**UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE**

**FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND COMMERCE**

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**
**ALICE CAMPUS (SOUTH AFRICA)**

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY IN RURAL ZIMBABWE: THE CASE OF SANGWE COMMUNAL LANDS**

**BY**

**NAISON**                                    **DZINAVATONGA**

**200705854**

**SUPERVISOR**                          **Prof. S BUTHELEZI**

**A RESEARCH SUBMITED IN FULFIMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTERS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES IN THE FUCULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND COMMERCE**

**2008**

# CHAPTER 1

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

**Introduction**

The concept of community participation in development gained prominence in development discourse in the seventies and since then literature on the subject has grown dramatically. What was initially a radical critique of development has relatively quickly become a staple for development practice in the world. The incorporation of the locals in development projects has become a common phenomenon that almost every organization talks about. The concept originated after it was realized that the top-down approach to development that was in place had serious consequences in project sustainability terms. Therefore, this new approach of community participation in development has been viewed as a panacea for the sustainability of projects at community level.

However, even though the discourse on participation has been widely accepted as a workable alternative for the realization of sustainable development, the rapid proliferation of the term and its myriad applications have sparked a great deal of debate and controversy, and served as an impetus for more critical analyses of the concept in recent times. Furthermore, despite its wide acceptance as a useful approach to rural development there still are many projects that are lying idle and the blame has often been shifted to lack of funding and other factors like inflation as having been behind this set-back. Concerns have thus been raised on the effectiveness of community participation in project sustainability because of the incompatibility of theory and practice. As such, the

concept of community participation has remained a key theme in development dialogue for the past few decades.

**Situational Analysis Prior to Participatory Development**

During the last decades, African countries and many others in the developing world have seen an unprecedented surge in programmes and projects aimed at providing solutions to development woes that have been rocking them. However, despite these efforts, problems hindering rural development have continued unabated and poverty has become increasingly severe and widespread as the quality of life deteriorates, threatening the livelihood of millions of people. The chief reason behind this bottleneck has been the failure of these programmes to include analyses of social and cultural phenomena, which influence the relationship between people and development. Awori *et.al.* (1996:1) have noted that, fundamentally lacking in these approaches has been the peoples' dimension which incorporates their indigenous knowledge, experiences, technologies, aspirations, skills, wisdom, culture and local governance systems.

These past approaches to development were heavily influenced by the models of 'dependency' and 'intervention' based on rescue solutions in times of crises and emergencies. Development efforts were often prescriptive and dictated to the people what organisations thought the people's problem was, and how to solve it. Put differently, the United Nations development Programme (UNDP) (1998:7) has written that, organisations prescribed to the people the 'song' that they wanted them to 'dance' to, rather than 'dancing' with the people to the 'song' that the people had chosen. In this scenario, the

people were viewed as passive recipients of development policies and programmes rather than active participants in the process. The people were dependent on the government and development agencies for solutions to their problems. The general belief was that the people did not have the knowledge to change their own lives, leaving governments, policy planners and experts in development issues to decide for them. Governments and development agencies had for decades, adopted this approach, and solved crises as they arose rather than developing long-term programmes involving the people.

The people for whom these policies were designed were generally marginalized and ignored. They were not given the opportunity to initiate, design and plan development projects that were ultimately expected to help them. In most cases, the people were expected to take over the project in the implementation phase. This approach gave the impression that people, especially rural communities, were not qualified to initiate, design or plan projects or programmes. Furthermore, the development arena was dominated by governments and foreign experts, mostly male. Groups such as women, local based organisations, local people, especially rural communities, were marginalized in the development process. The gender dimension of poverty was overlooked although, according to the UNDP, women represented and still represent the majority of people living in poverty all over the world. Similarly, local skills, talents and experience were underestimated. As such, the government and foreign experts did not understand the real needs of the communities since they did not stay among the people or make an effort to involve them in the choice of development programmes.

As a result, most of the efforts by both governments and development agencies failed to have any lasting impact on the real life situation of the people. In most cases, the development programmes that the people were expected to take over in the implementation phase collapsed; communities did own programmes and projects that were imposed on them and did not feel responsible for their failure or success. However, only recently there has been a shift by governments and development agencies in policy and focus in the attainment of programmes sustainability for sustainable development. These have claimed to be using participatory approach to development in project implementation where the community is allowed free play in the development process, that is, from the design, implementation and the monitoring and evaluation stages. However, in as much as the above is true in the lances of governments and development agencies, the facts on the ground speaks otherwise. The situation is characterized by high level of project unsustainability, which has stifled rural development. As such, questions have been posed as to whether community participation is a hallmark of project sustainability or just one of the processes that is necessary in development articulation.

Emphasizing the lack of community participation in rural development, Matowanyika (1998:11) warns that "… in the history of failed development efforts in Lesotho and the region, a major fault is that programme developments were not rooted in local values, institutions and local people's committed responses". Therefore, it is precisely due to this background of failed development that this applied research in community participation and project sustainability help in unearthing the weaknesses of past and current development discourse.

**Geographical Background of the Study Area**

The area of study is Sangwe Communal Lands. Sangwe is located fifty kilometers north of Chredzi Town. It is about 48, 417 hectares in extend and resided by more than 3, 933 households with a population of about 21, 766 and a density of 0,45 per hectare (Agritex, 1998). Sangwe Communal Lands share a boundary with the Save Valley Conservancy to the North, Gonarezhou National Park to the South, Malilangwe Conservancy and Chizvirizvi Resettlement to the West. The Gonarezhou and the associated conservancies form part of one of the world's largest wildlife and biodiversity reserve, known as the Great Limpopo Transfrontior Park (GLTP) and the Transfrontior Conservation Area (TFCA). The GLTP-TFCA is a wildlife-protected area or Peace Park formed through the joining of Zimbabwe's Gonarezhou National Park, South Africa's Kruger National Park and the Limpopo and Codata 16 of Mozambique. Sangwe Communal Lands' proximity to this region and global initiative makes it one of the most strategically located communal areas in the region as it forms part of the Peace Park's corridor and TFCA which will be the largest combined conservation area of its kind in the world (Malilangwe 2002). In the GLTP there are a lot of developmental and conservation activities expected to take place.

There are five wards in Sangwe Communal Lands and the wards in question are Ward 1 (Dikitiki) and Ward 4 (Mupinga). The Sangwe falls entirely under region five (5) of Zimbabwe. The average rainfall per annum is 450mm and due to its unreliability suitable farming systems are those based on the utilization of the veld. Temperatures are high

with maximum temperatures above 30 degrees. This is especially during the month of October to February. The annual mean temperature has been 22.1 degrees. Farming systems based on beef, goat and wildlife is common. Most of the communities' livelihood is sustained by livestock production whose resource base was destroyed by the 1991-92 devastating drought. Crop production is viable under irrigation.

Soils are dark reddish, brown and moderate deep to deep clay loams and alluvial along rivers and streams such as Save and Mkwasine river among others. As a result of the high clay content of the soils they have good water holding capacity as well as good permeability. The topography comprises of gentle sloping wide crest separated by shallow drainage depressions. The altitude of the area is plus or minus 400m above sea level.

Vegetation comprises of generally a drought tolerant shrub and bush savanna. Trees are durable hard woods suitable for firewood and roofing of houses, for example the *Mopani* and acacia tree species. The *Mopani* fruit, *acacia* and *kigelia Africana pods* and dry leaves of tree species in the area provide winter forage. Thus given such a geographical background one would assume that the area is a haven of developmental activities since the conditions are suitable for NGO interventions to spearhead development and as such the concept of community participation comes under spotlight

## Statement of the Problem

The research is premised on the understanding that the concept of community participation as widely advocated for by the participatory development management model has not lived up to its billing of ensuring sustainable projects in communities. It is clear from empirical evidence that community participation has not brought the results expected of it given a multiplicity of projects that are lying unfinished in rural Zimbabwe. In fact, community participation has been largely rhetorical and not substantive in project sustainability terms. It has remained elusive in the realm of practice. Despite its theoretical popularity in sustainable development, the concept has been undervalued and oversold by development agents and governments in developing countries. These have fallen into the pitfall of taking the phrase participatory development at face value to such an extent that even a bureaucrat going into a rural area in his brand new jeep, and having a few words with the village people, comes back to his office and speaks jubilantly of people's participation in planning.

What is even more striking here is that community participation exercises have largely been spectator politics where ordinary people have mostly become recipients of pre-designed programmes, often the objects of administrative manipulation. It would seem to mean that development agents are determined to impose their own version and understanding of community participation on particular communities. Therefore, it is against such a scenario that the researcher wants to unpackage and repackage the concept of community participation as it relates to project sustainability. The study does not seek

to discredit people participation but to review community participation with the view to advance specific strategies to effect more meaningful forms of engagement, dialogue and empowerment at local level. The thesis, therefore, will suggest a range of conceptual, theoretical and practical steps that the locals subscribe to for the advancement of community participation for project sustainability.

**Justification of the Study**

Little has been written on Sangwe community and its contribution to rural development particularly the Sangwe Communal Lands. It is thus vital to research on the contribution of the indigenous people of Sangwe in rural development, as this will assist policy-makers, development workers, and the communities themselves in undertaking development. This will allow development workers to build on the local culture and institutions to ensure sustainability and success of programmes. Sandwich (2001:14) strongly recommends that, in terms of Transboundary Natural Resources Management (TBNRM) they "…should build on existing internal natural management rather than inventing totally new initiatives…" Research in community participation thus ensures that existing realities are taken into consideration and the concerns, interests and aspirations of communities are taken on board and thus reduces cases of future conflicts.

Article II of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development (1986:3) provides that: "The people should be at the centre of the development process…" Hoffman (1990:159) supported this when he argued, "…we must not speak on behalf of

others who are able to speak in their own name…" In this case, the local people should be allowed to contribute their knowledge, practices and innovations in the process of project sustainability for sustainable development. Opoku (1990) defines development as building on our foundations rather than feverish attempts to catch up with others. This implies that the community is a good foundation, which needs to be taken advantage of. This is precisely why this research tries to highlight what there is in Sangwe communal lands in terms of community contribution to project sustainability.

It is hoped that the people of Sangwe Communal Lands can use these findings and recommendations of this study in their future development plans. The research can also contribute to massive regional and global development initiatives taking shape in South-Eastern Zimbabwe like the GLTP-TFCA covering Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa. Again, it is also hoped that the study will lay the foundation for further research in community participation and its contribution to project sustainability. So far, there are communities in Sangwe Communal Lands that are actively participating in developmental programmes that are in operation in the area. These are the Machoka, Manjira, Chimene, Kushinga, Chitsa and Chibememe. The research has no doubt added value to such community-based initiatives and thus helps filling the information gap currently in existence.

Furthermore, the study is believed to expose the existing realities with regards to the non-implementation of the strategy of community participation and this will in turn spark necessary action by government and NGOs to fully utilize community participation in

project implementation. Given such a scenario one would think that it is not only necessary but imperative to undertake the research as it is valid in current development discourse.

**Objectives of the Study**

The study will be guided by the following objectives:

- to evaluate the effectiveness of community participation in project sustainability in rural Zimbabwe;

- to investigate why the concept of community participation has not lived up to its expectations of ensuring project sustainability given its massive popularity;

- to explore the community's own perceptions and evaluations of participation and the implementing agencies' conceptualization of participation; and

- to suggest recommendations on various issues pertaining to community participation and project sustainability.

**Theoretical Framework**

This research has been influenced and guided by the critical theory of social development. Critical theorists assume society is cloaked in suffering and oppression. Thus the goal of this theory is to free the communities from the sources of domination and oppression. By being dominated and oppressed, the communities are not able to participate in development projects, a situation which is obtaining now. As such, the

critical theory questions whether past and current practices address social justice and empowerment and whether those practices have a commitment to oppressed persons. Given such a situation the researcher has seen it fit to premise this study on the critical theory as it has demonstrated that it values the contribution of the communities in development since they are the often oppressed and dominated in this capitalistic world.

**Delimitation of the Study**

The study is delimited to the rural areas of Zimbabwe. The researcher opted to limit his study in a rural set-up simply because many developmental projects that are operational in Zimbabwe are in the rural areas, and, furthermore, the government of Zimbabwe has emphasized its attention more on rural communities since the emergence of vibrant opposition politics in the country. As such, the researcher needs to investigate whether this shift in policy is a genuine shift and not cheap politics that is meant to cheat the people into supporting it.

The study is further delimited to Sangwe Communal lands of Chiredzi in Zimbabwe. Sangwe Communal Lands have been chosen mainly because the area falls within the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP), a region that comprises three countries that are South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. This makes the area unique and this uniqueness has attracted attention of researchers into researching about the area. Furthermore, there are many NGOs that are operating in the area since the uniqueness of the area attracts funding from international donors. More importantly, the researcher has

seen it fit to choose this area because it is inhabited by a multiplicity of ethnic groups and as such, the researcher wants to explore how these different ethnic groups conceptualize participatory development since this term is argued to mean differently to different people in different settings. Furthermore, the Sangwe area is inhabited by active communities that value their participation in development as a key to sustainable projects. This is evidenced by their active participation in the implementation of projects in the area.

