Community participation in environmental management and the fulfillment of household food security: A case study of Sanale Community in Insiza District, Zimbabwe.

By

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DECLARATION

The study represents an original undertaking by the author. Where use has been made of the work of others it has been duly acknowledged in the text. This dissertation has not been submitted in any form for a degree to any other University.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER SEVEN- Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Index of Tables

List of Figures

Index of Appendices

ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APPER	African Priority Program for Economic Recovery
AREX	Agricultural, Research and Extension Services
CBO	Community Based Organization
CIDA	Comedian International Development Agency
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DFID	Department for African Unity
ERF	Environmental Responsive Fund
FOS	Fonds voor Ontwikkelingssamenweking
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEFSGP	Global Environment Facility Small Grant Program
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IFAD	International Fund for agricultural development
IRDC	Insiza Rural District Council
ITC	Information Technology Centre
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
RDC	Rural District Council
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
PMD	Prime Minister's Directive
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SARDC	Southern African Research and Documentation Center
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
ZRA	Zambezi River Authority

Abstract

Current development thinking revolves around sustainable development, which must be achieved at every level of society in order to attain sustainable livelihoods. One way of fulfilling this, is by ensuring that human beings are put at the centre of the development process, that is, development should be woven around people and not people around development. In other words development should be participatory and people should have the opportunity to invest in the development of their capabilities in various facets of their life. This notion was applied to the Sanale community of Insiza District of Zimbabwe. The community in question mobilized itself around projects as a way of tackling mounting environmental and food security problems. The thrust of this thesis therefore is to establish how community participation enhances environmental management and how it can also lead to improvement of food security of the community in question.

The study adopted a qualitative research paradigm which entails the non-numerical examination of phenomena focusing on the underlying meanings and patterns of relationships. This is because the study utilized a case study method as a way of gaining an in-depth understanding of the community. Hence, in order to obtain information on the activities of the community in as far as conservation and livelihood issues are concerned fieldwork was undertaken and interviews conducted with household respondents and key informants. A focus group discussion was also conducted with community members involved in programme activities. Review of documents and literature such as journals, occasional papers, proposals, brochures, organizational reports and internet search was conducted in order to obtain information from secondary sources and gain insights from the literature on the subject matter. Also the observation method was used to cross check claims made by both community and key informants with regard conservation and livelihood endeavors by the community.

Research findings indicate that the Sanale community managed to pull itself out of a precarious position characterized by environmental degradation and constant food deficits. This was achieved through self-mobilisation and participation in project activities. Such initiatives impacted positively on the lives of poor Sanale villagers including women. It also emerged that projects in Sanale have led to full realization of

human capabilities as the community in question presides over their own decisions, have cultivated the right attitude to plan and work resulting in natural resources conservation and fulfillment of livelihood needs. In short, participation of the community in their own development has been a key factor in the success of their projects. Such success can be measured in terms of the improvement of the situation of the community after the inception of projects as compared to before project inception. This was also made possible by stakeholders such as NGOs, Government departments, CBOs and local leaders who played a facilitator role.

The study concluded that interactive participation and self-mobilisation of communities is a necessary ingredient for resource conservation and improvement of household food security. However, it emerged in the study that there is need to strengthen institutional structures, national or local, to allow full integration of environmental and developmental issues, at all levels of decision-making. Also important was the sustenance of the Sanale project beyond the life of grants such as GEFSGP and ERF. Further, fostering community participation in all stages of the project cycle is important for the project and community. Above all, the issue of sustainability should preoccupy such projects and multi-stakeholder partnerships should be encouraged if rural projects are to last into the foreseeable future.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a brief introduction to this dissertation. It also formulates the problem statement and outlines the rationale or justification for this study. The purpose of the study, objectives, and research questions are also highlighted. A hypothesis that will guide the study is also brought to the fore. Key theoretical concepts are laid out as well as the structure that the thesis will adopt.

1.1 Introduction

Current development thinking revolves around sustainable development, which must be achieved at every level of society in order to attain sustainable livelihoods. This notion has led to a new thrust of development: one that "puts people at the center". Hence, one of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is the broad public participation in decision-making. This entails individuals, groups and organizations in communities knowing about and participating in decisions that potentially affect them. According to UNECA/UN (1998) if communities are accorded a large measure of participation in the sustainable management of their resources it would enhance their productive capacity. Against this backdrop, this dissertation seeks to establish how community participation enhances environmental management and how it can also lead to improvement of food security of a poor community in Insiza District, in rural Zimbabwe. In this instance the community is classified poor as its existence is hand to mouth and sometimes its population suffers food deficits. The community in question is the Sanale. It mobilized around development projects as a way of reversing environmental degradation and at the same time fulfilling its livelihood needs.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Governments, especially in Africa, have shown little interest in revitalizing local level systems of authority, which were intentionally destroyed by past colonial regimes. Much of their energy to reform management of natural resources has centered on increasing their powers and responsibilities or more recently privatization. Attention has rarely focused on management of resources by communities or managing them as

common property. Thus, community participation in environmental decision-making has been ignored.

Currently, Sub-Saharan Africa is among the regions in the world currently facing widespread chronic food insecurity as well as threats of famine. Why is this so and what can be done? This study addresses partly these questions by bringing together some perspectives on food security problems, from analysis of causes to planning of policy interventions. Hence, the study will have a bias towards sustainable agriculture as an intervention in addressing food security issues in communities.

1.3 Justification

Statements of intent on global environmental problems issued at the 1992 Earth Summit, including Agenda 21 and the Desertification Convention, strongly advocate as solutions a combination of government decentralization, devolution to local communities of responsibility of natural resources held as commons and community participation. Hence, it is important for this study to ascertain at community level the feasibility of conventions and plans of action ratified by national governments.

It is also important to understand the livelihoods of rural communities or households brought about by sustainable agriculture in order to contribute effectively to rural planning, development and policy formulation. In the field of agriculture and planning, the livelihoods framework can be a useful conceptual tool for facilitating cross-sectoral discussion and planning. It puts people at the centre and considers all the diverse activities and concerns of their livelihoods, recognising that in order to bring about change there has to be a policy commitment to transforming the conditions under which poor rural producers operate.

1.4 Aim of the study

The purpose of the study is to assess whether interactive participation and self-mobilisation can lead to conservation of forest resources and also improvement of food security at household level.

1.5 Objectives

1. To establish the extent of forest depletion and food availability before the adoption of the Sanale project.

2. To establish initiatives undertaken by community in combating the natural forest depletion and enhancing food availability at household level.

3. To understand how the community has reacted to project activities.

4. To establish the extent and reasons for involvement in resource conservation and meeting livelihood needs.

5. To examine the role of Government, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in facilitating effective participation in resource management and fulfillment of household food security.

1.6 Research Questions

The study would be guided by the following **research questions**:

- What are the levels or forms of participation in the Sanale project?
- How were levels of participation achieved?
- Was the project community initiated?
- Are there differences in the understanding of community participation?
- Who is involved?
- How extensively are they involved?
- For what reasons?
- What are barriers to participation?
- What aspect of environmental problem is being outlined?
- What are the indicators of food insecurity/availability and forest depletion?

1.7 Key theoretical concepts/definitional issues

These are some of the major concepts that the dissertation will utilize. These concepts are briefly explained and will be expanded in the literature review.

1.7.1 Environmental Management

The World Bank (1999) cited by George in Lee and George (2000:179) defines environmental management as "...the set of mitigation, monitoring and institutional

3

measures to be taken during the implementation and operation to eliminate adverse environmental and social impacts, offset them, or reduce them to acceptable levels".

1.7.2 Sustainable agriculture

Sustainable agriculture denotes the ability to farm and produce agricultural products continually on a finite resource base, on a sustained yield basis. Thus, sustainable agriculture minimises the disruption of the ecological system or does not over-exploit natural resources.

1.7.3 Livelihood

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. Stated as a question, "How do people live their lives and make ends meet?" (Scoones, 1998: 5).

1.7.4 Land degradation

According to the Agricultural Outlook (2002) land degradation refers to changes in the quality of soil and water that reduce the ability of land to produce goods and services that people value.

1.7.5 Food security

This is generally defined in terms of access by all people at all times to sufficient food for active, healthy lives. As such, food security depends not only on how much food is available, but also on the access that people have to food – whether by purchasing it or producing it themselves, (Agricultural Outlook, 2002).

1.7.6 Community

This dissertation would be guided by Zentner's (1964) definition as cited by de Beer and Swanepoel (1998). Zentner sees a community as a group structure integrated around goals associated with the problems arising out of the collective occupation and utilisation of habitational space. It is further noted that the community has certain measures of local autonomy and a degree of local responsibility.

4

1.7.7 Participation

According to Moser (1989) participation is always connected to the actions of communities, groups or individuals related to the development, improvement or change of an existing situation. Thus, participation involves organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control, UNRISD in Pierce and Stiefel, (1979) cited in Turton, (1987).

1.7.8 Community participation

This is an approach to rural development that strives to improve the conditions of the rural population with its active participation. This is premised on the fact that rural people, though they look helpless and are poor, are capable of noticing their needs and should be accorded an opportunity to change their own lives by making decisions to that effect.

