility rests on your shoulders. It is very important that our leaders at all levels are as open and approachable as possible. It is our role to encourage new members to participate and to develop the full potential of all our members.

In many areas branch leadership start behaving like gatekeepers who want to keep all the resources and all the power to themselves. Leaders like these are scared of enthusiastic and energetic new members and see them as a threat. Our movement can never grow if this is our approach. As a branch chair you have to behave like a very good soccer coach not like a bad boss or a military commander. It is your job to get the whole branch team to play together to develop their individual talents and to use people in the positions that they can contribute most to the performance of the ZANU PF as a whole. Some tips follow below:

- Make all newcomers feel welcome and find out their interests and skills

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- pair new members up with more experienced people so that they can learn and succeed in what they are doing
- remember to thank and praise people even for small contributions
- make sure that old members do not get into cliques which exclude newcomers
- don't make people feel stupid because of their lack of experience. As the leader of your local ZANU PF branch you are the public face of the ZANU PF. You will represent the ZANU PF on many different forums and whenever there are public meetings or events you will be in the public eye. This means you are responsible for ZANU PF's image and profile in your local community. Here are some examples of things that you can do to increase ZANU PF's image and profile:
 - Make sure that you and other branch leaders get involved in local community issues and play a key role in addressing the problems of the community.
 - Assist other organisations that are dealing with welfare and social problems with their work.
 - Do not undermine and compete with other sectors, government or organisations when it comes to addressing the needs of the community. Rather try to develop relationships and partnerships that benefit everybody.
 - Whenever there is a crisis in your community make sure that you and ZANU PF Executives are there. Examples are death, disaster, fires, floods and so on.
 - In times of community conflict ZANU PF should be there and should get involved in sorting things out constructively. Being a ZANU PF leader does not give you the right to be arrogant. Listen to other people and work out constructive solutions.
 - Celebrate with your community as well so that people don't only associate you and the ANC with disasters and problems.

Dealing with conflict

As the chairperson of the branch you must avoid getting involved in conflict at all costs. Both within the community and within ZANU PF it is your role to resolve conflict and to bring warring factions together and not to contribute to conflict. When you are dealing with conflict it is very important to stay as neutral as possible and even if you believe one side is right you must not take sides publicly.

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