**Definition of Key Terms**

- Brown states that **community participation** is the active process by which beneficiary groups influence the direction and the execution of a project rather than merely being consulted or receiving the share of the project benefits. The beneficiary groups do this with a view of enhancing their well being in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance or other values they cherish (Theron, 2005:115-116). Nghikembua (1996:2) is of the opinion that community participation is about "…empowering people to mobilize their own capacities, be social actors …manage their resources, make decisions and control activities that affect their lives. Theron (2005b:117) agrees that community participation "…implies decentralization of decision making and entails self-mobilization and public control of the development process"

- A number of conceptual problems are associated with the definition of **community**. One reason for this is that communities are seldom, if ever, homogenous and unified (Emmett, 2000:3). Swanepoel (1992:11) defines a

**community** as a living entity, which like its people, continuously changes physically and psychologically. A community means interaction, equality and opportunity within the group and the possibility to grow in a collective consciousness (Oakley et al, 1991:220)

- Kok and Gelderbloem (1994: 58) regard **empowerment** as seeking to increase the control of the underprivileged sectors of society over the resources and decisions affecting their lives and their participation in the benefits produced by the society in which they live.

- Bryant and White (1982:110) define a **project** as an intervention that addresses a particular problem. A project is a one-off set of activities with a definite beginning and an end. Projects furthermore vary in size and scope. The task of getting the activities done on time, within budget and according to specifications, is referred to as **project management**. In the typical project, team members are temporarily assigned to a project manager, who coordinates the activities of the project with other departments. The project exists only long enough to complete its specific objectives. This is why it is temporary (Robbins and Decenzo 2004:415)

- According to Roodt (2001:469), participation is regarded as one of the ingredients necessary to promote sustainable development. Oakley et al (1991:18) agree and argue that participation can ensure that local communities maintain project dynamics. Oakley et al (1991:8) conclude by defining **sustainability** as continuity of what the community has started, and these researchers see participation as fundamental to developing self-sustaining momentum of development in a

particular area. Honadle and Van Sant (1985:7) regard sustainability as the ability to manage post project dynamics through the use of a permanent institution.

- Dresner (2002:1) states that **sustainable development** is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

- **Capacity** is the ability of a community to carry out its functions more effectively (Glickman and Servon, 2003:240). Morss and Gow (1985:135) regard capacity as the ability to make informed decisions, attract and absorb resources and to manage resources to achieve objective in an efficient way.

- According to Burkey (1993:50), **self-reliance** means doing things for one's own self, whilst maintaining confidence in making independent decisions. When people are self-reliant, their ability to devise solutions themselves to whatever problems they are experiencing improves.

- The World Bank (1996:25) states that **stakeholders** are those affected by the outcome – negatively or positively – or those who can affect the outcome of a proposed intervention. These may be either individuals or group representatives (Integrated Environmental Management Information Series, 2002:14)

# CHAPTER 2

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Introduction**

This chapter describes the research methods used in a study on the concept of community participation as it relates to project sustainability in rural Zimbabwe particularly the Sangwe Communal Lands of Chiredzi. The research was made possible by the use of various research tools. The research methods that were used included secondary and primary data collection methods. Secondary data in this case refers to data already prepared in the form of both published and unpublished documents on participatory development management. On the other hand primary data collection methods refer to field data survey.

These methods that were used were both qualitative and quantitative in nature. With regards to qualitative techniques the researcher took advantage of the usefulness of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques such as focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews with key informants. Qualitative techniques are essential in the sense that they emphasize stakeholder participation and mutual learning. They also promote continuous learning, self-assessment and sharing of experience. Whilst the quantitative approach such as household interviews was useful in obtaining personal information from the respondents, physical inspection and on the spot checks were helpful in collecting data on the effectiveness of community participation in ensuring sustainable projects in communities.

**Secondary Data**

A desk study in which the researcher familiarized with participatory development management issues in project implementation was undertaken. Secondary data used was precisely literature on participatory development. This form of literature included material and documents on Sangwe Communal Lands prepared by government ministries and NGOs. Secondary data collected through baseline surveys by NGOs like SAFIRE, Africa 2000 Plus Network, Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEFSGP) and many others were used in this research. Among these include the SAFIRE socio-economic baseline survey report for Chibememe village and minutes for Save Valley Conservancy Trust board meeting.

Socio-economic baseline information for villages Such as Chibememe was also obtained from Africa 2000 Plus Network. The reports provided information on the socio-economic status of the Villages in terms of the population. Also information on sustainable livelihoods was found in these documents especially sustainable agriculture or Small grain production. From Chiredzi Rural District council's campfire department and AREX the researcher collected information concerning the wards and villages. The Council thus provided the ward maps for the area under study.

**Qualitative Techniques**

**Participatory Rural Appraisal Tools**

Participatory Rural Appraisal is a process in which Communities analyze their own situation and make decisions themselves about how best to tackle their problems**.** It is a qualitative research method used to gain an in depth Understanding of a community or situation. The technique based on the philosophy that outsiders need to learn from the insiders, and the insiders can analyze their own problems (AGRITEX, 2000).

**Focus Group Discussions**

At list one focus group discussion was undertaken in each ward. The participants comprised of age, sex and religion. This strategy ensured cross-fertilization of information. Selection of participants in the discussions was also based on a 50:50 gender composition to ensure that participatory development related issues associated with both men and woman are captured. This even helped in evaluating the level of awareness of participatory development among participants of different sexes. To avoid biases participants in the groups were selected by counting, where even numbers comprised one group and odd numbers the other. A questionnaire checklist to guide the discussions was used.

**Semi-structured Interviews**

Interviews with key informants were also conducted in this research. This method was used to get information from institutions and organizations involved in projects implementation in Sangwe Communal Lands of Chiredzi. Traditional leaders and local authority representatives were interviewed as part of local leadership. Special attention was given to rules and by-laws governing project implementation in the Sangwe area. This also included policy issues related to community participation in project implementation in the area.

**Table 1: Breakdown of traditional leaders interviewed by ward**

| Ward name | Total number of headmen | Number interviewed | Percentage |
|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Ward 1 | 30 | 6 | 20% |
| Ward 4 | 40 | 8 | 20% |

Source: Survey data (2008)

Also government extension workers, NGO representatives and other enlightened individuals in the area were interviewed. All these different personalities gave accounts of how they view community participation and that gave the researcher clear information on participatory development from all stakeholders. In situations where some issues remained unclear, the researcher probed in order to get more information.

**Quantitative Methods**

**Household Interviews**

Household questionnaires were administered in ward 1 and 4 respectively with the help of research assistants. Sampling for the target interviewees was done at three levels. These are ward, village and household level. The researcher employed purposive and random sampling techniques at each level as illustrated in the table below.

**Table 2: Sampling technique number and percentage sampled**

| Task | Sampling method | Total | Number sampled | % |
|------|-----------------|-------|----------------|---|
| Ward selection | Purposive sampling | 5 | 2 | 40 |
| Village selection | Random sampling | 70 | 7 | 10 |
| Household selection | Random sampling | 256 | 68 | 27 |

Source: Dzinavatonga (2008)

**Sampling at Ward and Village Level**

Sangwe Communal Lands are comprised of five wards that are ward 1 to 5. Ward 1 is settled predominantly by ndau people while wards 2 to 5 comprise of a mixture of people of ndau, karanga, and shangani ethnic background. The researcher used a 40% sample size of the five wards implying that two wards were selected for the study. In selecting the two wards a purposive sampling technique was used where ethnic representation was

the guiding principle. In this case ward 1 comprising exclusively of ndau ethnical background was selected. Ward 4 was picked up from the other four wards with the shangani ethnic group as the majority. This was selected purposively because general information from NGOs, government ministries and departments has shown that it is representative of the other three wards (2,3 and 5) that is in terms of ethnic, cultural and socio-economic background.

A random sampling technique was used in selecting villages in the two wards. A list of villages was obtained from the councilors' records of drought relief or food aid. A 10% sample size was used where ward 1 with thirty villages had three villages selected, while four villages were selected in ward 4 from a total of forty villages. A total of seven villages were selected from the two wards and these villages are Chibememe, Tangurana, Mahlasera, Chivhiko, Jekero, Mugejo and Munyangani. These villages were selected using a random number table where each ward's villages were assigned a number and numbers were written on small cards, which were shuffled and handpicked by the researcher. This determined the target villages for the survey. This implies that every village had an equal probability of being selected.

**Sampling at Household Level**

A total of sixty-eight households were interviewed from a total of two hundred and fifty-six households forming a 27% sample size. The questionnaire breakdown per village was as follows:

**Table 3: Household questionnaire breakdown by ward and village**

| Ward | Village | Number of households | 27% sample size |
|------|---------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Chibememe | 19 | 6 |
| 1 | Tangurana | 37 | 9 |
| 1 | Mahlasera | 38 | 9 |
| 4 | Jekero | 68 | 19 |
| 4 | Chivhiko | 29 | 8 |
| 4 | Munyangani | 26 | 7 |
| 4 | Mugejo | 39 | 10 |
| **Total sample** | | **256** | **68** |

Source: Dzinavatonga (2008)

Information on households was collected from the headmen who are current chairpersons of the new Village Committees. Selection of sampled households was precisely random where each household stood a chance of being interviewed. However because of the unavailability of residents in their homes in some cases selection had to be based on households with people during time of research. Systematic sampling could have been used but because the research was undertaken when the country was facing chronic food shortages which means some households had no people since they had gone to look for food to feed their families.

**Observation or on the Spot Checks**

The researcher, with the assistance of local leadership toured already existing projects in the study area. Examples are the Chibememe Earth Healing Association Conservation Programmes, Zivembava Island Forest Biodiversity Conservation Programme and the Machoka Catchment Rehabilitation Programme. These visits helped the researcher very much in ascertaining the level of willingness among the communities in as far as project implementation is concerned.

# CHAPTER 3

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## Introduction

The last decades have seen academics, policy-makers and planners as well as development agents pressing that community participation should be integrated into mainstream development. This implies that various scholars have written a substantial amount of literature dealing with participatory development management issues. However, much of the literature on community participation is project documentation by international and local NGOs on particular projects they support. As such, there is the likelihood that these organizations might have been concentrating more on their role in ensuring successful community participation and ultimately overstating the case. Therefore, there is a need to dig deep quite extensively to uncover the community participation element in projects at community level to bring forth a clearer picture of participatory development management.

## Community Participation: A Conceptual Framework

The definition of participation is one of the most problematic issues in development discourse. The term is complex, broad and essentially contestable. It has sparked a great deal of debate and controversy among think tanks in the development discourse and no agreement has been reached yet on the actual conceptualization of community participation. To this end, the World Bank (1996) has argued that, participation is a rich

concept that means different things to different people in different settings. As such, different scholars have thus advanced different meanings. But, however, given the complexity of community participation it is necessary to firstly grapple with the terms "community" and "participation" in their individual capacity to best explain the concept of community participation. Nick Wates (2000:184) has thus defined a "community" as a group of people sharing common interests and living within a geographically defined area. Thus a community generally has two certain elements, that is, physical boundary and social interests common among the people. Important to note here is that the word "community" has both social and spatial dimensions and that generally the people within a community come together to achieve a common objective, even if they have certain differences.

With regards to 'participation' Wates (2000:194) defines it as the act of being involved in something. Habraken is of the opinion that, participation can either represent assigning certain decisive roles to the users, where they share the decision-making responsibility with the professionals. The other type of participation is where there is no shift of responsibilities between the users and professionals but instead only the opinion of the user is considered while making decisions. Therefore, given such a clarification of terminologies surrounding the concept of community participation it is, therefore, relatively easy to conceptualize community participation in development process.

Rahman (1993) has defined community participation as an active process in which the participants take initiatives and take action that is stimulated by their own thinking and

deliberation and over which they can exert effective control. Important to note here is that such an approach instils a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the programme, and in turn leads to sustainability of programmes (Chambers 1983). A more related definition of community participation is given by Brown (2000) who has regarded community participation as the active process by which beneficiaries influence the direction and the execution of the project rather than merely being consulted or receiving the share of the benefits. The World Bank (1996) has given a slightly different definition of participation when it views participation as a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them. Wolfe seems to conform to the above explanation. He views participation as "the organized efforts to increase control over resources and groups and movements hitherto excluded from such control."

While the debate goes on, for the purpose of this thesis, the definition by Rahman supported by Brown will be used since it appears to include all the facets that are necessary for participatory development management to take shape. The definition implies that people are the objects of development and it is their involvement in the direction and execution of projects that is of concern here. Thus in this thesis, participatory development is conceptualized as a process that is made possible by various actors but the emphasis is on active participation of the beneficiaries at all levels of the project life. Of particular importance here is that phrases 'participatory development,' and 'community participation,' and in some instances, 'community development,' are often used interchangeably. So to avoid being bogged down in semantic deliberations

both participatory development and community participation in this presentation will be used to refer to that participation of beneficiaries in development projects at community level. As such, literature has shown that a shift to participatory development by development agencies, policy-makers and scholars has been due to the realization that participation by stakeholders, particularly the beneficiaries is crucial to the success of any project. Oakley noted that, failed community level efforts resulted from project failure to take on board the local values, institutions and local people's committed responses.