1.8. Outline of the study

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows. *Chapter 2* explores literature on sustainable development untangling issues such as conservation, participation and food security. It highlights arguments and the critiques emanating from literature and identifies working definitions, participation models, and conservation and livelihood frameworks. It concludes by drawing a link between community participation, environmental management and food security.

Chapter 3 explains the methodological considerations relevant to the study. It specifically looks at the justification and usefulness of the methodology, selection of the case study, sampling strategy, data collection and analysis techniques. It concludes by highlighting some of the limitations of the study.

Chapter 4 provides the contextual material for the case study. It begins with a broad country analysis of the socio-economic, environmental and political scenario of the area. It then specifically looks at the study area presenting the demographic and

household characteristics as well as socio-economic characteristics. It concludes by describing initiatives and programmes undertaken by the study community.

Chapter 5 provides a presentation and analysis of findings with a specific focus on community and key informant description and history of the project. It also looks at the impact of the project on their natural environment and livelihood needs. This emanates from the qualitative approaches employed.

Chapter 6 further provides a presentation and analysis of findings with a specific focus on community participation. That is, how the community mobilised around the problems of conservation and livelihood needs and how this was achieved. It also looks at the role of various stakeholders in development in fostering community participation. It concludes by highlighting the barriers to participation.

Chapter 7 draws from the analysis of the case study to present the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of the literature on the broad theoretical framework of sustainable development. It untangles sustainable development by looking at specific issues that form the framework such as conservation, participation and food security. As far as sustainable development is concerned, the literature review will focus on origins of the concept and the basic tenets as brought up by WCED in 1987. This will be followed by community participation where the search will focus on various schools of thought on such concepts as community and participation. Within community participation, literature will dwell on participation and various issues that positively or negatively influence participation. Factors that motivate people to manage their environment and the conservation initiatives they undertake will also be scrutinised. On food security, the literature will focus on approaches to household food security, agricultural issues and indicators of food security. A link will then be drawn between community participation, environmental management and food security. The thrust of the literature is on active participation enhancing environmental management and food security as applicable to Sanale community in Insiza District of Zimbabwe.

2.0 Sustainable development

2.1 Concepts of sustainability

Current development thinking is emphasizing measures that enhance the sustainability of programmes. Based on this, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WECD) (1987) defined sustainable development as the ability of development to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The general theme behind sustainability is the ability of the production system to persist in the foreseeable future. This is a development path that does not destroy the natural resource base on which production is based, (Mugabe, 2001). Colchester (1994: 69) adds that sustainability emphasizes four basic principles when applied to rural communities: that basic needs must be met; that resources should be subject to local control; that local communities must

7

have a decisive voice in planning and that they should represent themselves through their own institutions. This shows that chances of a resource management system being sustainable are based on supply of the resource, demand for the resource and control, (Murphree, 2000). Also alluded to in the principles cited above are the social aspects of sustainability that have to do with the management side of sustainable development, which form the control aspect. This is linked to the demand aspect. Demand is the variable that management seeks to control, (Mugabe, 2001:1).

In a rural setting, sustainable use thus entails not only conserving biological diversity, fauna and flora, but also maintaining ecological functions such as soil quality, hydrological cycles, climate and weather, river flow and water quality. It also implies maintaining supplies of natural products such as game, fodder, fruits and fuel wood among others which are essential to the livelihoods of local people, (Colchester 1994: 70). Hence achieving sustainability implies a radical transformation in modern day economies. The way natural resources are owned, controlled and mobilized has to shift to meet the needs of local people. Non-involvement obliges people to take from the environment more than planned. Therefore political changes are necessary if sustainability is to be achieved. Colchester (1994: 70) citing WCED notes:

> The pursuit of sustainable development requires a political system that secures effective participation in decision-making ... This is best secured by decentralising the management of resources upon which local communities depend, and giving these communities an effective say over the use of these resources. It will also require promoting citizen's initiatives, empowering peoples' organisations, and strengthening local democracy.

This view is closely related to the idea of popular participation which is defined by United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) cited in Turton, (1987: 3) "as the organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of the groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control".

The world is getting more and more globalized in that development in one country affect other countries positively or negatively. Hence, the reason why global bodies such as the United Nations, through various conventions and plans of action, are now determining the course of action that nations must take in order to achieve sustainable

development. Such course of action is even felt at grassroots level. One document that has an impact in sustainable development is Agenda 21. This is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organisations of the United Nations system, Governments and major groups in every area in which human beings impact on the environment. It was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. Chapter 23 of Agenda 21 looks at strengthening the role of major groups and Section 2 of this chapter states:

> "One of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making. Furthermore, in more specific context of environment and development, the need for new forms of participation has emerged. This includes the need for individuals, groups and organisations to participate in environmental impact assessment procedures and to know about and participate in decisions, particularly those which potentially affect the communities in which they live and work", http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agends21/english/agenda21chapter3.htm

Chapter 3 of Agenda 21, which alludes to enabling the poor to achieve sustainable livelihoods, supports this. In this quest, section 3-7 calls for empowering of communities. It states that "people's organisations, women's groups and non-governmental organisations are important sources of innovation and action at the local level and have a strong interest and proven ability to promote sustainable livelihoods". Hence, Governments, in cooperation with appropriate international and non-governmental organisations, should support a community-driven approach to sustainability, which includes:

a) empowering women through participation in decision-making

b) giving communities a large measure of participation in the sustainable management and protection of the local natural resources in order to enhance their capacity, http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/index.htm.

Thus, the importance of participation in various programmes cannot be overemphasized. The need to accord full participation to the vulnerable such as women is a prerequisite. This is because projects rely on women's participation as a means to ensure project success. However, Moser (1993) argues that they far less frequently recognise that for women as much as for other groups in society, participation is an end in itself. Moser, thus advocates three objectives for incorporating women's participation in programmes or projects and these relate to

empowerment; a means to achieve efficiency, effectiveness and cost recovery; and capacity building. As far as empowerment is concerned, Moser notes that women's participation is an end in itself. Women as much as men have the right and duty to participate in the execution of projects which profoundly affect their lives. In other words, women should be involved in the planning and decision –making as well as the implementation and management of projects that relate particularly to their lives. With regard to efficiency and effectiveness, women's participation is a means to improve project results. Moser argues that "…since women have particular responsibility for the welfare of the household, they are more aware than men of needs for infrastructure and services and are more committed to the success of a project that improves living conditions", (101). Hence, the exclusion of women can negatively affect the outcome of a project, while their active involvement can often help its success. On capacity building, Moser argues that participation in programme activities stimulates women's participation in other spheres of life. Participation in projects has been seen as an important mechanism to "overcome apathy" and "lack of confidence" and it can make women visible in the community. It would be interesting to ascertain in this dissertation if the Sanale community project enables empowerment, efficiency and effectiveness and capacity building of women, which are the main tenets of Agenda 21, of which Zimbabwe is a signatory.

2.2 Community participation

The development agenda in many developing countries was greatly influenced by development models of the 1960s, namely dependency and intervention based on relief or rescue solutions in times of crises and emergencies. According to the UNDP (1998: 7) such efforts were often prescriptive and dictated to the citizens or population of these countries by international agencies who thought they knew people's problems and how to solve them. As such people were viewed as passive recipients of development policies and programmes rather than active participants in the process. The people were dependent on governments and development agencies for solutions to their problems (UNDP 1998: 7). The underlying sentiment seemed to be that people did not have expertise to change their own lives; hence governments, policy planners and "experts" in development issues had to decide for them. This paradigm persisted for decades and governments and development agencies adopted it without necessarily developing long-term programmes involving the people in

initiation, design, planning and implementation of programmes. As a result, prescriptive policies and methodologies from outside the affected community have often failed to have an impact on the real life situation of the people. Programmes and projects have collapsed as communities do not own them and do not feel responsible for their failure or success.

However, since the 1970s there has been a paradigm shift from dependency and interventionist theories towards greater participation that has become the hallmark of sustainable development. This means there has been a general shift from prescriptive "top-down" to participatory "bottom-up" approaches to development. However, before looking at participatory development there is need to first unpack and understand the term community, as it is a fundamental concept of this dissertation.

2.2.1 Community: defining the concept

As alluded to above there is need to understand what a community is or at least know the defining characteristics of it before dwelling on the issue of community participation. Different scholars have used the term community differently and there is no universal definition. It is rather context specific. A Euro-centric conception of local community is usually different from that of other regions. It tends to view community as natives living together in harmony, oppressed by their poverty and perhaps also their ignorance, but working together and trying to make the best out of a difficult situation (Burkey, 1993: 40). The other view sees communities as composed of individuals and groups with different and often opposing interests. In fact, every rural society has some form of socio-economic class structure (ibid). This view is supported by Moser (1993: 16) who highlighted the notion of the heterogeneity of household structures within communities. She notes that the common assumption sees the predominant household structure as consisting of a nuclear family of husband, wife and two or three children. This, Moser argues, is "...no more than an idealised traditional planning stereotype even of Western industrial society today", (page 16). Even though Moser acknowledges that nuclear families may be dominant type in some contexts, she still maintains that other structures exist, not only in industrialised countries but also in the developing world. For example, extended families, de jure female-headed households and de facto female headed- households. De jure female-headed refers to those households in which the male partner is permanently absent

due to separation or death and the woman is legally single, divorced or widowed. De facto women-headed households refer to those in which the male partner is "temporarily" absent and the woman is not the legal household head, (Moser, 1993: 17).