A cursory review of rural development projects undertaken by a variety of institutions in Zimbabwe and the world over, would tell a number of stories, that is, from admirable success to outright failure of participatory development. Almost all the agencies would profess employment of participatory methodologies in project implementation at community level. Participatory development or more precisely, community participation has become the catch phrase in development jargon. So common has it become that it is almost synonymous with people-led development or rural development to be more precise.

Very few interventions would claim failure to employ participatory methodologies in their activities. As to why the concept of community participation and its mutations has become so commonplace, Chibememe Earth Healing Association (CHIEHA), a local organisation in Sangwe has pointed out that the concept belongs to the most tested and successful rural or people-centered development paradigms ever employed by

development agencies. As such, community participation has become a development dogma subscribed to by most development institutions, agencies and practitioners.

**Participatory Development Debate**

The concept, participatory development, is a matter on which there is considerable disagreement among development scholars and practitioners. In fact, scholars have agreed to disagree on the contribution of community participation in rural development. Some have gone to the extent of questioning the validity of the concept in current development discourse, while others hail it as a panacea to achieve sustainable development in communities. As a result of these differences in view-points, current accounts of participation suffer from a lack of understanding and what it expects to achieve. Such a situation has been frequently steeped in ideological debate, which further mystifies and romanticizes the concept, making practical application even more problematic. However, despite the lack of consensus on the importance of and a conceptual framework for participation, it has remained a key theme in development discourse. As such various views have been put forward by different scholars in a bid to unpack the concept as it relates to project sustainability.

Amongst the eminent scholars in rural development is Robert Chambers who is believed to be the chief proponent of the current participatory development model in operation in the development discourse. Chambers has grappled with the concept of community participation very well. He is totally opposed to the top-down approach that development

agencies have been using. Chambers (1989) has noted that the 1970s development approaches as propounded by the neo-Fabians and the neo-liberals embody

> *a planner's core, centre-outwards, top-down view of rural development. They start with the economies, not people; with the macro not the micro; with the view from the office not the field. And in consequence their prescription tend to be uniform, standard and for universal application.*

Chambers, therefore, advocates for a bottom-up approach where the emphasis is on the community as an active participant in development projects. He believes that a critical mass and momentum was reached in the 1990s that enables the rise and the spread of participatory rural appraisal techniques.

To Chambers, community participation offers a means of empowering the poor, the marginalized and the disenfranchised in societies in the design and implementation of programmes without external influence or pressure.  The role of the agencies is that of facilitating not to influence decisions in the life of community development initiatives. Chambers, therefore, has a vision of a participatory approach to development problems that is led by the grassroots, and includes the perspectives of all stakeholders. In Chambers' view, rather than a one-sided extraction process by external evaluators, local stakeholders are empowered to choose and define procedures and methods in their own terms. Thus Chambers champions the exulting of the locals to the first position in the development process who in this case have been viewed as the last and fit to receive development rather than initiate it. With this thrust of putting the first last, Chambers presents a new exciting and practical agenda for sustainable development.

However, Chambers' works on participatory development are not without criticisms. Though he has been dubbed the 'godfather' of participatory development management model, Chambers takes community participation for granted to such an extent that he oversimplifies matters. In his PRA concept as a tool to achieve participatory development he overlooked complex power relations within communities and present an unrealistic view of group behaviour and dynamics. Cooke and Kothari (2001) confirmed the above argument when they said, that the emphasis on participation obscures many limitations and manipulations that suppress power differentials. Furthermore, Chambers seems to be unaware of the machinations of capitalism in all its forms that work against participation. His point that agencies should be facilitators was not well thought out, because he failed to realize that these very same agencies that purports to facilitate project implementation often hijack community programmes and sometimes report in their own format to donors, misrepresenting facts for them to get further funding. As Kothari points out, external agendas can easily be presented as local needs by project facilitators and the process of participation can be employed to legitimize donor priorities by rubber-stamping or manufacturing community consent.

Cooke and Kothari (2001) see the idea of participatory development as flawed, idealistic or naïve. The above scholars are wary of the mechanical acceptance of participatory approaches to development. As such, their works produces a counterbalance to the context of contemporary development thinking that treats participation as a panacea to sustainable development. They have challenged the pervasive belief that participation is unequivocally good. They have gone to the extent of likening participation to a tyrant. To

them, participation creates false illusions of empowerment while at the same time reinforcing norms and existing power hierarchies. Responding to Chambers' argument that participation empowers the community to make decisions on the issues that affect them, Cooke and Kothari (2001) hold the view that decision-making control is theoretically held and as such it is alien to the community in practical terms. These two are particularly concerned by the lack of attention to power structures at the micro-level and feels that the focus on the local can exacerbate existing inequalities because the production and representation of knowledge is inseparable from the exercise of power.

The above argument by Cooke and Kothari is, therefore, a clear challenge to current practice to create real space for the poor to voice their views. However, in as much as Cooke and Kothari might have a point to prove in their assessment of community participation they are rather too radical. They only criticize without giving a possible alternative to development thinking. One would think that Cooke and Kothari suggest possible ways of accommodating the locals in the development process rather than grilling the process without replacing it with an alternative concept.

Williams has also contributed his views in this debate on community participation. Williams (2004) challenges current models of empowerment that are implicit in the literature on participatory development. He neatly encapsulates the major issues with Chambers' idealized vision of participatory development. Williams stresses the need for development practitioners to engage with the political aspects of development and recognize that empowerment is an inherently political struggle. He maintains that it is

naïve to ignore the political nature of participation and rely on idealized narratives of communal behaviour that understate power and politics. For Williams, the pursuit of participation is politically motivated and he is equally reluctant to give in to Chambers' romanticism or Kothari's bleak standpoint. Unlike Kothari whose critique does not offer an alternative view of development, William illustrates that far from being a redundant concept, participation can be genuinely transformative with positive outcomes for all participants. However, Williams' weakness is that he is not sure of his position. He at some point agrees with Chambers, another point agrees with Kothari, and as such, readers may get lost on the pros and cons of the concept of participation. Therefore, because of this observation the researcher hopes to give an independent account of the concept that is not based on other scholars' views but the communities themselves.

**International Conventions Guiding the Use of Participatory Approach**

Although previous developmental assumptions regarded community participation as a no match to developmental initiatives, there has been a marked change as international legislative and policy instruments consider it central to the achievement of sustainable development. A clinical look at the various legislative instruments shows that community participation has gained recognition at the international level. Among the conventions include the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), Convention to Combat Desertification and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) or Johannesburg Declaration (2002) among others. The Rio Declaration (1992) makes it

unequivocally clear that, rural communities, their knowledge and traditions are pivotal in the attainment of sustainable development. Principle 22 0f the declaration states that;

> *Indigenous people and their communities have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development. (Journal for social Development 1994:21)*

Agenda 21 covers issues on indigenous peoples and sustainable development in general. Chapter 26 provides that there has to be recognition of indigenous values, traditional knowledge and resource management practices with a view to promoting environmentally sound sustainable development. Ramots'oari (1998) observed that in essence Agenda 21 calls for smart partnership arrangements between the government, indigenous peoples and their communities

Mayet (2002) argues that the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) is the first international treaty to acknowledge the vital role of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices in conserving and using biodiversity. It thus acknowledges the role that community participation has in sustainable development. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) also sings the same song of putting the local people first in developmental initiatives for the realization of sustainable development.

However, in as much as the international community has legitimized community participation through the enactment of various conventions but, in reality organizations are devoting much of their time talking about it rather than implementing it. A classical example is the Tanzanian experience during Nyerere's era. Kalumuna (1998: 97) argued

that Tanzania during Nyerere's rule was gripped by "…the desire to catch up with the developed countries. Like many developing countries' leaders Nyerere's ideology was that ….Tanzania has to run while others walk so that we can catch up and go to the moon". This thus implies that community participation had no room in such a philosophy.

Of particular importance here is that these international legislative instruments are mere instruments that only legalize community participation but they do not explain how this participation should be done on the ground. Furthermore, organizations and governments seem to give deaf ears to the participation of communities in development since these conventions are mere conventions that do not have mechanisms to punish member states in case a member fails to comply with the conventions. Hence it is necessary to embark on this task of researching about the concept of community participation in sustainable development so as to further conscientise the various actors in development on the importance of community participation in development.

# CHAPTER 4

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

### Legal and Policy Context for Community Participation in Zimbabwe since 1980

With the attainment of independence saw the government of Zimbabwe adopting a socialist path to development since socialism influenced the struggle for independence. Given that the new government took over from a racist and capitalist government that had not been respecting the concerns of the black rural people, the newly formed government was faced with the biggest task of integrating people into the development process, particularly the local people in their respective localities. Therefore, preceding policies by government were coined in such a manner that was thought to be accommodative of the local people in the development process. But whether the enactment of these policies meant total participation or not is another story.

From 1980 to 1988 the system of rural local government comprised the poorly resourced District Councils in the Communal Areas administered in terms of the District Councils Act of 1980 and the richer Rural Councils in the commercial farming areas. The period since 1988 has seen the amalgamation of Rural Councils and District Councils through the Rural District Councils Act to establish what became to be known as Rural District Councils (RDCs). The latter have been empowered to plan developmental initiatives in their areas. The establishment of RDCs was followed by the restructuring of the administration of rural areas. The express objective of this was to ensure that planning

would begin "at the lowest level and not (be) imposed from above" (Government of Zimbabwe, 1990:2). In this case, the central government devolved power to the RDCs to take decisions regarding development in their areas.

Just immediately after the attainment of independence Mugabe remarked that "Government is determined to embark on policies and programmes designed to involve fully in the development process the entire people who are the beginning and end of society, the very asset of the country and the raison d'etre of government". Following this remark were deliberate policies that ensured the participation of communities in development processes. In 1984 Robert Mugabe issued a directive to establish planning structures from village level to national level to ensure a more participatory and bottom-up approach to development planning. This saw a creation of Ward Development Committees (WARDCOs) and Village Development Committees (VIDCOs). These aimed at facilitating participation in development programmes from grassroots level. It is important to note that a WARDCO is led by a politically elected councilor and it follows that the elected official often come with party developmental projects to the people instead of listening to what his constituency needs. As such the Party comes first and people then follow. The same situation applies to VIDCOs which are led by the chairpersons. So instead of being a bottom-up approach the whole process has lost its initial mandate since what is on the White Paper is not what is on the ground. Thus community participation has remained rhetoric and not a reality. Nevertheless this was one giant-step towards the decentralization process.

The year 2000 when the country was at the hive of political tension between the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) (ZANUPF) also saw the government enacting the Traditional Leaders Act which sought to strengthen the role of traditional leaders over local planning and development issues. The Traditional Leaders Act (2000) gave the chiefs, headmen, and village heads the powers to co-ordinate development in their areas. To co-ordinate development literally means traditional leaders are supposed to work with the people in ensuring sustainable development in their respective areas. This Act gives traditional leaders a wide range of powers in the planning process. However, since the traditional leaders are widely responsible in the planning process what it, therefore, means is that in a developmental project the locals are only implementers of an already designed project. As such, that project is bound to fail because of the inadequacy of beneficiary involvement from the planning to implementation stage. Furthermore, developmental initiatives spearheaded by traditional leaders are subject to selective participation because of political affiliation, since the whole institution of traditional leaders has been politicized by the government. This scenario is a nemesis to project sustainability since community participation entails total involvement of all the people regardless of political affiliation.

Planning in Zimbabwe is usually initiated at national or district level to achieve national or district objectives. It is important to underscore that government policy on community participation is multi-sectoral. Under its policy on the environment the government instituted the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources

(CAMPFIRE). The premise of the initiative was that local populations have an economic stake in the conservation of wildlife. Thus local participation is used as a tactic to fulfill national conservation objectives. However, the whole process has come under fire for not taking community participation seriously. It has been argued that, conservation institutions developed at national level are inserted into the existing administrative framework at the village and district level. Essentially this is a top-down approach which is alien to community participation.

Besides the above stated legislations as enacted by the government, the Zimbabwean government has also a clear-cut policy on decentralization whose main objective has been to effect the legislated transfer of functions from central government to local authorities and in the process redefine the role of central government in the provision and administration of services and infrastructure at provincial, district and community level. The policy is administered by the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing. The policy re-aligns the centre as it changes the role of the centre away from implementation to facilitation through the provision of policy direction and capacity building. The policy also empowers local government to plan and deliver services in consultation with citizens and other sectors. As such, the policy is said to have empowered communities to participate in their own development, including the marginalized and poorer groups since in the eyes of its proponents it ensures that planning and decision-making processes are inclusive and avoid domination by the elite.

Under the decentralization policy the government has initiated a Capacity Building Programme as a strategy to enable the rural district councils to take charge of the responsibilities being decentralized to them. This capacity building programme focuses on institutional framework strengthening, human resources development as well as financial management. However, the successful implementation of the decentralization policy hinges on the rural district councils that are mandated to take charge of the process through effective coordination to ensure the full participation of all stakeholders in the development process.

It is worth noting here that despite its good intentions, there exists a wide gap between theory and practice. The policy has remained a neatly written White Paper whose fruits are yet to be harvested. The policy simply entrenches the hegemony of the government over the development process and thus relegating communities to only the recipients of development, rather than the initiators of development in their respective localities. The fact that local councils have been mandated through the policy to plan, consult and deliver services is indicative enough to expose the policy as a 'white elephant' that is contributing nothing meaningful to genuine community participation for sustainable projects. Above all, the policy was mooted from above and lacks grassroots input. As such it is top-down in nature, hence the need to reformulate and refocus the policy so that it can be community-oriented in outlook.

**The State and Community Participation**

Literature on rural development has not dealt adequately with the issue of the role of the state in community participation. Given the dominance of the state in the lives and affairs of its citizens, community participation advocates are left with no choice but to include the activities of the state in social development. Therefore, it is naïve to argue that state involvement in social development is superfluous and that local communities in developing societies can solve the serious problems of poverty and deprivation wholly on their own efforts. Also, it is equally naïve to assume that a cosy relationship between the state and the local communities will emerge and that political elites, professionals and administrators will readily agree to the devolution of their authority to ordinary people. While community participation is a desirable goal, the extensive involvement of the state in social development complicates the issue and requires further analysis.

The state is one of the fundamental stakeholders whose presence is necessary in the community participation matrix for rural development, particularly at project level. The role of the state in this case is informed by an attitude or a commitment to achieve sustainable development in communities. The commitment is designed to be a long-term one, which means that development should be given a climate in which to grow and prosper. No wonder why Swanepoel (2000:86) is of the opinion that successful development needs a firm government commitment. Many states or governments in developing nations have claimed to exhibit maximum commitment in rural development policy to ensure an enabling environment for community participation in development

efforts. Swanepoel (2000:87), has emphasized the role of the state in community participation through policy formulation, and argued that, without a national commitment reflected in a national policy there would be no basis or binding factor for development, and that development would therefore, at best be haphazard and ad hoc. It is important to note here that national policy commitment and administrative support are intertwined to such an extent that a lack in one of them would render the whole process of community participation impossible in real terms.

Ideally the state is the supporter of development. This implies a lesser role for the state, both in effort and in importance. Swanepoel notes, if the state is the supporter of development, someone else has to be the initiator and the manager of that development. Swanepoel is thus advocating for the localization of development with the locals playing a greater role. The state would be just a partner whose role is to provide a conducive environment through an enabling policy, the provision of expertise, infrastructure and development funding for the locals to initiate developmental projects in their different localities. The local people therefore, should take responsibility for development: they should make the decisions and they should do the planning.

States in developing societies agree with the notion that popular participation is necessary if sustainable development is to be achieved. Referring to the Rwandan community the then president of Rwanda, Habyarimana, is quoted by Goran Hyden *et. al.* (1992:40) as having said that,

*We must have confidence in the population; they must be consulted on everything that has to do with their development. …The communes that have carried out these instructions are clearly developing more quickly than the others.*

Such admittance by the person of the president is indicative of the importance of community participation in rural development for project sustainability. States often use local governments and government departments to harmonize the community with development. This is witnessed in most, if not all, developing states. Zimbabwe is one such state that uses government departments to spearhead development in communities, particularly through extension workers.

However, analysts familiar with state politics and administration wonder how the encouragement of participation will be implemented in the government departments as currently structured. A look at the role of extension workers illustrates this point. Critics point out that the structures within which government appointed extension workers does their work are not conducive to making them representatives of popular masses. Extension workers have been criticized for telling the communal people what to do and what not to do. Therefore, from the point of view of the masses, an extension worker represents the power of the central government and the most evident role of the extension worker is to collect taxes, fines, levies and so on. The Rwandan government in 1988 acknowledged the above argument when Habyarimana criticized the proliferation of taxes. He is quoted as having said that, "these contributions are necessary but they should note bankrupt the population" (Habyarimana 1988:35-40). Summing up the whole situation one donor study, as put forward by Hyden et. al, observes that "training and visit is a hierarchical, top-down system of working with farmers and the local population in

which the extension agents look up, not down, that is, they are accountable to their superiors and not to their clients.

**NGOs and Community Participation**

There is widespread recognition in rural development that NGOs play a significant part in helping the rural poor to break out of their condition of poverty through sustainable projects in communities. Certainly, a major source of these NGOs lies in their idealism and values which include their spirit of voluntarism and independence. Since the inception of the concept of community participation in rural development NGOs have been claiming to either have employed or employing the participatory development model in rural development.  In fact NGOs have become important agents promoting beneficiary participation in development. Referring to the Zimbabwean scenario, Makumbe notes that, both indigenous and foreign NGOs play a significant role in organizing grassroots people to participate in such activities as cattle feeding schemes, woodlot development, well digging and market gardening.

In rural development initiatives the world over, and in particular the developing societies, most NGOs consider the empowerment of the poor as their major goal and objective. Gladman Chibememe of the Chibememe Earth Healing Association (CHIEHA) is quoted by Africa 2000 Plus Network; a local NGO as having said that, empowerment has become so common in development jargon to levels that almost anyone in the development arena views it as a pre-requisite for the achievement of sustainable

development. Of significance here is that the empowerment process can be as basic as enabling groups to improve their conditions through socio-economic projects. However many NGOs view empowerment as a much more encompassing process that enables people, particularly the poor, to confront and deal with the factors that are causing their suffering.

In practical terms NGOs deem active participation by the poor in their development process as an essential pre-condition to their empowerment. However, according to IFAD, this participation is not only supposed to be in the implementation stage of projects but also in their conceptualization, design, monitoring and evaluation. Most NGOs have argued that, they have developed a highly effective participatory process to increase the involvement of the poor in their own development processes, to analyze and to act upon their situations through their own eyes and not as defined by the outside agencies. NGOs in this case simply supply the expertise and the starting capital and equipment. Beneficiaries are supposed to provide the bulk of the labour requirements for the projects. Gladman of the CHIEHA initiative holds the view that NGOs should play a passive role in project implementation as facilitators and not as implementers. The role of implementing has to be left to the beneficiaries who in this case know best what they need and ultimately how to go about the whole process. The argument by Gladman implies that NGOs need not direct and tell the people what to do but rather listen to what the people want and then help them achieve their goals and aspirations.

NGOs are welcome in development activities at the local level because they enable people to have confidence in themselves since they allow people to make decisions about development. The material benefits accruing to the community are believed to be more visible when NGOs are involved in local development than when central government is involved. Makumbe (1996:77) has quoted grassroots-based government officials in Zimbabwe as having said that, government-initiated and funded projects usually take longer to implement than the NGO-initiated and funded ones. Most of these officials, according to Makumbe, felt that this was inevitable since it takes time to get central government to release funds for approved projects, a situation that is alien to NGOs.

However, in as much as NGOs have a very significant role to play in the development arena, especially in community development their work has not been spared from criticisms by various rural development commentators. It has been argued that even though the various NGOs spearheading development in communities claim successful implementation of the participatory development model in project implementation with communities, a close look at the actual events on the ground reveals otherwise. Referring to the Angolan situation, the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) (2003:44), a local organisation in Angola, noted that;

> *…while there is a consensus that humanitarian programmes in Angola*
> *have saved many lives, there is also debate. One criticism centres on*
> *the form of humanitarian action during acute crisis and its top-down*
> *nature*

NGOs have been accused of taking the word "participation" or phrase "participatory development" at face value. The terms are underscored by such simplicity that easily tempts one away from a deeper search of what they really stand for. This simplicity makes participation an easy philosophy to subscribe to. The problem is that the terms describe a process that is difficult if not impossible to measure. Therefore, due to the relative ease with which most of the NGOs approach participation the concept has suffered all, from abuse to casual transformations and renderings of its true meaning. Some NGOs have even been accused of manufacturing community consent for them to get funding from International donors that value the participation of beneficiaries in project implementation as a pre-requisite for funding.

**Community Participation in Zimbabwe**

In Zimbabwe there seems to be a lot of literature on community participation. However, most of the information is scattered in different works whose thrust is not precisely community participation documentation. Important to note here is that much of the literature is project documentation by NGOs that are working with particular communities.

Makumbe (1996) examines the concept of participation in development as applied to Zimbabwe since independence. He notes that participatory development can be presented as a continuum of participation levels from passive participation, where donor or government-initiated ideas are promoted, to active participation where the recipients are

involved in all stages of a development project. However, in as much as Makumbe has tried to explain the concept of participatory development in Zimbabwe he has not done justice to the subject matter. He is pre-occupied with the role NGOs play in project life and little attention is given to the role of the beneficiaries in project implementation.

Zinyama (1992) also tried to explain the concept of community participation. Zinyama argues that the process of rural development entails increasing the participation of the people concerned in the decision-making process, and this can be enhanced through local groups. However, in spite of his sterling work in explaining the concept of participation in Zimbabwe, Zinyama's contribution is not without criticism. He is guilty of giving much emphasis to local farmer groups at the expense of other important stakeholders in community participation, such as the locals in their individual capacity and NGOs as facilitators as well as the role of the state.

It is evident from the literature that in Zimbabwe the idea of community participation has gained prominence. Even the government through its departments has realized the importance of community participation in development. AREX (1999), a government department had agreed to the assertion that development initiatives undertaken in the past lacked a clear cut strategy to ensure sustainability of projects. However, the contribution by AREX is emphasizing more on the role of its extension workers in facilitating developmental initiatives. As such the department lacks in its presentation a complete analysis of the concept of participation, since it left out other stakeholders in its analysis.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has also shared its views on participatory development in Zimbabwe. According to the UNDP (1998), participation has become the hallmark of sustainable development with a general shift from prescriptive "top-down" to participatory "bottom-up" approaches to development. The UNDP envisages participatory development as constituting a "non-directive" approach that enables people to regain control over their own development. However, the document by the UNDP lacks a lot of essential issues that are necessary for community participation to take shape. The authors of the document concentrated more on the importance of the concept in sustainable development. They never enlighten the readers on the various stages that are necessary for the implementation of participatory development at community level.

It is important to note here that, the situation regarding community participation in Sangwe is a bit different from the national level where literature seems to be available. Literature on community participation in Sangwe Communal Lands is scanty, if not non-existent. To this end, Saunder (1998) observes that while the cultural histories of the Shona and Ndebele were well recorded and displayed in local museums the Shangaan and other less prominent components of the country's peoples had been neglected (Malilangwe Development Trust, 1998). This thus implies that little could be cited about the Sangwe people and their participation in development.

Nonetheless, this does not mean there is nothing to write about the Sangwe people's participation in development. What it means is that there is in Sangwe an information gap

that needs to be filled in through research. Opuku (1998) observed that "…..if you get close enough to the river you can hear the crab coughing." This implies that if researchers get close to the Sangwe people they get to hear things they did not know before. As such the researcher needs to find out the real issues pertaining to community participation in development projects in Sangwe communal Lands as it relates to project sustainability.

There are a few writers who have documented the activities undertaken in Sangwe Communal Lands and these include such personalities like Muparange (2002), Chishawa (2001) and Chakanyuka (2001) among others. Of particular importance here is that the Sangwe area has been a haven of environmentalists who are championing for the conservation and sustainable utilization of biodiversity in the area. Therefore, these writers have endeavored to portray various conservation initiatives by the Sangwe communities. The literature provides that in terms of biodiversity Sangwe Communal Lands and its environs that is Gonarezhou National Park, Save Valley and Malilangwe Conservancy have high biodiversity richness. According to an article in 'The Herald' (September, 1997), the Gonarezhou is home to the "big five" and "small five". The "big five" refers to the elephants, lion, buffalo, rhino, and leopard, while the "small five" comprises; suni, steenbok, greysbok, klipspringer and duiker. However, this article seems to be silent on how the local communities have helped in the conservation and sustainability of these biological resources. It has succeeded in doing nothing but in painting an image that biodiversity in Sangwe and its environs exists in a social vacuum.

Chishawa (2001) wrote about the Machoka community in the Sangwe Communal Lands. Chishawa focused on how biodiversity on parts of the once severely degraded Machoka area has been rehabilitated and restored. This has been attributed to the catchment management programme the community was involved in. Chishawa tried his best to document the community's involvement, but in as much as he tried to document these activities, there is no clarity on the procedure followed in community participation in these conservation activities. He seems to be narrating community participation instead of getting the readers to know how the community was involved in these activities.