Midgley, quoted in de Beer and Swanepoel (1998: 17), defines a community "…in terms of geographic locality, of shared interests and needs, or in terms of deprivation and disadvantage". This fits the image of the traditional African village or the urban slum or squatter settlement. This is linked to another definition which sees a community as a group of individuals living together in some form of social organisation with cohesion in planning and operation and/or manifesting some unifying trait or common interest (www.iime.org/glossary.htm). Scholars like Edwards and Jones quoted in de Beer and Swanepoel (1998: 17) add the local autonomy dimension to their definition when they maintain that a community is:
"… a grouping of people who reside in a specific locality and who exercise some degree of local autonomy in organising their social life in such a way that they can, from that locality base, satisfy the full range of their daily needs".

The United Nations (UN) cited in de Beer and Swanepoel (1998:18) argue that the use of socio-spatial definitions does not clarify the concept as it simultaneously refers to villages, districts and even towns. The UN thus suggests focussing on small communities of individuals "…at the lowest level of aggregation at which people organise for common effort", (ibid). This is mainly because groups involved in community development often organise at the lowest level of aggregation. The foregoing shows that there is no general agreement on the meaning of community as it is always used with an inherent assumption. However, what is clear are general characteristics such as closeness of people (geographic locality), shared needs or interests, a willingness or need to participate in development and some measurable level of poverty or deprivation, (de Beer and Swanepoel, 1998). Even though the UN definition casts doubt on the Midgley definition in as far as spatial aspect is concerned, it is important to note rural areas in Zimbabwe have boundaries under chiefs, sub-chiefs and headmen. These define the territorial aspect of community hence the influence of Midgley definition in this thesis.

2.2.2 Defining Participation

Having established the relevant characteristics of community, the next step is to look at what constitutes participation. The United Nations Conference on Popular Participation held in Tanzania in 1990 and whose theme was "Putting the People First" advocated putting the people, however defined, first. Makumbe (1996: 1), citing the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), noted that "... the generality of our people have been excluded from any critical and significant contribution to national directions". This has tremendous negative impact on the well-being and survival of the people. Makumbe (1996:2) further adds, "... the problem of the marginalisation of the people as a result of their being excluded from decision-making processes for development is pervasive throughout Africa and the Third World. It is a negation of the principle of the democratisation of the development process". Thus, people's involvement or participation in decision-making results in the democratisation of the development process. With this in mind, this study would assess whether participation is real or active rather than passive. According to UNDP/CSOPP passive participation is whereby beneficiaries basically welcome the project proposals and support them but are generally cautious (and even suspicious) in relation to project management. Active participation is where beneficiaries play the role of active partners in the project's implementation and development and assume increasing responsibilities, (http://www.uni-freiburg.de/worldbank/Lehre/Le_pdf). It would also be important to ascertain if the development process is democratic at community level.

According to IFAD (2001: 10) participation is shared understanding and empowerment leading to joint decision-making. It starts with consultation, moves to negotiation (of problems, solutions, approaches) and ends with decision-making and action. IFAD further notes that participation should also be thought of as a political act as it enables voices to be heard and in so doing changes power relationships. It also promotes accountability and transparency. Projects that reflect local knowledge and priorities are more likely to be sustainable because they are relevant and acceptable to beneficiaries. Thus, participation increases ownership and motivation vi-a-vis projects, a necessary but not sufficient condition for sustainability. Participation is also described as a human right as it holds that individuals, local

communities and national governments have the fundamental right to be involved in the decision-making processes that affect their future, (IFAD 2001: 10).

On one hand, The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation strongly believes that popular participation is the empowerment of the people to effectively involve themselves in creating the structures and in designing the policies and programmes that serve the interests of all, (http://www.africaaction.org/african-initiatives/charter.htm). Hence, there should be an accommodation of freedom of opinions, tolerance of differences, accepting consensus on issues as well as ensuring the effective participation of the people and their organisations and associations. This requires action on the part of all, first and foremost of the people themselves. There is also need to recognise the contribution made by women to African societies and economies and the extreme subordination and discrimination they suffer, (ibid). It was the view of the conference that the attainment of equal rights by women in social, economic and political spheres must become a central feature of a democratic and participatory pattern of development. In view of this, the study will inquisitively ascertain who is involved in programme activities at Sanale community. Of interest would be the role of women and youth in this initiative.

According to the UNDP (1998: 9), active participation entails letting the beneficiaries of development projects and programmes identify their needs, initiate and plan interventions, and seek assistance from interested partners. Communities in a participatory process develop proposals to what already exists around them, identifying their most pressing needs and realistic responses. Communities draw work plans and contribute in cash and kind, including labour. The participation of communities would extend to the monitoring and evaluation stages of activities. This enables communities to carry out checks, identifying where they went wrong, where they were successful and how to improve on their successes. UNDP (1998) further notes that this kind of approach instils some sense of ownership and responsibility towards the programme among the communities. This in turn, leads to sustainability of programmes and activities. It is noted that people learn better and faster when they do things themselves, while development agencies can assist with technical expertise where necessary and requested. In the same vein, Makumbe (1996: 7) argues that

14

popular participation is considered severely limited when the masses are merely being asked to choose between alternatives initially selected by bureaucrats. The limitation of participation becomes more evident under these circumstances when none of the alternatives proposed by the bureaucrats meet the expectations of the masses, or fail to consider what the masses may feel are their felt needs. Such a notion will help this study to ascertain whether the development process in Sanale Community in Insiza is "directive" or "non-directive" or whether it enables people to regain control over their own development.

2.2.3 Defining community participation

Having looked at community and participation, it is now possible to unpack community participation. Chandler (1998: 175) views community participation as the direct involvement of the local community in the process of policy formulation, administrative decision-making, and programme implementation. This approach goes further to imply that decisions made should involve and be acceptable to those affected by them. Thus, decision-making and the implementation of development policy at community level should not be partaken in isolation of the local community being served. Brown (1995: 46) in this respect adds that community participation can be viewed as the active process by which beneficiary or client groups influence the direction and execution of a project rather than merely be consulted thereof or receive a share of the benefits. This definition has some bearing on the project management cycle and project conception specifically. This implies that the context of participation is defined by the scope of the project and the affected community is the vital cog in the development process and whose acceptance is crucial to the eventual success of the project.

2.2.4 Participation as key to empowerment

Paul (1987) cited in Moser (1993:101) identifies a fivefold continuum of the objectives of participation in development projects. This ranges from the objective of participation for empowerment, to capacity building, through increasing project effectiveness to improving project efficiency and, finally, to project cost sharing. Moser (1993:101) notes that the issue of whether participation includes an element of empowerment is central to the debate about participation. This is because it brings to the fore the question of "means" and "ends", a distinction that is crucial when it

comes to participation. Moser further notes that where participation is a means, it generally becomes a form of mobilisation to get things done. This could be state-directed, top-down mobilisation, sometimes enforced, to achieve specific objectives, or bottom-up "voluntary" community-based mobilisation to obtain a greater share of resources, (Moser, 1993: 101). Where participation is identified as an end in itself, the objective is not a fixed, quantified development goal, but a process, the outcome of which is an increasingly "meaningful" participation in the development process, (Moser, 1993: 101).

Therefore, placing people at the core of the development process, as epitomised by interactive participation and self-mobilisation, is also said to empower them. This also forms a basis for sustainable development. According to UNDP (1998: 10) empowerment is a process through which individuals transform themselves and become self-reliant in developing their economic and social well-being. This entails strengthening the capacity, capability, authority and will of an individual to define his or her development needs and act on them in accordance with his or her own priorities and choices of solutions. UNDP further notes that individuals are given opportunities to freely discover and use the power they already possess for autonomous constructive action. They are given the means to achieve this end, resulting in an empowered individual who is able to independently act to change his or her poverty condition. Thus, at community level, empowerment is achieved through a collective and continuous process of seeing what the need is, thinking about what to do with it and collective acting by all segments of community. This is said to constitute internal empowerment. However, to achieve this, the community has to share common concerns and interests, feel an affinity towards one another and have a sense of belonging together, (UNDP 1998:10). This enables an active and effective contribution from all participants and benefits to accrue to the participants resulting in a commitment to make development activities a success. As such, empowerment leads to ownership, imagination, creativity and sustainability, which are qualities that "dependency" and "intervention" theories of development lack, (UNDP, 1998: 11). This study would test the notion of participation as key to empowerment of communities. This would be achieved by looking at activities of Sanale Community and assessing whether at the end the community is self-reliant or not. However, many scholars have advanced various levels or stages of community participation where

empowerment can be achieved. This implies communities operate at different levels when it comes to project or programme issues. This would be the subject of the next section.