In the same vein Chakanyuka (2000) wrote about the Zivembava Island forest, which he described as having a rich diversity of medicinal herbs, fodder trees and indigenous tree species. However, Chakanyuka does not give a comprehensive explanation of how the locals with their local knowledge, technologies and institutions have contributed in the management of the Island forest. Focusing on the Chibememe community, Muparange (2002) highlighted how the community has managed to devise methods and ways of sustainably and prudently utilizing their local resources. Muparange (2002) highlighted the *Kigelia Africana* (mubveve) juice and honey as among the indigenous sustainable livelihood non-timber forest products the communities are currently benefiting from. As previously observed, there is no mention of the role of indigenous knowledge systems and indigenous communities in the identification, nurturing and development of both the biological resource and the biodiversity product (juice) as if to say the product developed in a social vacuum.

The Sangwe Communal lands boasts of a multiplicity of projects on biodiversity conservation and livelihoods improvement. The area is home to projects on sustainable agriculture spearheaded by 'Africa2000 Plus Network', a local NGO. In this initiative the locals are valued as important for the realization and the sustainability of the programme. Osmond Mugweni, the National Coordinator of the organization, has noted that the locals are a very important aspect of rural development, and that any initiative that does not include them is bound to fail. In his proposal to the Global Environment Facility Small Grant Programme (GEFSGP) on the Save River Sub-catchments Management and Climate Change Mitigation Project, Chibememe of the Chibememe Earth Healing Association (CHIEHA), has recorded various activities undertaken by the Sangwe communities. These communities include, among others, Zvirodzo, Mazivandagara, Kushinga, and Chibememe among others. They are very instrumental in various conservation and sustainable livelihoods activities in the area

# CHAPTER 5

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

**Introduction**

This chapter discusses in detail the crux of the research as it outlines the views of various stakeholders in project life cycle. The findings are a product of the various methodological tools and techniques employed by the researcher during the process of the field study in the Sangwe Communal Lands of Chiredzi. These findings are a true representative of different views given by the various stakeholders in rural development and as such helps in ascertaining the pros and cons of community participation and project sustainability. They range from socio-economic issues of Sangwe, organizational as well as community conceptualization of the notion of community participation in sustainable development.

**Socio-economic Background and Community Participation in Sangwe**

The researcher administered 68 household questionnaires and accordingly 44 interviews were undertaken with women whilst 24 were done with men. The interviews were done according to the age group distribution as illustrated in the table below.

**Table 4: Age Group Distribution**

| Age group (yr) | Frequency (%) | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | **Males** | **Females** | **Total** |
| 11-20 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| 21-30 | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| 31-40 | 10 | 20 | 30 |
| 41-50 | 7 | 11 | 18 |
| 51 and above | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| **Total** | **24** | **44** | **68** |

Source: Dzinavatonga (2008)

Of the interviewees at household level about 55 percent were more than 30 years of age. This implies that the study targeted old people who are well informed with information on community participation and the majority of whom have lived in Sangwe for more than 30 years. Again this implies that this age group boasts of vast experience in project implementation since they could have been involved in almost every project that was implemented in the community. The graph below shows the variation in the period of residence in Sangwe where 5 respondents stayed in Sangwe between 11-20 years, 7 respondents stayed between 21-30 years, 26 respondents stayed between 31-40 years, while 16 and 5 respondents stayed in Sangwe between 41-50 and above 50 years respectively

**Figure 1: Period living in the area**
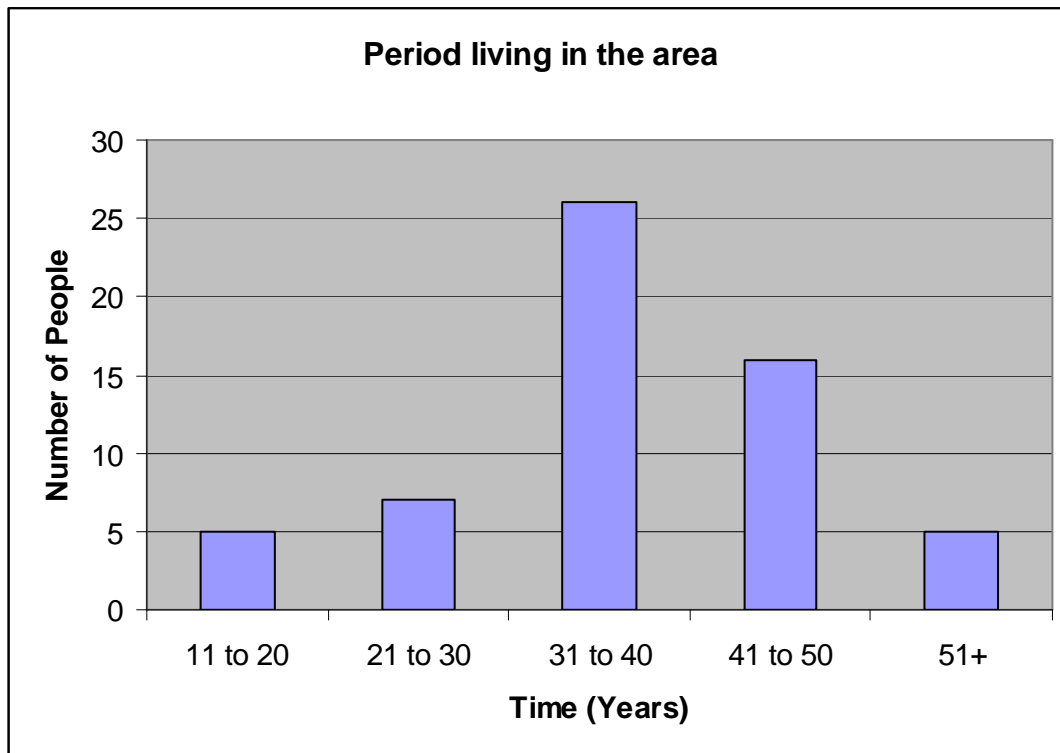


Source: Dzinavatonga (2008)

**Marital Status**

In terms of marital status 59 percent of the household interview respondents were married while 16 percent were single, 15 percent were widowed and only 10 percent were divorced. The research tilted mainly to the direction of married people simply because married couples tend to have a settled and permanent life in their places of marriage and are thus significant participants in development projects in communities they reside. Furthermore, married women have been always active in development activities at household level whilst their husbands work in town. The table below shows a breakdown of the respondents according to marriage status.

**Table 5: Marital Status**

| Status | Number of respondents | Percentage |
|--------|----------------------|------------|
| Married | 40 | 59 |
| Single | 11 | 16 |
| Divorced | 7 | 10 |
| Widowed | 10 | 15 |
| **Total** | **68** | **100** |

Source: Dzinavatonga (2008)

**Educational Background**

Of those interviewed at the household level, female respondents had the lowest educational background as 30 (68 percent) of them went as far as primary or not educated at all. This is in contrast to the male respondents with 18 (75 percent) of them having gone as far as secondary and tertiary level. This is due to the patriarchal nature of Sangwe community. This impacted greatly on their responses on the concept of community participation and project sustainability in Sangwe. Interestingly, despite their low level of education women have been very instrumental in project implementation in Sangwe even though they are relegated to mere implementers rather than leaders of the projects. This is because most of these women spend their time in the village and thus have gained experience in project implementation since they always participate in developmental activities spearheaded by both the government and the private sector. The graph below illustrates education by sex of the respondents.

**Figure 2: Level of Education**



**level of education**

75%  68%

☐ females
☐ males
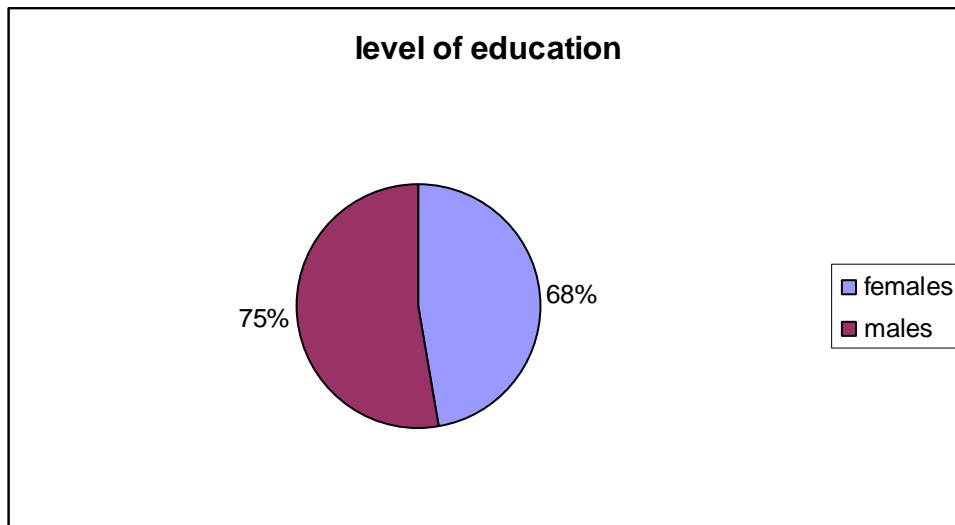
Source: Dzinavatonga (2008)

**Ethnic Representation**

The ndau ethnic group constituted more than half of the respondents (56 percent) followed by the Shangani (29 percent) while 15 percent was Karanga. This variation in ethnicity is shown graphically below.

**Figure 3: Distribution of population by ethnic affiliation**



**distribution of population by ethnic affiliation**

- ndau — 56%
- shangani — 29%
- karanga — 15%
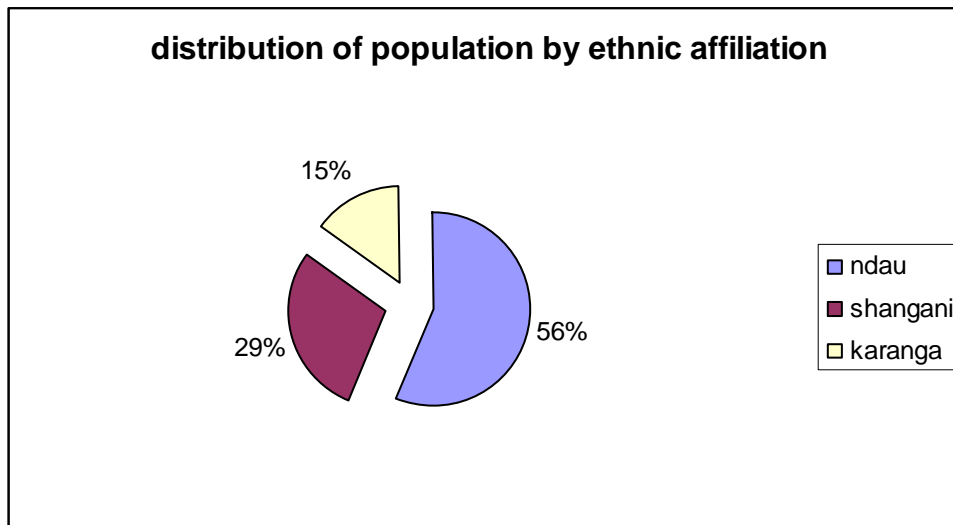
Source: Dzinavatonga (2008)

Community participation has been argued to mean differently to different people in different settings and as such the ethnic divisions in Sangwe was very instrumental in defining the concept of participatory development for project sustainability. A people's ethnic background is pivotal as it defines their values and systems which in turn explain how they interact in project implementation. The research therefore established that diversity in cultural beliefs through ethnic differences has a bearing in the way people participate in various developmental projects. What one believes in this side is not one believes in that side so said Chibememe of the Chibememe Earth Healing Association (CHIEHA) initiative. Chibememe went further to argue that correct apparatus needs to be in place so as to ensure smooth harmonization of these different ethnic groups for the realization of sustainable projects in communities and that, development agencies need not to prescribe to these groupings how they should participate.

**NGOs and Government Participation in Sangwe Communal Lands**

Sangwe Communal lands have been a haven of a multiplicity of organizations and these organizations range from government ministries and departments, NGOs as well as Community-based organizations spearheading various developmental projects in the area. It is worth noting here that in as much as these organizations co-exist in project implementation in Sangwe their activities are distributed per ward. Thus, while other organizations are found in one of the ward some operate in both wards.

Amongst these organizations in Sangwe include Africa 2000 Plus Network, World Vision, Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme, SAFIRE, Malilangwe Development Trust, Care international, Rural Unity for Development Organization and government departments Such as AREX, DNR, and so on. Given Such a multiplicity of organizations, the research established that programmes and activities of these stakeholders are not coordinated and this impacted negatively on the level of community participation since the locals are chocked with different activities from different organizations with different organizational cultures. What it therefore means is that attention to activities is not evenly distributed as a result of a multiplicity of activities and ultimately leads to divided participation which in this case is a nemesis to sustainable projects in communities. Thus organizations are not worried about genuine participation of communities in development but are worried about their end goal of sustainable funding to satiate their organizational aspirations and not community aspirations. If ever community aspirations are satisfied it is by accident and not by honest desire to develop

the community. This is evidenced by their duplication of activities since most of them claim invincible in one area or the other.