2.3 Levels of community participation

Levels of community participation, just like any other strategic plan, require a clear understanding of the baseline. However, due to lack of clarity in the concepts of participation, most people find it difficult to define the levels of achievement as they progress with the project, http://www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/english/asia/resource/apdrj/z13fmo108.htm, 15/03/04. However, different scholars have suggested various methods of grading different levels of participation. Paul (1987:44) outlines four ascending levels of intensity of participation, but emphasizes those different levels of community participation may co-exist in the same project. It is suggested that the best form of people's participation includes all four levels, but the appropriate level for a specific situation depends on the nature of the project. The levels of intensity are identified as **information sharing, consultation, decision-making and initiating action.** Information sharing is where information is shared between the parties to enable collective or individual action. The beneficiaries are viewed as passive recipients of the benefits of the project. With consultation the beneficiaries are not only informed, but also consulted on key issues at some or all stages. There is an opportunity for beneficiaries to interact and provide feed back to the project agency, which the latter could take into account in the design and implementation stages. Decision-making is a higher level of intensity that is said to occur when beneficiaries have a decision-making role in matters of design and implementation. Initiating action occurs when beneficiaries are able to take the initiative in terms of actions pertaining to a project. At this stage the intensity of community participation is said to have reached a peak as it implies a pro-active capacity and the confidence to progress on one's own.

To allow for quantification of the term participation, a typology of participation by Pretty et al 1995 is referred to in this thesis. This is given below in table 1:

17

Table 1: Typology of Participation

Typology	Characteristics of Each Type
1. Passive Participation	People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement by an administration or project management without listening to people's responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals.
2. Participation in Information Giving	People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches. People do not have the opportunity to influence proceedings, as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.
3. Participation by Consultation	People participate by being consulted, and external people listen to views. These external professionals define both problems and solutions, and may modify these in the light of people's responses. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views.
4. Participation for Material Incentives	People participate by providing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives e.g on-farm research. It is very common to see this called participation; but people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end.
5. Functional Participation	People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organisation. Such involvement does not tend to be at early stages of project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have been made. These institutions tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may become self-dependent.
6. Interactive Participation	People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and formation of new local institutions or the strengthening of existing ones. It tends to involve interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and make use of systematic structured learning processes. These groups take control over local decisions, and so people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices.
7. Self-mobilisation	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used.

2.4 Institutions and Participation

In rural development, institutions, micro or macro level, are important if participation is to be achieved. These are known to facilitate or hinder participation. In Zimbabwe various structures are found at national, provincial, district, ward and village level. These structures are viewed as conduits for effective participation as various government documents highlight. The Republic of Zimbabwe (1981: 2) in a policy paper titled "Growth with Equity: An Economic Policy Statement" announced that "… Government is determined to embark on policies and programmes designed to involve fully, in the development process, the entire people". This was further supported by another policy document titled "First Five Year National Development Plan: 1986-1990" which alluded to the need for participatory planning in issues affecting the people. Hence, it was stated in the document that:

> " One of the main tasks which Government will undertake during the plan period is the establishment of a broadly based planning machinery which is intended to facilitate plan formulation and plan implementation and, most important, to make possible direct involvement of the broad masses in the planning process", (Republic of Zimbabwe, 1986: 2).

In Zimbabwe, soon after independence in 1980, the design and implementation of rural development policy was the responsibility of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development, although other ministries were involved. To fully incorporate people in the development process, local government reforms were effected in 1984 by the then Prime Minister Robert Mugabe. The directive and statement of policy that came to be known as The Prime Minister's Directive (PMD) on Decentralisation and Development was then issued. In announcing the decentralisation of the Local Government system, the then Prime Minister announced that the intention was to bring about:

> "… a comprehensive and more effective system of involving the local communities both horizontally and vertically in the process of planning and effecting their development, thus enabling Government to assess the development needs and priorities not only of the provinces but also of the district, ward and village areas within the province", (Republic of Zimbabwe, 1984:1).

On one hand Castillo (1983) cited by Makumbe (1996:12) argues that people's participation in development tends to be moulded by the nature of institutions or organisations that are set up for this purpose. It is further argued that involvement of

people in community action is usually modelled along programme implementation and maintenance;

> "The programme being implemented at the village level are packaged programmes whose planning and decision-making processes were done by high level policy makers from the different agencies and brought to the community for implementation", (Castillo cited in Makumbe 1996:12).

The proliferation of literature on institutions shows their importance, especially at the local or implementation level. Such institutions comprise Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Government institutions or departments and Community Based Organisations (CBOs), among others. These have an important role to play in addressing development challenges in Zimbabwe, and developing countries at large and have tended to be associated with the adoption of participatory approaches. Such institutions are discussed below.

2.4.1 NGOs

NGOs can contribute towards enhancing the lives of the poor and protecting their fundamental rights. The growing concern, in recent years, with the environment and interest in "sustainable development" has coincided with an increased emphasis on involving non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in development efforts. Vivian (1994: 170) looks at various issues within the sustainable development paradigm and suggests problem areas that NGOs can help in assuaging. These are given as:

> "The issues addressed by the sustainable development paradigm include international problems such as ozone depletion and global warming, as well as national-level issues such as destruction caused by resource extraction or industrial pollution. Another important area of concern, however, is the resource depletion and destruction carried out by individuals on a small-scale, which collectively have permanent destructive impacts and reduce productive capacities, especially in the rural sector. It is this type of dynamic that is especially relevant to NGOs working in the Third World. Such problems involve widespread, incremental overexploitation or contamination of natural resources, resulting in gradual deforestation, degradation of soils and depletion of marine and forest resources ----- the proximate causes of rural environmental problems are often locally based, suggests that local level action will be an important component of solutions to environmental problems. It is this small-scale, individual dimension of the problems of resource depletion and environmental degradation which NGOs are, in theory, particularly well-suited to address", (Vivian, 1994:170).

Despite the role played by NGOs in sustainable development, Haidari and Wright (2001: 53) question their role in as far as participation and empowerment of local communities is concerned. They argue that the fundamental point on participatory development is decision-making and control by "insiders" or local people. This is lent support by Chambers (1993), who argued that development should be people-centred and the role of "outsiders" such as technicians, developers and researchers whether from government or from NGOs should be as enablers and facilitators. This alludes to the fact that participation should not only be a means, where people are brought into a project in order for its aims to be accomplished more efficiently, effectively or cheaply. But NGOs working with communities should ensure that participation is an end, where the community or group sets up a process to control its own development. The foregoing literature is important when one is assessing the role played NGOs in programmes that entail their participation. Of importance is the issue of whether NGOs are coming in as facilitators and enablers or they are merely representing a top-down approach where communities are passive recipients.

2.4.2 Government Institutions

Jeppe (1985: 53) sees the central government's role in regard to community development as "initiating policy formulation, overall planning, administrative structuring, financing, coordinating and controlling, staffing and training, surveying and/or researching and evaluating". Various relevant departments or think tanks carry this out. Such institutions can be too restricted or too broad, can have too little power or can assume too much power. Swanepoel (1993) cited by de Beer and Swanepoel (1998: 34) note that a possible way out of such a dilemma is for Government institutions to play a supportive role, which is also in line with the notion of empowerment. One institution of government, which is a key player in rural development, is the local government. Citing Sady (1962) de Beer and Swanepoel (1998: 38) identify various important tasks for local government, such as:

- "decongesting" government at the centre by freeing it from local responsibilities;
- increasing the people's understanding and support of local development activities;

- ensuring that local programmes for development are more realistic. This is in line with current development thinking that development should be institutionalised at the local level and local government should develop local political responsibility.

With the above in mind, this dissertation will carefully analyse the role played by specific government departments or institutions in facilitating community participation in community programmes of Insiza community.

2.4.3 Community-based Organisations (CBOs)

It is argued that smaller, less structured organisations among the community organisation fare better in community development, (de Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 41). This is because the participation of the people is more intensive and pronounced. Also small groups seem to be able to enhance the learning process and members are motivated to be more productive in the presence of others in problem-solving situations, (ibid). Community based organisations provide a basis for development "in so far as they are building an organisation and bringing the community together around mutual concerns and needs", (White, 1986 cited by de Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 41). Overall, CBOs have an invaluable role of acting as channels for government and non-government attempts at development. From the foregoing, it would be of interest to have a standpoint on CBOs engaged with the Sanale community in Insiza District, Zimbabwe.

The issue of institutions or structures is thus very pertinent to this study. As alluded to, these arrangements will be scrutinised to determine the level of the people's involvement or participation in development and the benefits, if any, accruing to them. It will also be necessary to ascertain whether policy pronouncements have been effected in practice and what difference they have brought to the development agenda in Zimbabwe.

2.5 Impediments or obstacles to community participation

There is a horde of factors that could curtail and constrain the promotion of participatory development, which often lead to emergence of non-participatory approaches. According to Botes and van Rensburg (2000: 42) obstacles prohibiting

participation range from institutional to socio-cultural, to technical, and to logistical factors. Such obstacles could be external, internal and a combination of both. Botes and van Rensburg note that external obstacles refer to those factors outside the end-beneficiary community that inhibit or prevent true community participation taking place. These external obstacles include the role of development professionals, the broader government orientation towards promoting participation, the tendency among development agencies to apply selective participation, and their techno-financial bias. On one hand internal obstacles refer to conflicting interest groups, gate keeping by local elites and alleged lack of public interest in becoming involved. Some of the obstacles such as excessive pressures for immediate results and techno-financial bias include both internal and external characteristics, (Botes and van Rensburg 2000:42). However, to overcome the barriers and promote community participation there is need to promote co-decision-making in defining needs, goal setting and formulating policies and plans in the implementation of these decisions. Also development practitioners should become good facilitators and catalysts of development that assist and stimulate community based initiatives and challenge practices that hinder people releasing their own initiatives and realize their own ideals, (Botes and van Rensburg, 2000: 53). The issue of barriers to community participation is central to this dissertation. Both external and internal factors would be assessed to ascertain whether they play a role in community organisation at Sanale. Despite identified obstacles to community participation, there are also factors that encourage communities to take an active role in the management of their resources. Some of these factors are discussed below.

2.6 Why do people seek to manage the environment?

The World Bank (1999) cited by George in Lee and George (2000:179) defines environmental management as "the set of mitigation, monitoring and institutional measures to be taken during the implementation and operation to eliminate adverse environmental and social impacts, offset them, or reduce them to acceptable levels". If communities participate in environmental management it means they would be able to identify, evaluate and rank environmental problems facing them and develop viable local environmental action plans in collaboration with some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local environmental authorities. Murphree (1991: 1) in his study of communities as institutions for resource management suggests that people

seek to manage the environment for two reasons, namely: a) because its management improves the conditions of their livelihood, and b) because its degradation is perceived to be threatening, either to life-sustaining processes (for example, pollution and soil erosion) or to peoples' aesthetic values. In this regard the environment is taken by Murphree to mean the habitat or ecosystem in which human beings live, but he emphasizes on natural resources which form a component of the ecosystem which sustains life or provide goods and services useful to man. Murphree, however, argues that this is highly generalised and there is need for definitive proposition. He thus notes "people seek to manage the environment when the benefits of management are perceived to exceed its costs", (Murphree 1991: 2). This proposition introduces the notion of cost, which is a basic aspect of environmental management. In this regard, people may want to manage the environment for better production or to prevent the effects of its deterioration. However, Murphree notes that they will only engage in environmental management if they consider the benefit to be worth the cost and if they have the means to meet these costs. In the same study, Murphree introduces the notion of resource management and resource use. He notes that resource use without resource management is non-sustainable. But equally any attempt to establish resource management without resource use is likely to be futile", (Murphree 1991: 14). From the foregoing, this dissertation will need to look analytically at the initiatives and reasons that compelled the Sanale community to come together and manage their environment and consider their short and long term benefits and costs.

2.6.1 Conservation initiatives

The need to curb environmental deterioration has catapulted widespread endeavours aimed at conservation and improvement of natural resources. Ghai (1994: 7) highlights 3 categories of conservation initiatives. Two categories comprise official programmes: those which aim to preserve forests, parks and animal and plant species for the benefit of present and future generations; and those that strive to rehabilitate and improve degraded resources to meet the subsistence needs of farmers, herders and foragers. Ghai mentions the category as consisting of resource improvement efforts undertaken at the initiative of local communities and grass-roots organisations, with different support from activists and voluntary development bodies, state agencies and foreign donors. Conservation programmes in the former category have often met with limited success owing to their non-tolerance or failure to take into account the needs

24

of communities near or surrounding resource areas such as parks or protected areas (Ghai 1994: 7). The second category of conservation endeavours have posted some notable successes owing to their explicit purpose of improving degraded resources with the aim of raising the living standards of the poor. However, some initiatives in this category have failed because they are not embedded in the socio-economic and political scenario of the area. The third category of conservation initiatives has a better record of success because participation by local communities guarantees that the programmes and projects address the real needs and priority concerns of the local people. This is even made possible by the support, material and political, from individuals and organisations, (ibid). Based on this literature, this study will test the community conservation initiatives and assess the factors that lead to success or failure of the initiatives. One such tool of analysis is the sustainable livelihood framework which is tackled below.

2.7 Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

Any attempt to analyse rural development programmes should include sustainability of the whole strategy. That's why focus should be on sustainable livelihood strategies. According to Scoones (1998) livelihood strategies should be understood at different levels. Of note is that ownership of assets does not always translate into effective livelihood strategies. However, a balance between assets is critical to make the best use of opportunities, for example, where access to land of reasonable quality exists, credit, markets and access to inputs are critical in order to expand agricultural production. Therefore, a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can "...cope with and recover from stresses and shocks maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base", (Scoones, 1998: 5).

Linked to Scoones' livelihood framework is sustainable livelihood framework propounded by Department for International Development (DFID) when it comes to analysing how people use the resources at their disposal in a given policy and institutional framework to deal with vulnerability where they are prone to shocks, stresses and seasonal variations. They have access and influence to certain assets (human, natural, financial, physical and social) that are poverty-reducing factors that

gain meaning and value through a prevailing social, institutional and policy environment. This environment in turn affects the livelihood strategies that people use to achieve beneficial livelihood outcomes, (DFID, 1999: 1). Thus, the concept of sustainable livelihood securities focuses on local people's ability to act in an environmentally-sustainable way, and on removing the constraints that prevent them from taking the long-term view in conserving their resource base in which, it is argued, they have a vested interest for food security and other reasons (Chambers, 1988). According to Davies et al (1991) this approach to sustainable development represents the most explicit attempt to link food security and environmental concerns at conceptual level although it has been criticised for failing to take account of trade-offs between food security and environmental objectives within local livelihood systems. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework is therefore presented below.

2.7.1 Sustainable livelihoods framework

The framework has been developed to help understand and analyse the livelihoods of the poor. It is also useful in assessing the effectiveness of existing efforts to reduce poverty. It presents the main factors that affect people's livelihoods, and typical relationships between these, Department for International Development (DFID) (1999). This is shown, as developed by DFID (1999), in figure 1 below.
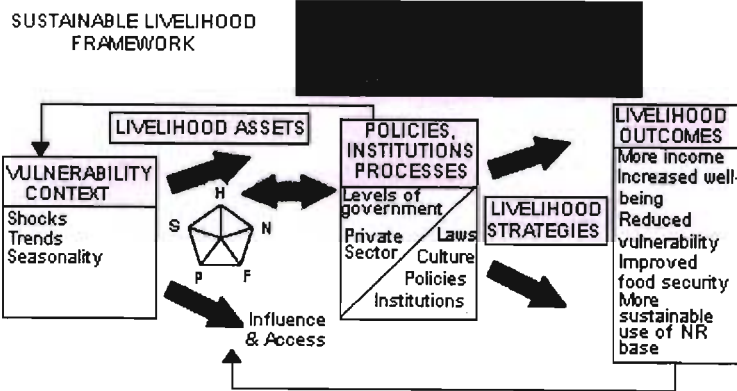
Figure 1: Sustainable Livelihood Framework

DFID (2001) further notes that the vulnerability context mainly refers to the external factors that create shocks, stresses and seasonal variations in people's lives. Policies of state and non-state players provide the framework for activities, whereas institutions comprise the organisation and rules that enable people to carry out and

benefit from their livelihood strategies. Processes are the dynamic element of policies and institutions implying how things are actually done. Having looked at policies, institutions and processes, this dissertation would advance or add levels of participation to this category. It argues that if people participate in action planning, takes control over local decisions, develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need and retain control over how resources are used. Such levels of participation are viewed as having a bearing on livelihood strategies that communities adopt and eventually leads to beneficial outcomes. Beneficial outcomes are those that reinforce and expand the assets of the people, (DFID 2001).

Aspects of the sustainable livelihood framework would be utilised in this study to analyse the action of Sanale community in managing their environment and improving household food security, which is explained below.

2.8 Food Security

2.8.1 Approaches to the concept of household food security

According to the World Bank (1986: 1) food security is access by all people at all times to enough food for active, healthy life. The emphasis here is on individual access in all seasons and all years and to enough food not just for survival, but for active participation in society. However, uncertainties remain about whether the unit of analysis should be the individual or household. Maxwell in Devereux and Maxwell (2001: 17) notes that recent research favours the view that access to food by individuals in a household is pervasively linked to the control they have over household resources and the access they have to household income. Therefore in following this logic, most current definitions of food security begin with individual entitlement, though recognising the complex inter-linkages between the individual, the household, the community, the nation and the international economy, (Maxwell in Devereux and Maxwell 2001). Food insecurity can therefore be viewed as chronic or transitory food insecurity. Chronic food insecurity refers to the inability of a household to meet its food needs on a going basis whilst transitory food insecurity is a temporary decline in a household's access to enough food, (World Bank 1986: 1).