Also established in the research is the fact that organizations, although they engage in partnerships they only mention this partnership in funding proposals so as to gain currency from funding organizations but do not honestly work together as a team. This is evidenced by the uncoordinated nature of programmes and activities in the area. Important to mention here is that these partnerships are at organizational level not community level hence the ultimate goal is to realize organizational aspirations. Furthermore, organizations also fail to take advantage of indigenous knowledge systems and structures and community based initiatives in undertaking their work and yet current development experts have observed that "… it is usually better to strengthen local institutions than to create new ones" (*Kemf, 1993:254*). This is evidenced in environmental awareness programmes spearheaded by such organizations like CHIEHA, Mazivandagara, and Zvirodzo and others that are not taking on board these initiatives and if anything they create new structures. Some organizations even strive to overshadow community efforts and reduce their impact and visibility and this results in conflicts between the facilitating organization and the community at large. This scenario is a nemesis to project sustainability since it demoralizes the community. The table below summarizes organizations and their programmes by ward.

**Table 6: Organizations involved in projects by ward**

| Organization | Ward | Programme |
|---|---|---|
| Rural Unity for Development Organization | 1 | Community gardens, conservation gardens, drip irrigation, small grains production, infrastructure development |
| Care International | 1,4 | Food distribution |
| Forestry Commission | 1,4 | Capacity building, agro-forestry, nurseries, non-timber forest product development |
| CHIEHA | 4 | Land care and watershed management, environmental and cultural awareness, sustainable livelihoods (eco-ethno-tourism) and food security (eco-agriculture) |
| Environment Africa and CAMPFIRE | 1 | Environmental awareness, bee keeping and capacity building |
| Africa 2000 Plus Network/GEFSGP | 1,4 | Natural resource management, biodiversity conservation and rural development, eco-agriculture, capacity building, GLTP processes and community conservation areas (CCAs) integration into GLTP and conservancy system |
| Canadian International Agency | 1.4 | Environmental Awareness and Capacity building |
| Malilangwe Trust | 4 | Youth and Community development, natural resources management, capacity building and |

| | | GLTP processes |
|---|---|---|
| DNR | 1,4 | Environmental awareness and capacity building |
| Assistance to Underprivileged Rural Populations Project | 1 | Water development and gardening |
| World Vision | 1,4 | Food distribution |
| Africa Resource Trust | 1 | Natural resource management, environmental lobby through media and policy research |
| Save Valley Conservancy | 1 | Environmental awareness and conservation |
| Horizon T 3000 | 1 | Environmental awareness |
| Mazivandagara | 1 | Natural resource management and food security |
| Traditional leadership | 1,4 | Leadership |
| Kushinga project | 1 | Natural resource management and food security |
| Mupinga | 1,4 | Natural resource management and food security |
| LEAP | 1,4 | Natural resource management and food security |

Source: Survey data (2008)

The above illustration of organizational activities is depictive of a difficult situation that makes the whole process of participatory development a failure in real terms despite its good intentions. Such a situation of a multiplicity of programmes leads to the duplication of activities and also makes it difficult to coordinate them between organizations. It has also been established in the research that the community perceive some organizations to be more people centered than others particularly those that are for welfare purposes (food

distribution) since they give handouts. This situation perpetuates a dependence syndrome that does not auger well with sustainability in projects.

**Community vs. Organizational Thinking on Sustainable Projects in Sangwe**

From a scholarly point of view, participation has been conceptualized as an active process in which the participants take initiatives and take action that is stimulated by their own thinking and deliberation and over which they can exert effective control (Rahman 1993). However, this is one but among several definitions by different scholars. As such various concepts were established from the research but with no sharp differences in theoretical formulations but sharp differences in practical terms. From a community's point of view it was established that effective community participation is when the locals who in this case are the raison d`etre of projects in communities are actively participating, that is, from the birth of the idea to the design stage, to the implementation stage, to the monitoring and evaluation stages as well as benefit sharing where necessary, so said Gladman Chibememe, one of the locals who has been instrumental in development processes in Sangwe. About 99 percent of the respondents are in agreement with the above view and strongly believe that their genuine participation in developmental projects in their respective localities should not be taken with a pinch of salt but taken seriously for sustainable projects to be realized. Respondents to the research argued that organizations are not sincere and that they preach participation on paper but in practical terms it doesn't exist.

However, it should be noted that there is not much difference in theoretical conceptualization between the two protagonists except on wording where in some instances organizations emphasize on such words like 'involvement', 'consultation' and so forth in their conceptualization of participation. For example one representative from one of the NGOs operating in the area remarked that community participation is the involvement of community members in project formulation, monitoring and evaluation. What these organizations are not aware of is that these terms are underlain by such simplicity that easily tempts one from a deeper search of what they really stand for. This simplicity makes participation an easy philosophy to subscribe to. Due to the relative ease with which most NGOs approach participation, the concept has suffered all, from abuse to casual transformations and rendering of its true meaning. To this effect it would seem to mean that participation has been misconstrued to suggest mere gathering of stakeholders, distorted as meaning consultation and has been viewed as an event and an end in itself rather than a process targeted at certain outcomes. The general belief from respondents therefore was that community participation includes, but is not limited to meetings, consultations and events. Respondents remarked that community participation involve actions from both interventionists and target communities that seek to achieve willful, deliberate, premeditated and intentional partaking or involvement in a project.

Important to note here is that some NGO representatives seemed to be shy to give a comprehensive explanation as their responses were somewhat unclear on how they conceptualize participation. This was evidenced in such responses which emphasized on the importance of the community on sustainable projects by some of these organizations.

It was thus established that the coining of development models by organizations was in a way influencing on how the communities should organize themselves in project implementation. Therefore it would seem to mean that NGOs are imposing their will on communities when it comes to project implementation.

**Community Participation in Project Implementation**

Beneficiary participation in project life cycle is of paramount importance for the realization of sustainable projects so said Mapiko, a ward 4 councilor. Indeed any development initiative that excludes or belittles the locals in terms of participation is an antithesis to sustainability in projects. The responses to this matter are supportive of the above idea. Of the household questionnaire respondents 46 (68 percent) claimed that they have capacity to participate actively in programme implementation while 22 (32 percent) said they lack capacity to participate due to various reasons. Of the 68 percent respondents males constituted 24 percent whilst females were 44 percent.

However the females' capacity may have been improved by the various capacity building programmes being offered by facilitating organizations such as Malilangwe Trust, Africa 2000 Plus Network, and many others. The table below illustrates respondents' perception by gender on community's capacity.

**Table 7: Community's capacity to participate by gender**

| Respondents | Capable | Percentage % | Not capable | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Males | 16 | 24 | 8 | 12 |
| Females | 30 | 44 | 14 | 20 |
| **Total** | **46** | **68** | **22** | **32** |

Source: Dzinavatonga (2008)

However, in as much as the response on participation was very high it should be born in mind that this form of participation is passive in nature. It is "guided participatory development" where facilitators prescribe to the participants how they should engage each other in project implementation. Mostly it is done through platforms such as Capacity Building Workshops where the facilitator dominates the proceedings, lecturing the community on forms of engagement. Under the banner of capacity building representatives from organizations tell the community how to participate. Thus what the representative may have said carries the day since the locals feel inferior to the superiority of these representatives.

**Ethnicity and Community Participation**

From an ethnic point of view the ndau, shangani and the Karanga respectively, claimed that they have access to participation in projects. With regards to the ndau ethnic group their cultural values do not put females in the forefront in terms of leadership. They argued that it is a taboo for a woman to be seen standing in front of men deliberating on

issues to do with development. Thus women are just relegated to inferior roles of being mere implementers of men's ideas. So, for organizations to lecture them on gender equality in project implementation is like telling them to disobey their culture. A situation like that doesn't auger well with project sustainability since the particular community find it difficult to respect the will of the facilitating organization. 95% of the ndau respondents in ward 4 testified to the above assertion arguing that organizations cannot tell them how to organize themselves in project implementation. Maybe this is because the ndau ethnic group is still deeply connected to its culture to such an extent that they cannot oppose its values and beliefs.

On the other side of the coin, the shangani and the karanga testified that everyone has the capacity to participate in developmental projects in their respective communities and have the right to occupy any post in developmental projects. The research established that these groups are not affected very much by their cultural beliefs in project implementation. This is because they have been co-existing for a long time and thus issues to do with cultural beliefs is of secondary importance hence doesn't affect their engagement in project implementation. Important to note here is the fact that the shangani and the karanga are found in almost all the wards in Sangwe, particularly wards 2 to 5 and such a situation means that culture is of less importance when it comes to interaction in developmental projects. This means either a woman or a man can occupy a higher post in a project.

However, in terms of capacity to participate in projects almost all the respective ethnic groups testified that they participate in projects in their different localities. What is only different is their approach to participation in these projects. In a focus group discussion in ward 1, Lucia, one of the local project coordinators said that "despite differences in beliefs locals still participate in projects and that communities choose project leaders according to their competency as per the values and expectations of the communities." The table below shows responses on community's capacity to participate according to ethnicity.

**Table 8: Response on community's capacity to participate according to ethnic background**

| Ethnic group | Capable | Not capable | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ndau | 26 | 11 | **37** |
| Shangani | 12 | 7 | **19** |
| Karanga | 9 | 3 | **12** |

Source: Dzinavatonga (2008)

**Effectiveness of Community Participation in Developmental Projects**

The majority of the respondents view their active participation in projects as the most effective alternative to sustainable development. The research established that maximum participation of the locals from project design to implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation stages of these projects is of great importance. Of the household

questionnaire respondents about 87% have testified that the concept of community participation is very instrumental in developmental projects if appropriately implemented whilst 23% of the respondents do not agree. In group discussions in both wards 1 and 4 it was established that participants view the participation of the locals as the most effective solution to development woes that have been affecting societies. Even chief Gudo, in a separate interview said that *"Hakuna maProjects anobudirira kana pasina vanhu venharaunda iyoyo"* (No project can succeed as long as it does not include the locals in it). Therefore, basing on the views of the respondents it is important to note that communities contribute much to the development of their societies particularly through sustainable projects.

However, in as much as the concept has proved to be the most effective alternative to sustainable development in the eyes of the majority of the respondents, it has often been compromised by development agents who often bring with them alternative ways of engagement in project implementation. This has seen the adoption of such models of participation like 'Participatory Development Management Model' as put forward by facilitating organizations. These so-called models have been prescribing to the people how they should participate in development. This impacted greatly on the participation of the locals in the implementation of projects. Thus organizations imposed their own will to communities so that their organizational aspirations can be realized. Referring to the imposition of participation alternatives, Norman, one of the project leaders in ward 1 at a focus group discussion had this to say, *"Mamwevo masangano ndiwo anouya nenzira*

*dzokuti tinoshanda sei mumaProjects (*some of the organizations prescribe to us how we should participate in projects).

Thus, given the above situation, common sense has it that only the so-called community elite always has the privilege to lead projects since in the eyes of the facilitators they possess accepted leadership standards. This scenario is therefore a stab on the back of sustainable development since the poor who are always the majority in society are relegated to mere recipients and implementers of the rich and educated people's ideas. As such this de-motivates them to such an extent that they do not give hundred percent effort in their participation in developmental projects. Thus, despite of the effectiveness of the concept in rural development, it has been established that projects have heavily been affected by sustainable participation of the poor majority locals who often withdraw their services as a result of the sidelining they experience from the facilitating organizations and their agents. Projects have been experiencing massive withdrawals from these disgruntled participants who always play second fiddle to the so-called community elite. Above all if properly implemented the idea of community participation is a noble one and very effective in sustainable terms.

**Challenges and Barriers to Community Participation in Developmental Projects**

The research has established that there are a wide range of factors that hinder and indeed constrain the promotion of participatory development and these often lead to the emergence of non-participatory approaches. These obstacles range from institutional to

socio-cultural, to technical, to logistical, and are spread over a seemingly endless spectrum. 73 percent of the respondents are of the opinion that development projects are initiated by outsiders instead of the insiders. The insiders are only used to ratify what has already been designed so that it would appear as community consent. This however is done in a very cleverly fashion where the international organizations use some of the locals especially the leaned ones who may have been out of touch with the realities in the community since they view themselves as distinct from the rest and look down upon the poor in the community. Their views are then processed as direct views of the community. Such a situation is very detrimental in sustainability terms. One participant at a focus group discussion in ward 4 remarked that,

*Organizations arrived already knowing everything. They come here and look around but they see only what is not here. They appoint their own teams to carry out what they call 'baseline surveys' and information from these surveys becomes community consent (A ward 1 focus group discussion participant)*

The above argument is depictive of a unilateral situation whereby community consent is manufactured and becomes bait for sourcing funds from funding organizations. It was also established that, often, the so-called professional experts dominate decision making and manipulate instead of facilitating development processes. It is common knowledge that the trademark of 'development experts' is often that they always know best and therefore, their prime function is to transfer knowledge to the communities whom they view as 'knowing less'. Given such a situation it would be naïve to accept the view that

the current discourse on community participation is genuine in its attempt to empower communities to choose development options freely, but should rather be accepted as an attempt to sell preconceived proposals for the betterment of organizational aspirations.

Respondents to household questionnaires were also very quick to point out that the process of development has been politicized and this has affected greatly the participation of locals in the realization of these projects given the polarity that exists in Zimbabwean politics. About 87 percent of the respondents have accused the state through the ZANUPF party to be in the fore front of politicizing development particularly in the area of food distribution for their own political gains at the expense of the masses. Only 13% have put the blame on the opposition particularly the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) for politicization of development activities for its political gains. For the state, it appears that the main aim of community participation in programmes such as Public Works is less about improving conditions for the poor than maintaining existing power relations in society and ensuring the silence of the poor. This politicization of development activities has rendered the concept of community participation redundant since members are reluctant to participate on political grounds. Those that belong to ZANUPF participate in activities they view to be pro-ZANUPF and also those from the MDC side do likewise. This situation is a disincentive to participation hence cripples development projects resulting to unsustainable projects in societies.

Again it was established that selective participation is rated highly amongst the barriers to community participation. Very often it is the most visible and vocal, wealthier, more

articulated and educated groups that are allowed to be partners in development. The above assertion was supported by the majority respondents 93 percent, especially the poor who blame NGOs for not realizing that Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are not always democratically elected and that the involvement of local leaders in these community based organizations often represents the voice of a group of self-appointed people, and may not accurately reflect the views and perspectives of the broader community. This easily runs the risk of the project being co-opted by certain groups, a scenario that is dangerous in project sustainability terms since the needs and issues at stake are determined by people who do not experience poverty in society.

Sixty five percent of the respondents also agreed that community participation in projects has been stifled by conflicts among beneficiaries. These respondents have argued that the conflicts being experienced emanate from the unfairness of benefit sharing from the proceeds of the project. It was established that some members particularly those on position of authority always take a lion's share of the proceeds to the chagrin of the majority members. In some instances it was revealed that the project leaders abuse project material for their own use. This situation is prevalent in welfare projects where facilitators sometimes steal the donated material and use them for their own benefit.

More often than not, organizations ask people to participate but fail to realize that the targeted people are passively asking them 'why participate?' This is very common in environmental programmes implemented in Sangwe in which the aim is biodiversity conservation. Organizations in this case are often overwhelmed with the ultimate goal to

the extent of forgetting that environmental sustainability is just a means to the higher goal of sustainable human development. About 90 percent of the respondents remarked that they are more concerned about daily bread issues, that is, how to educate or clothes their children. Indeed in real terms, people participate in a project because there is a visible, direct and immediate benefit. Thus it would seem to mean that for participation to be achieved, the programme has to take care of the livelihood needs of the people. However, in so doing, organizations should not run the risk of 'bribing' the community by emphasizing the livelihoods side of the issue

One of the worst causes of waning participation as unearthed by the research is the fact that facilitating organizations have been failing to stick to promises made during the project design stages. During participatory problem identification and planning, organizations normally gather colossus volumes of information. They rank, cross-tabulate, draw problem trees and so on. Whereas it might be fine to do all this, it is very dangerous to raise the expectations of the people on activities on activities that the organization does not afford to sponsor. The temptation is always high to stimulate people's participation by promising them the earth. This problem was remarked to be very prevalent in projects that do not directly address bread and butter issues like those projects that deals with the conservation of the environment. Organizations in this case upon asked by the intended beneficiaries on the importance of their initiatives in uplifting their standards of living they have been diplomatic in their responses and in a way unknowingly promised the communities heaven on earth. As such this fallacy has manifested itself through declining participation.

**Table 9: Response on challenges and barriers in community participation**

| Barriers | Responses (%) |
|---|---|
| Outside interference | 73 |
| Political interference | 90 |
| Conflicts among beneficiaries | 65 |
| Selective participation | 82 |
| Not emphasizing much on livelihood issues | 90 |
| Corruption by facilitators | 63 |
| Organizations not living up to their promises | 70 |

Source: Survey Data (2008)

# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

This chapter gives a summation of the research findings. Not only does it give a summary of the research but it also provides recommendations on how Sangwe people's beliefs, innovations and practices can be promoted and strengthened for the realization of sustainable projects. It outlines recommendations on how policies and programmes can be adjusted to take on board critical issues, concerns, interests, and needs of the community.

### Conclusion

The concept of community participation has proved to be a thorn in the throat for various stakeholders in the development arena. Stakeholders in development have always been at loggerheads on the actual approach to an effective alternative to effect a sound community participation strategy that ensures sustainability of projects. Stakeholders have agreed to disagree on community participation conceptualization. In fact the research has shown that community participation is a port manteau term which covers a number of different things as put forward by different stakeholders in the development discourse. This was discussed both by mere looking at the participation conceptual framework and the tensions surrounding its conceptualization by different actors in

development theory and practice. From the literature gathered it was crystal clear that community participation is not an easy philosophy as some sections of literature would want to proclaim. Its existence in current development discourse has been shrouded by controversies and counter-controversies with some sections of literature hailing it as an irreplaceable alternative to sustainable projects while the other part is somewhat skeptical about the ability of the concept in the realization of sustainable projects.

However from a practical point of view, the research has established that Sangwe Communal Lands are inhabited by a multiplicity of organizations whose activities are highly fragmented, uncoordinated and sectoral. Traditional leadership and their subjects in Sangwe have been working alone so are government departments which at most work as individuals and on the other side of the coin NGOs run self-motivated individual programmes. Rarely do these stakeholders meet to make strategic plans together. Currently there has been a tendency by stakeholder organizations to monopolize projects and shun partnerships in a bid to further institutional interests at the expense of the community. Organizations have been refusing to take on board local CBOs operating within the area while preferring to create new institutions, and in the process end up reinventing the wheel and impose institutions on communities. Only a few of these organizations such as the likes of GEFSGP and Africa 2000 Plus Network have been using the existing community initiated organizations to implement development projects in the area. The fact that organizations have seen no wisdom in using existing community initiated organizations and favour to create new structures has been a stumbling block to the realization of sustainable projects in communities since the created structures always

serve the interests of their masters. Sandwich *et.al.* *(*2001:50) argues that "... it is important to remember that there can be a danger of imposing structures upon people rather than allowing organizations to evolve on the basis of need and the concept of organizational space..."

The policy of genuine co-existence, smart and faithful partnership does not exist in the policies of some of these organizations. Because of the prevalence of unfaithful partnerships among stakeholders in Sangwe there are fears that there could be exploitation of communities in the name of community participation by organizations pursuing their organizational interests. Some organizations enter and collect information from the communities and use it outside that community in the name of replication and expansion of organizational activities. Often local initiatives have been sidelined in the name of regional mandates and up-scaling of local practices to regional and global scale.

Although communities are seen as important partners in project identification, planning, designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation this role has been easier said than done. Local initiatives and institutions that promote community participation have been given little or no opportunity to participate in decision-making and policy-making as far as development programmes are concerned. Even though there are vibrant CBOs like the CHIEHA some organizations have seen it wise to bypass such organizations and appoint what they call project facilitators to over see the whole process of project implementation. This has created a false impression that there are no serious organized

and coordinated community-based institutions that push the agenda of the community a step further from its current state.

Therefore, given such a scenario it would be naïve for one to remark that the concept of community participation has lived up to its billing of ensuring sustainable projects. It is clear from empirical evidence that community participation has not brought the results expected of it since a multiplicity of unfinished projects in and beyond Sangwe has become an eyesore to communities. The research confirmed that community participation has largely been rhetorical and not substantive in project sustainability terms as hypothesized earlier on. It was also confirmed that the concept has been undervalued and oversold by development agents and governments in developing countries. Undervalued in the sense that some organizations choose not to practice it, and oversold in the sense that some organizations over-emphasized it to such an extent that it appears as if they are bent on using it as a bait for funding from international funding organizations. In this regard, one should not be ostracized if he argues that organizations take the phrase participatory development at face value. As a result of this lack of a deeper understanding of community participation, many of these organizations have duped themselves into believing that it is so easy to achieve it. By and large organizations have been imposing their own version and understanding of community participation that is alien to particular communities, rendering the whole process of community participation redundant in project sustainability terms despite its good intentions.

**Recommendations**

Having clinically studied the concept of community participation in relation to project sustainability in Sangwe Communal Lands the researcher unearthed some loopholes, potentials and opportunities in how communities can participate actively and efficiently in developmental projects. Based on the identified loopholes the researcher therefore made the following recommendations:

- There seems to be an institutional gap in Sangwe. Only one group, the Chibememe Earth Healing Association, is actively participating in projects implementation. Since the area is a haven of a multiplicity of development projects the grouping has found it quite a big deal to harness and harmonize these activities. Therefore, such a situation calls for a proper community-based initiative or network to deal with various development projects in Sangwe. This thus implies that there is a need for the government and NGOs to take it upon themselves to facilitate the creation of a community based network programme that ensures the participation of the locals in project implementation. Facilitation, however, does not mean the facilitators dictate on the communities what to do but set the necessary conducive environment for the community to institute this community-based network programme. Important to not here is that, through such a network the locals will participate actively in the realization of sustainable projects in Sangwe. Cementing the above argument small holder farmers at the WSSD (2002:7) remarked that "…nothing can destroy our spirit to farm, fish and

feed the world. We will develop a strong movement. We are determined to speak for ourselves because we believe that a new world is possible." Here the need for a movement to protect communities, their knowledge, innovations, interests and practices is spelt out clearly. CHIEHA has taken the initiative of creating a Transfrontior and protected areas Rural Communities' Programme (TRANSPRORUCONET). NGOs and government should take advantage of this positive gesture and build on it. It is, therefore, vital for all stakeholders in project implementation to listen to the call of communities and give them the support and opportunity to participate in policy formulation and decision making.

- It is extremely important that development workers and agents strive to build on what is there instead of destroying existing traditional structures and beliefs in order to create new ones. Sustainable human development is development that emphasizes value addition. In this case cultural systems such as their indigenous knowledge that are used by traditional communities to manage projects in Sangwe should be promoted and strengthened. Very often organizations have been downplaying the importance of these systems since the education they received from facilitating organizations advanced the interests of these organizations to a greater extent. Thus in order to avoid possible confrontation with the locals, organizations need not to advance their agendas more vigorously at the expense of community wisdom through their indigenous knowledge on matters to do with their active participation in the management of developmental projects.

- There is a need for a genuine strategic partnership arrangement between communities and strategic organizations. Such partnerships will result in the proper understanding of the various issues and policies affecting local communities that have a bearing on the sustainability of projects in these communities. It is important to note that what has been happening in the development arena when partnerships only exist at the organizational level is not substantive in sustainability terms. This is because by arranging partnerships between themselves organizations knowingly or unknowingly establish elite clubs where the top bras of the organizations would dine and wine in flash and posh hotels in the name of partnership. The genuine partnership expected here is grassroots in nature where organizations interact more with the community participants not amongst themselves. Yes, they may have argued that they have been encouraging that partnership herein referred above through exchange visits but in all fairness this is easier said than done.

- More often than not the government has been always at loggerheads with NGOs and the very people it purports to represent over the politicization of development projects. It even sometimes when it is necessary, according to it, goes to the extent of closing development projects before they are concluded for the best reasons known to it. This situation has impacted negatively on the participation of the locals in these development projects. Given such a scenario, the researcher recommends that government should enact laws and policies that do not inhibit the development process spearheaded by the NGOs and the locals. It should

exonerate itself from negatively meddling in development projects, but rather create an enabling environment that ensures successful implementation of projects in communities.

- It was the finding of the research that there is a lot of untapped information related to community participation in Sangwe. As such, there is a need for more research on the issues that affect the communities in projects in Sangwe. Further research will enable researchers to probe the status quo on why the concept of community participation has not lived up to its expectation of ensuring sustainable projects. However, the researchers should exercise caution, that is, the bracketing of all presuppositions that would lead to the stigmatization of the indigenous communities particularly their indigenous knowledge. For instance, where it involves research in biodiversity it should be essentially community bio-prospecting as opposed to bio-piracy.

- Communities have been deprived of information on the role of their effort in development processes. In this case there is a strong need for awareness on the role of the communities and their indigenous knowledge systems in ensuring sustainable projects. As such there is a need to establish community based information technological centers (ITC) for the display, storage and dissemination of community participation related knowledge to communities. Government and NGOs should strengthen community awareness on the value of the role of the locals in sustainable development.

- More often than not organizations have been dictating to the people their own perception about effective participation by the locals in development projects. Against such a scenario it is, therefore, recommended that organizations should not tell the locals how to participate but rather listen to what the locals have to say about their participation in development projects. If only they can do that sustainability in projects will be realized. As if he was advising them (organizations) on engaging with the communities, Lao Tsu remarked that,

  *Go to the people. Live with them, Learn from them, Love them*

  *Start with what they know, build with what they have. But with*

  *the best leaders, When the work is done, The task accomplished,*

  *The people will say, "We have done this ourselves"*

  The statement by Tsu if taken seriously and implemented by organizations sustainability in projects will be realized.