From the above, several objectives of food security can be discerned. These are given by Hlophe cited in Rukuni, Mudimu and Jayne (1990: 38) as:

- To satisfy the basic needs of the population of the country and progressively to improve food supplies to all the people, irrespective of their positions in society.
- To achieve national self-sufficiency in food supply to the maximum extent possible in order to reduce the national dependence on external sources of food aid.
- To eliminate periodic food crises which affect some areas of the country.

Household food security hence assumes adequate access by the household to the amount of food of the right quality to satisfy the dietary needs of its family members throughout the year. Devereux (1997: 33) notes that at household level, food insecurity is the inability to acquire – through production, purchase and transfers – sufficient food for a healthy, active life. Key determinants of food insecurity relate to constraints on household food production and the limited availability of off-farm income-earning opportunities. Simply stated, the rural poor are unable either to grow or purchase enough food. However, Borton and Shoham as quoted in Latham (1997) note that household food security is a multi-faceted concept that does not necessarily lend itself to single, discrete indicators. It is however generally agreed that most rural poor are food insecure or at high risk of being so largely due to factors like capital, labour and knowledge. Within the poor people, severely affected by food insecurity are women-headed households, children under 5 years, pregnant and lactating mothers, the aged, the landless, asset poor households and households constrained by a high dependency ration, (Latham 1997). To this end achieving food security entails a sufficient supply of food, stability in terms of supply within and across years and physical and economic access to food.

2.8.2 Food Supply (food availability)

According to Latham (1997: 2) for a population to be nourished adequately "there must be a sufficient quantity and variety of good quality and safe food in the country". Improving food security hence embraces any methods that endeavour to increase sustainable agricultural production of food and promotion of the same. In that light a

significant strategy for food security policy is to improve and increase food production. Increasing food production, however, does not go in isolation but calls for an understanding of the nutritional needs of the population and associated nutritional implications of any intervention.

Latham (1997: 30) further argues, "developing countries should strive for integrated rural development combining sustainable agricultural development and promotion of off-farm economic activities". Therefore, the major thrust of rural development organisations operating in food insecure communities would be the expansion of agricultural production to achieve higher yields coupled with an increase in household income. Associated with food production is a need to reduce food losses arising out of inappropriate food harvesting, processing, storage, and inefficient/ineffective marketing systems. Conversely, even after successful production, other factors can still affect food supply and these include but are not limited to transportation and repayments of food debts (ibid).

Maxwell in Maxwell and Devereux (2001:47) highlights that the stability in the supply of food is a necessary condition towards ensuring sustainable food security. Such stability can be achieved through any of the following means:
- Adequate stock holding through strategic resources.
- Introducing new cropping strategies like inter/mixed cropping, appropriate rotation systems and agro forestry.
- Promoting effective post food handling practices.
- Promoting other food household projects with a bias towards food production.

2.8.3 Access to food (food demand)
According to Pretty (1995: 16) a shift towards more intensive, sustainable forms of agriculture can make a substantial positive contribution to food security – not only through its ability to contribute to sustainable intensification of production, but also through an emphasis on improving people's ability to acquire food. Thus, access to food is dependent upon the resources that households command, the ability and knowledge to produce and procure the food it needs for the energy and nutritional requirements of each member. Access to food by an individual family member or

household is therefore a function of resource ownership, production, aid and trade. Increasingly per capita incomes and prices play a key role in food demand. Pretty further argues that the poor are the most vulnerable to food deficits, which implies increasing their expenditure levels through the raising of incomes will provide a potential for improving their household food security status. Adequate access can therefore be achieved without household self-sufficiency as long as the household is capable of generating sufficient income, which together with own production will enable it to meet its food requirements.

2.8.4 Indicators of food security

Indicators of food security can be objective or subjective. According to Maxwell in Devereux and Maxwell (2001: 20) conventional approaches to food security have relied on objective measurement, that is, "target" levels of consumption or more generally a timely, reliable and nutritionally adequate supply of food. These in themselves can be problematic as ideas suggest that it is not just the quantity of food entitlement that matters, but also its quality. Measurement questions arise as to how different aspects are quantified or weighted. Such problems lead us to subjective dimension of food security. This would take into account perceptions of poor people themselves which should to be given greater weight, (Maxwell cited in Devereux and Maxwell 2001: 20). Drawing from the above discussion, indicators of household food security then relate to food production and supply on the one hand and demand and access on the other. Supply indicators include yields in agricultural production, the influence of inputs on production (eg credit and fertilisers) and market factors like sales and prices. Access indicators include food consumption data, selling of household's assets, an increase in consumption of low status foods, foraging and possibly migration to urban areas, (Latham, 1997).

The foregoing literature on the concept of household food security is important for this dissertation. Of importance, the issue of food availability would be given precedence and the indicators outlined above would be tested against the community in question for commonality.

2.8.5 Agricultural issues in food security

Agriculture is at the heart of food security. This is not for the obvious reason that the agricultural sector is the only source of the food we need. It is also because of the multiple roles played by the agricultural sector as a source of employment and livelihood, and as one of the main motors of economic activity, (Maxwell in Devereux and Maxwell, 2001). This has driven policy makers in Africa to recognize the importance of agriculture. For example, the Lagos Plan of Action adopted by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1980 identified food security as one of the main priorities, and called for a target growth of 4% per annum in the agricultural sector. In 1985, the OAU African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER) called for African governments to devote up to 25% of government budgets to the agricultural sector. This is because the agricultural sector takes care of the supply and demand of food. However, to achieve this, agriculture has to be sustainable. According to Vukasin, Roos, Spicer and Davies (1995: 8) sustainable agriculture is an approach to agricultural production that stresses the improvement and preservation of the land while increasing productivity and decreasing dependency on external inputs. This approach is followed in Southern Africa because the soil has often been degraded and the fertility decreased significantly. This is mainly brought about by deforestation, lack of groundcover, erosion, loss of broad leaf grasses for grazing, siltation of streams and lowered water tables. Vukasin et al (1995: 8) argue that dependence on artificial or inorganic fertilisers does not solve these environmental problems because it does not regenerate or improve the soil. Such dependence does not contribute to sustainable systems especially for peasant farmers working communally owned land. Thus, the sustainable approach requires the maintenance of a balance of fertility in the soil and biodiversity in the ecosystem as a whole. This means there should be a lessening of dependence on outside inputs such as hybrid seeds, artificial fertilisers and pesticides. In other words a return to natural farming is emphasised.

In the fight to combat food insecurity, the Government of Zimbabwe developed positive measures that gave first priority to the development of the agricultural sector because of the dynamic role that it plays in the economy of the country, (Takavarasha and Rukovo in Rukuni et al, (1990: 63). This was after the realisation that over 70 per cent of lives in the rural areas depend on farming as their primary source of

livelihood. In addition, economic growth is conditioned by the performance of the agricultural sector, which provides over 90 per cent of domestic food requirements and accounts for 41 per cent of total merchandise exports (ibid). However, this dissertation will ascertain whether Government prioritisation is felt at community level. In this light the role of Government in promoting community involvement in livelihood issues would be put under scrutiny.

Takavarasha and Rukovo in Rukuni et al (1990: 64) highlight that food insecurity in Zimbabwe is present at both micro and macro levels, but the major area of concern is the availability of food at the household level. Household food insecurity is seasonal due to poverty and the lack of effective distribution machinery. At the national level, food insecurity is caused by droughts, the limited funds available for the development of the agricultural sector, poor road infrastructure and the lack of skilled manpower to implement Government policies. Erratic droughts have been a common feature in the 1980s with four drought seasons/years (1982 – 83; 1983 – 84; 1984 – 85; and 1986 – 87). The country's weather pattern is also erratic. Not only is rainfall unreliable, but it is poorly distributed geographically and there is high frequency of mid-season droughts. The rural poor are mainly affected by this erratic rainfall pattern. The rural poor are mainly those without a member of the household formally employed in the urban area, (ibid). Although cited reasons for food insecurity are at national level, this dissertation will concentrate at the micro level, that is, the household. It will attempt to ascertain the causes at this level. A comparison with causes at the national level will be done.

2.8.6 Food insecurity and environmental degradation nexus

Production failures are not the only environmental consequences of increased food insecurity. Vulnerability to food insecurity means, in most instances, vulnerability to environmental degradation and vice versa. As such, during times of food insecurity, coping strategies centre on natural resources outside the usual production system, or alternatively on intensifying exploitation of resources habitually used (Davies et al 1991: 8). Citing Corbett (1998) Davies et al (1991:8) further note that "although coping strategies often originate as temporary measures in bad years, they become an essential part of food acquisition over time as food entitlements derived from

traditional production systems decline". As such, it is imperative for this dissertation to look at both food security and environmental issues as they do not exist in isolation.

2.8.7 Conclusion

To sum up, the literature has shown that participation is the hallmark of sustainable development. This is because the form and degree of community participation determines the rate at which the objectives of sustainable development, such as conservation/environmental management and food security, are realised.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

This chapter explains methodological considerations relevant to the study. It looks in detail at the chosen data collection and analytical tools. It also explores the ethical issues and discusses the study's limitations.