- Organizations should try to address 'bread-and-butter' issues in their projects with the communities. This is because developmental projects that do not address these issues do not last longer since the people are much more concerned with livelihoods issues. Dwindling participation is often seen in environmental programmes where biodiversity conservation is the end goal. The researcher, therefore, advocates that whenever participation is to be achieved, the programme should take care of the livelihood needs of the people. However, in

so doing, organizations should not run the risk of bribing the communities by emphasizing the livelihoods side of the issue.

# References

Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action

(ALNAP), (2003), *Consultation and Participation in Humanitarian Action*,

Angola, Overseas Development Institute, London

AREX, (1999), *Learning Together Through Participatory Extension: A Guide to an Approach Developed in Zimbabwe*, Arex, Harare

Awori A et al (1996), *A Model for Sustainable Livelihood and Natural Resources Management in Africa*, Kenya Energy and Environment Organisations

Brown C .J (2000), "A Model of the Facilitation of Community Participation in the Scoping of Projects" in F. Theron, A. Van Rooyen and J. Van Baalen (eds) *Good Governance for People: Policy and Management*, Bellville: School of Public Management and Planning, University of Stellenbosch.

Bryant C. and White L.G (1982), *Managing Development in the Third World*, Boulder: Westview Press

Burkey S. (1993), *People First: A Guide to Self-reliant, Participatory Rural Development*. London, Zed Books

Chambers R, (1983), *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*, Longman London

Chakanyuka W, (2000), "Chibememe Villagers start on an ambitious ethno-tourism venture" *Masvingo star*, 15-21 December

Cooke B and U, (2001), *Participation: The New Tyranny?* Zed Books, New York

Dresner S. (2002), *The Principles of Sustainability,* London: Earthscan Publications

Emmet T. (2000), *Beyond Community Participation? Alternative roots to civil Engagements and Development in South Africa*, Development Southern Africa, 17(4):1-18

Government of Zimbabwe, (1990), *Rural District Council's Accounting Handbook: Trainer's Manual, First draft,* Harare, Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development

Chibememe G, (2003*), A Proposal on Save River Sub-catchments Management and Climate Change Mitigation Project*, Chibememe Earth Healing Association

Glickman N, and Servon C (2003), *By the Numbers: Measuring Development Corporations Capacity,* Journal of Planning Education and Research 22(3):240-254

Habyarimana (1988), Speech in Hyden G and Bratton M, *Governance and Politics in Africa,* 1992, Boulder and London Lynne Rienner Publishers

Hoffman G. R, (1990), "What can the Europeans learn from African Philosophy" in Oruka H. O. *Philosophy, Humanity and Ecology: Philosophy, Nature and Environmental Ethics,* Lagos: Earthscan

Honadle G and Van Sant J (1985*), Implementation for Sustainability: Lessons from Intergrated Rural Development,* West Hartford Kumaria Press

Hyden G. and Bratton M. (1992), *Governance and Politics in Africa,* Boulder and London, Lynne Rienner Publishers

Integrated Environmental Management Information Series (3), (2002), *Stakeholder Engagement:* Pretoria, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

*Journal for Social Development,* Number 21, (1994)

Kalumuna M, et al (1998), "Integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems into Land Management in Tanzania" in Matowanyika J.Z.Z (Ed), *Hearing the Crabs Cough: Perspectives and Emerging Institutions for Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Land Resources Management in Southern Africa,* IUCN-Rosa Harare

Malilangwe Development Trust, (1998), *Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the Shangaan / San Cultural History Museum Committee*, Simbiri Camp, Chiredzi

Makumbe J. Mw, (1996), *Participatory Development: The Case of Zimbabwe,* UZ Publications, Harare

Mayet M, (2002), "Securing Sustainable Livelihoods: Imperatives Undermining the Development of any Appropriate Regime to Protect Community Rights to Biodiversity", in IUCN, *Development People for Sui generis national policies and legislation in the SADC region,* IUCN-Rosa, Harare

Morss E. R, and Gow D. D (eds) (1985), *Implementing Rural Development Projects. Lesions from Aid and World Bank Experience,* Boulder Westview press

Mugweni O, (2004) *Annual Report,* Africa 2000 Plus network

Muparange R, (2002), "Community Participation the key to sustainable development" in *The Journal of Natural Resources Board,* Harare: NRB

Nghikembua S. (1996), *From Drought-Relief Recipients to Community-Based Development Organisations: A case of participation in human development Namibia,* Windhoek, Multi-disciplinary Research Centre, university of Namibia

Oakley P et al, (1991), *Projects with people: The Practice of Participation in Rural Development,* Geneva, International Labour Office

Opoku K.A, (1998), "Hearing the crabs cough: Indigenous knowledge and the future", in Matowanyika J.Z.Z., *Hearing the crabs cough: Perspectives and emerging Institutions of indigenous knowledge systems in land resources management in Southern Africa,* IUCN-Rosa, Harare

Rahman M.D.A (1993) *People's Self-Development: Perspectives on Participatory Action Research,* A Journal through experience, Zed Books, London and New Jersey

Ramots'oari J, (1998), "Opening remarks on Matowanyika's Hearing the crabs cough: Perspectives and emerging institutions of indigenous knowledge systems in *Land resources management in Southern Africa,* IUCN-Rosa, Harare

Robbins S. P and Decenzo D. A, (2004) *Fundamentals of Management: Essential Concepts and Applications,* 4th ed, USA, Pearson Prentice Hall

Roodt M. J, (2001), "Participation, Civil Society and Development", in Coetzee J. K, Graaf J, Hendriks F, and Wood G, (eds), *Development: Theory, Policy and Practice,* Cape Town, Oxford University Press

Sandwich T, (2001), *Beyond Boundaries: Transboundary Natural Resources Management in Sub-Sahara Africa,* Washington DC: Biodiversity Support Programme

Swanepoel H, (1992), *Community Development. Putting Plans into Action,* Cape Town, Juta

Swanepoel H, (2000), *Introduction to Development Studies,* Oxford

Wates N, (2000), *The Community Planning Handbook,* London

Williams G, (2004), *Evaluating Participatory Development: Tyranny, Power and (Re) politicization*, Third World Quarterly


Wolfe in Goulet (1989), "Participation in Development: New Avenues", World

Development 17(2)

UNDP, (2000), The concept of participation in development (online). Available: http://www.undp.org/csopp/CSO/NewFiles/docemppeople1.html (2004, 21 August)

UNIFEM, (1992), *Agenda 21: An easy reference to the specific recommendations on Woman,* New York, United Nations Development Fund for Women, New York

World Bank, (1996), *World Bank Participation Source Book*, WB, New York

Zinyama L.M, "Local farmer Organizations and Rural Development in Zimbabwe," in Taylor D.R.F and Mackenzie F (1992), *Development from within: Survival in Rural Africa,* Routledge

**APPENDICES**

**Annex 1 Household Questionnaire**

**Research Topic: Community Participation and Project Sustainability in Rural Zimbabwe: The Case of Sangwe Communal Lands of Chiredzi**

Date                              ……....……………………………………

Interviewer's Name              …………………………………………

Village                           …………………………………………

Ward                             …………………………………………

**A. Background Information**

**Age Group**

11-20 ……………                               21-30 ……………....

31-40 ……………                               41-50 ……………….

51 and above …………

**Sex of Interviewee**                            Male.........................

                                                Female ……………...

**Marital Status**      Married ……………                 Single ………………

                          Divorced …………..                 Widowed …………...

**Educational Level**   Grade 7 …………….               'O' Level …………...

                          'A' Level ……………             Diploma/Above …….

**B. Ethnographic Characteristics**

Totem                      …………………………………………………………

Ethnic Affiliation      …………………………………………………………

**C. Research Questions**

1.  Are there any developmental projects in your area?

    | Yes | |
    |-----|--|
    | No  | |

2.  If yes, list these projects in terms of their importance ……………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………..
    …………………………………………………………………………………………..
    …………………………………………………………………………………………..

3.  Is your Community involved in the formulation of these projects?

    | Yes | |
    |-----|--|
    | No  | |

4.  If yes, who then has the prerogative to design the project among the community?
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………

5.  Which organizations are operating in your area and what role do they play in
    project management? ……………………………………………………………….
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………

6.  Do these organizations value the participation of the community in project
    management?

    | Yes | |
    |-----|--|
    | No  | |

7.  If yes, how …………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………

8.  Do these organizations have preconditions or working models on how you should
    participate in project management?

    | Yes | |
    |-----|--|
    | No  | |

9.  If yes what are these models or preconditions? …………………………………….
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………

10. Does your conceptualization of community participation differ from that of NGOs operating in your area?

| Yes | |
|-----|--|
| No  | |

11. How do you conceptualize community participation from a community's point of view?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

12. Do you think as local community you can play an important role in ensuring successful implementation of projects in your area?

| Yes | |
|-----|--|
| No  | |

13. if yes, how

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

14. Is your participation reliable in project management to ensure project sustainability?

| Yes | |
|-----|--|
| No  | |

15. If reliable, how would you rate the reliability of your participation in project management?

………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

16. Do you face any challenges in project implementation in your area?

| Yes | |
|-----|--|
| No  | |

17. If yes, what are these challenges and barriers you are facing?...........................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................
.........................................................................................................................

18.  Do you think your contribution in project implementation has lived up to its expectation of ensuring sustainable projects in your area?

| Yes | |
| No | |

19.  Give a reason  to the above answer……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………

**Annex 2 Questionnaire for Organizations Operating in Sangwe Communal Lands**

1.      Does your organization have any community out-reach programmes?

| Yes | |
|-----|-|
| No  | |

2.      If yes, which are they?
        …………………………………………………………………………………………
        …………………………………………………………………………………………
        …………………………………………………………………………………………

3.      What are the focal points of the programmes?
        …………………………………………………………………………………………
        …………………………………………………………………………………………
        …………………………………………………………………………………………

4.      Does your organization value grassroots communities in project management?

| Yes | |
|-----|-|
| No  | |

5.      If yes, what role do these communities play in projects that your organization facilitate?
        …………………………………………………………………………………………
        …………………………………………………………………………………………
        …………………………………………………………………………………………

6.      How does your organization decide which programme should be done and to which community?
        …………………………………………………………………………………………
        …………………………………………………………………………………………
        …………………………………………………………………………………………

7.      Do you think the communities and their indigenous knowledge play any significant role in the success of the programmes that you facilitate?

| Yes | |
|-----|-|
| No  | |

8.      If so, in what way?...................................................................................................................
        ...................................................................................................................
        ...................................................................................................................

9. Is your understanding of community participation different from that of the community?

| Yes | |
|-----|--|
| No | |

10. What is your conceptualization of community participation?.................................................................................................
.................................................................................................................................
.................................................................................................................................

11. Do you have any participatory development management model you prescribe to be used by the project beneficiaries when implementing projects?

| Yes | |
|-----|--|
| No | |

12. If yes what is this model and how does it work?.........................................................................................................
.................................................................................................................................
.................................................................................................................................

13. How effective is your model in ensuring sustainable projects?.........................................................................................................
.................................................................................................................................

14. Do you think the concept of community participation has lived up to its billing of ensuring sustainable projects in communities?

| Yes | |
|-----|--|
| No | |

15. Give a reason to the above answer…………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………

**Annex 3 Questionnaire Checklist – Focus group discussion**

**Research Topic: Community Participation and Project Sustainability in Rural Zimbabwe: The Case of Sangwe Communal Lands**

1.  What are the various projects undertaken in your area?

2.  Is the community involved in all the phases of these projects, that is, from design to implementation, and to also monitoring and evaluation stages?

3.  If so, who facilitates and mobilize the community to participate in these projects?

4.  How effective is community participation in ensuring sustainable projects?

5.  Are local and international NGOs also involved in these projects?

6.  What role do these organizations play in ensuring successful implementation of projects?

7.  Do you think NGOs are doing enough to promote community participation in developmental activities undertaken in your area?

8.  If not what do you think should be done to promote the participation of locals in project implementation?

9.  How do you conceptualize community participation?

10. Are there any differences in conceptualization of community participation in project implementation between the facilitating NGO and the community?

11. Do you think the concept of community participation has lived up to its expectation of ensuring sustainable projects in communities?

**Sangwe Communal Lands**

**Dear Sir/Madam**

**Re:      REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT A RESEARCH ON COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY IN YOUR AREA**

The University of Fort Hare together with the National Council of Research, with their main aim of providing qualitative research, request if you can grant Naison Dzinavatonga a Masters student in the Development Studies Department, permission to carry out his research in your area. The study is aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the concept of community participation in relation to project sustainability.

Let me emphasize that results for this research will only be used for academic purposes and that it is not politically motivated. The research is expected to benefit both the Fort Hare University and the Sangwe Community at large. Your assistance on this matter will be highly appreciated.

Should there be any need for more information feel free to contact the University, particularly the department of development studies.

Yours Sincerely

Prof Buthelezi
*(Director of the School of Management and Commerce)*