3.1 Research Methodology

The study will adopt a qualitative research paradigm. According to Marlow (1998: 342) this entails the non-numerical examination of phenomena focussing on the underlying meanings and patterns of relationships. This is because the study aims to provide an in-depth description of a group of people or community. Such descriptions are embedded in the life-worlds of the actors being studied and produce insider perspectives of the actors and their practices. This view is buttressed by Babbie and Mouton (2001: 53), who note that qualitative researchers always attempt to study human action from the insider's perspective (also referred to as the "emic" perspective). Hence, the goal of research is defined as describing and understanding (verstehen) rather than the explanation and prediction of human behaviour, (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 53). In addition, qualitative approaches describe "undefined and open situation(s), where knowledge about the problem has to be explored first" while quantitative methods on the other hand require a defined problem, (Maier et al, 1994: 3). Thus, by utilising a qualitative approach, an attempt will be made to understand the community's experience from the subjective perspective of the individuals involved, because the complexities, richness and diversity of their lives can only be captured by describing what really goes on in their everyday lives, incorporating the context in which they operate, as well as their frame of reference.

3.2 Selection of case study

According to Marlow (1998: 211) the basis of qualitative analysis often consists of a description. This narrative includes all the materials one could have collected: observations, interviews, data from case records, or impressions of others. These descriptive accounts are also called case studies. Yin (1984: 23) defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon

and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Case study research excels at bringing out an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. It emphasises contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships.

Therefore, case studies examine the interplay of all variables in order to provide as complete an understanding of an event or situation as possible. This type of comprehensive understanding is arrived at through a process known as thick description, which involves an in-depth description of the entity being evaluated, the circumstances under which it is used, the characteristics of the people involved in it, and the nature of the community in which it is located, (Stake, 1995).

Unlike quantitative methods of research, like the survey, which focus on the questions of who, what, where, how much, and how many, and archival analysis, which often places the participant in some kind of historical context, case studies are the preferred strategy when how or why questions are asked, (Stake, 1995). They are also preferred when the researcher has little control over the events, and when there is a contemporary focus within a real life context. Moreover, unlike directed experiments, case studies require a problem that seeks a holistic understanding of the event or situation in question using inductive logic reasoning from specific to more general terms, (ibid).

This dissertation will utilise a type of case study known as illustrative case study. This is primarily a descriptive study that uses one or two instances of an event to show what a situation is like. Illustrative case studies serve primarily to make the unfamiliar familiar and to give readers a common language about the topic in question (Feagin, 1991).

Critics of the case study method believe that the study of small number of cases can offer no grounds for establishing reliability or generalisability of findings. Some feel that the intense exposure to study of the case biases the findings. Others dismiss the case study research as useful only as an exploratory tool. However, the preoccupation of this dissertation is not to generalise or establish reliability per se but to get a

comprehensive understanding of the entity under study. This can best be achieved using qualitative methodologies such as a case study method.

The community in question was randomly selected from a list of 10 communities currently receiving financial and technical assistance from UNDP's Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEFSGP). UNDP list was used because the researcher is familiar with the programme and has worked with the communities in question.

3.3 Sampling strategy

Sampling involves determining who will be the participants in the study. It is essential as everyone cannot be included in a study. Hence, a smaller group of participants, or a sample is selected from a large group or population that consists of all possible cases one is interested in studying. Marlow (1998: 135) states that one of the key concepts of sampling is the extent to which the sample is representative of the population. A representative sample means that the sample has the same distribution of characteristics as the population from which it is selected. If the sample is representative of the population, then one can generalise the findings from the sample to that population. The positivist approach usually emphasizes generalizability and representatives of the findings, (Marlow 1998: 135). However, generalisability and representativeness are not such important issues in some studies. For example, an interpretive approach is not usually concerned with the representativeness of the sample and the generalisability of the findings. The most important thing is whether the sample is information rich, that is, the sample consists of cases from which you can learn about issues central to the research question, (Marlow, 1998: 135).

3.3.1 Types of sampling methods

The sample can be selected in two major ways, namely probability and non-probability sampling. According to Marlow (1998: 136) probability sampling allows a researcher to select a sample where each element in the population has a known chance of being selected for the sample. This increases the representativeness of the sample. Instead of this method, a non-probability or purposive sampling method may be used. According to Robson (1993) purposive sampling allows for the researcher's judgement as to "typicality or interest". In other words, a researcher can handpick the

sample according to the nature of the research problem and the phenomenon under study, (Marlow, 1998). Marlow further notes that this method is limited when it comes to representativeness, in that the probability of each element of the population being included in the sample is unknown. This method is usually used in interpretive studies, where generalisability of results is less important. This dissertation will utilise a purposive sampling method as selection is based on important characteristics under study, such as where they live, position in society or specific cultural knowledge.

3.4 Data Collection Techniques

When the problem has been defined and conceptualised, the next step is to decide how information would be collected, (Robson, 1993). This information is known as data and would be collected using a measuring instrument, or data collection method. The methods of inquiry adopted by this study include key informant interviews, household interviews (semi-structured), observation and secondary sources of data.

The study will use key informant interviews as a method of inquiry. According to USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation (1996) key informant interviews are qualitative, in-depth interviews of people selected for their first-hand knowledge about a topic of interest. The interviews are loosely structured, relying on a list of issues to be discussed. It is further stated that key informant interviews resemble a conversation among acquaintances, allowing a free flow of ideas and information. Interviewers frame questions spontaneously, probe for information and take notes, which are elaborated on later (ibid). Advantages of using key informant interviews include: they provide information directly from knowledgeable people; they provide flexibility to explore new ideas and issues not anticipated during planning and they are inexpensive and simple to conduct. On the other hand, they have disadvantages which include: they are not appropriate if quantitative data are needed; they may be biased if informants are not carefully selected; they are susceptible to interviewer biases and it may be difficult to prove validity of findings, (USAID Center for Development Information and Evaluation, 1996). Key informant interviews will be conducted with a community leader, NGOs operating in the area and Government departments. See interview schedules in the appendix.

The study will also make use of household interviews. These would be conducted in participating villages within the ward where the project is being undertaken. Interviews are usually structured, semi-structured or unstructured. Often, the questions may be very similar, but the interviews are distinguished based on how they are conducted. This study will utilise semi-structured interviews. According to Marlow (1998: 160) in a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has more freedom to pursue hunches and can improvise with the questions. Semi-structured interviews often use interview schedules consisting of the general types of questions to ask, but they are not in a questionnaire format. Sometimes semi-structured interviews are referred to as open-ended interviews. Interviews are usually appropriate in scenarios where respondents are usually of low literacy levels. In most third world countries literacy levels are usually low in rural areas and since my study is in rural setting, interviews would be the appropriate tool for data gathering. Hence, instead of asking respondents to read questions and enter their own responses or answers, researchers send interviewers to ask questions orally and record respondents' answers, (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:249). However, the question of neutrality comes to the fore when dealing with interviews. Although structured and semi-structured interviews are more neutral than unstructured interviews, in general, the neutrality of interviewing is limited. This is because people respond differently to different people depending on the way they would have been approached. Marlow (1998: 161) states that the answer to an interviewer's question will be influenced by several factors: the interviewer's age, gender, ethnicity and dress, the context in which the interviewer approaches the interviewee and the manner in which the interviewer speaks. In other words interviews have a problem of reactive effect, that is, the degree to which the researcher's presence affects the behaviour being observed. For this study 10 household interviews would be conducted. See interview schedule in the appendix.

Secondary sources of data were also used. According to Marlow (1998: 178) secondary data are data collected for another research project or data that were not collected with research in mind at all. Such data includes case records, monitoring and evaluation reports, minute books, policy documents, and census data among others. Such data will be integrated with data obtained from interviews in an attempt to add any other nuances that may reside in these sources. The documentary sources will be compared with data already gathered, and then added as new information to the

present study where they can be of use. Hence, the data from the available sources that were utilised during the research process will be integrated and collated, to conclude the data collection stage.

There are various uses/advantages of using secondary data. For example, secondary data may provide a context (geographic, temporal, and social) for primary data. This enables researchers to see where primary data "fit in" to the larger scheme of things. Secondary data may provide validation for primary data, whereby the secondary data allow us to assess the quality and consistency of the primary data. In some situations, it may be difficult to collect data, for reasons of access, cost or time or the data may have been collected once and to repeat the collection process would be undesirable. Secondary sources are not threatened by reactive effect (http://www.deakin.edu.au/~agoodman/sci101/chap6.php). However, secondary sources have their own disadvantages. This is because the method by which secondary data were collected is often unknown to the user of the data (apart from the major sources like the census). This means that the researcher is forced to rely on the skills and propriety of the collectors – usually, but not always, a safe proposition. Also with secondary data users have little or no direct knowledge of the processing methods employed, and we will rarely have access to the original raw data to check them. Again reliance is on the skills and integrity of the people who collected and analysed the data, (http://www.deakin.edu.au/~agoodman/sci101/chap6.php).

These techniques have strengths of high construct validity, provide for in-depth insights and establishing rapport with research subjects.

To some extent simple observation will be employed to see physical developments linked to the project. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 293) simple observation is where the researcher remains an outside observer. In this study observation would be unstructured. This would complement findings from other techniques. However, this may raise ethical questions as to whether respondents would have consented to being observed.

3.5 Data Analysis

Since the data is qualitative, methods of analysis will also be qualitative. The approach to data analysis is to understand more about the phenomenon under investigation and then describe what we learn with minimum of interpretation. Hence, the interest lies in developing propositions or statements of fact inductively derived from a rigorous and systematic analysis of data, (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:126). Thus, one of the defining characteristics of qualitative research is an inductive approach to data analysis. This entails collecting data that relates to focus of inquiry. Hypotheses are not generated a priori and thus the relevant variables for data collection are not predetermined. The data are not sorted according to predetermined categories. Rather, what becomes important to analyse emerges from the data itself, out of a process of inductive reasoning.

The goal is to integrate the themes and concepts into a theory that offers an accurate, detailed and yet subtle interpretation of the research arena. Hence, qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and key informant interviews was analysed according to themes drawn from the objectives. Thus, the constant comparative method of analysing qualitative data would be used. According to Glasser and Strauss in Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 134) this combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all units of meaning obtained. As each new unit of meaning is selected for analysis, it is compared to all other units of meaning and subsequently grouped (categorised and coded) with similar units of meaning. If there are no similar units of meaning, a new category is formed (ibid). In this process there is room for continuous refinement; initial categories are changed, merged or omitted; new categories are generated and new relationships can be discovered (Goertz and Lecompte in Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 134). Coding of the interview schedules was completed manually.

Content analysis was used for secondary sources of data such as documents and reports. According to Denscombe (1998) content analysis is a research technique for systematically examining the content of communications. At the same time "quite independently of what the writer had consciously intended, the text carries some clues about a deeper rooted and possibly unintentional message that is actually being communicated", (Denscombe 1998: 168). The main advantage of content analysis is

that it is an unobtrusive measure since the data is in a "permanent form" and be subject to re-analysis, (Robson, 1996). However, Robson lists the limitation or partiality of available documents. He states that such documents would have been written for another purpose and as with other non-experimental approaches, it is very difficult to assess causal relationships. Content analysis was completed manually.

3.6 Limitations of the study

The study was carried out a few months before the Zimbabwean general elections. As the situation was volatile, with sporadic violence, it meant respondents were careful with whatever they had to say. This could have compromised the data as no one would have wanted to say anything negative about certain local leaders. Although respondents were assured that this was an academic study it was possible to see that there was some uneasiness when it came to answering certain questions. The same could also be said with questions pertaining to donors, the community wanted to present a positive picture of their work. Maybe they thought that anything negative could lead to withdrawal of funding.

The timing of the study also coincided with the community preparation of their field day. This meant project members were busy and interviews were interrupted with members having to attend to crucial matters. This also could have compromised the data as project member's attention was divided.

3.7 Conclusion

The chapter has presented a review of the methods and approaches that were employed in the study. It also looked at the way data was collected and analysed. The chapter also explored factors that influenced the selection of the study area, methodological considerations that included the sampling strategy and the limitations of the study. Above all, this chapter has demonstrated the usefulness of qualitative approach to research.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH CONTEXT

This chapter provides the contextual material for the study. This entails setting out the political, economic and social parameters of Zimbabwe, and describing the research area and the population to be studied. The chapter further examines the characteristics of the study participants thereby providing a profile of the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the sample population. Thus the purpose of this section is to gain an understanding of the characteristics of the respondents that in turn will assist in contextualising the research findings as presented in chapter five.

4.1 Country of Study

The study is located in Zimbabwe. This is a landlocked nation situated in the middle of the Southern African plateau sharing borders with 4 countries, viz South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana. It measures about 350 000 square kilometres, about a third of South Africa.

4.1.1 Zimbabwe Population Statistics

The population of Zimbabwe was recorded to be 11 634 663 at the 2002 census, (CSO, 2002). Of the total population, 6 003 237 was constituted by the female population and 5 631 426 by the male population.

Zimbabwe has a total of 10 provinces. This includes two cities, Harare and Bulawayo, with provincial status. The other 8 provinces are Manicaland, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Masvingo, Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South and Midlands. The study area is located in Matabeleland South Province. See the administrative map of Zimbabwe below.
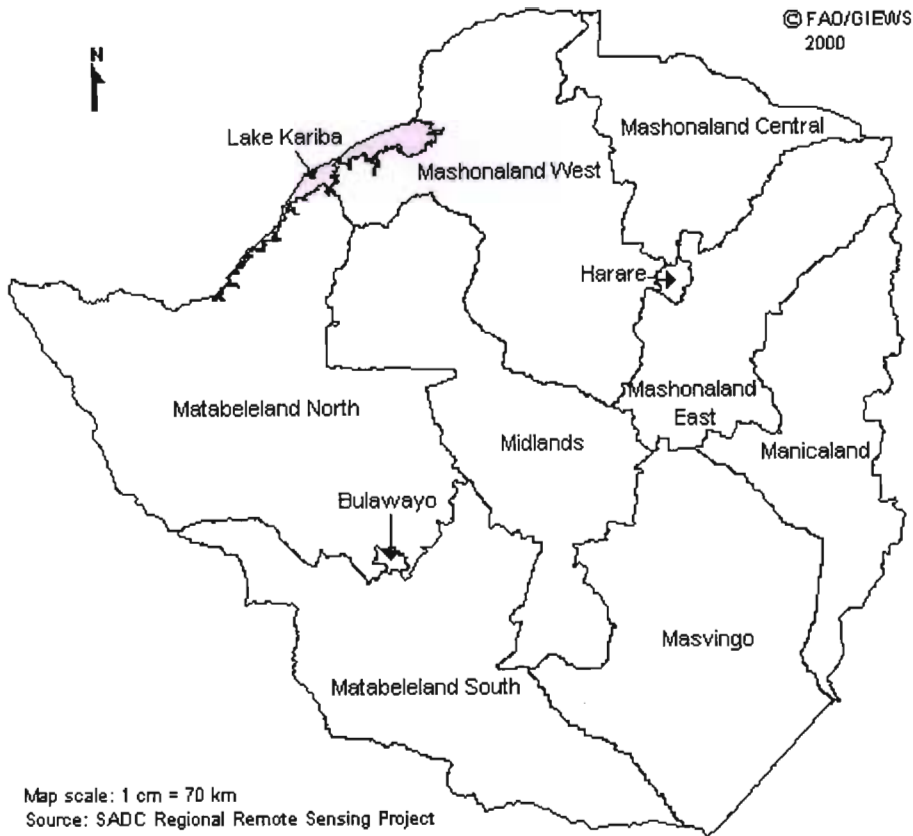
Figure 2: Administrative Map of Zimbabwe

4.1.2 Zimbabwe's Climate

It is important for this section to focus on Zimbabwe's climatic conditions as the rural economy, among other things, is influenced by it. For example, agriculture in Zimbabwe is highly dependent on rainfall. Most of the communal and resettlement areas depend entirely on rainfall for crop production. Climatic conditions also determine crop suitability for a particular region.

Zimbabwe lies entirely within the tropics but much of the Highveld and Eastern Highlands have a subtropical to temperate climate due to the modifying effect of altitude. Three seasons are experienced in Zimbabwe. These are: (1) a hot wet season from mid-November to March (summer); (2) a cold dry season from April to July (winter), and a hot dry season from August to mid-November (spring) (http://www.fao.org/ag/wheat/afriac/zimbabwe.htm)

Air temperatures are closely related to altitude with mean annual temperature ranging from about 25 degrees Celsius in parts of the Zambezi Valley to less than 15 degrees

43

Celsius above 1800 metres in the Eastern Highlands. Maximum temperatures are lowest in June or July and highest in October. Rainfall varies widely both temporary and spatially. The reliability of rainfall increases with altitude and from south to north (ibid).

4.1.3 Agro-ecological zones of Zimbabwe

According to PlanAfric (2000) the rural economy of Zimbabwe is strongly influenced by ecology, land tenure and use, population density and land distribution. As such, Zimbabwe is divided into 5 natural regions on the basis of rainfall and other climatic factors. The types and value of farm output varies significantly among these five natural regions (ibid). As illustrated in table 2 below natural regions 1 and 11 are the intensive cropping zones, while iv and v are suitable for extensive livestock farming.

Table 2 below illustrates the Agro-ecological zones of Zimbabwe and the recommended farming systems in each region

Table 2: Agro-ecological Zones of Zimbabwe

Natural Region	Area (km^2)	Rainfall (mm per yr)	Farming system
1	7 000	> 1 000	Specialised and diversified farming
11	58 600	750 - 1 000	Intensive farming
111	72 900	650 - 800	Semi-intensive farming
1V	147 800	450 - 650	Semi-extensive farming
V	104 400	< 450	Extensive farming

Source: Vincent and Thomas, 1960.

Natural Region 1 has the highest annual rainfall and covers about 2% of the land area. It is a specialised and diversified farming region with plantation forestry, fruit

and intensive livestock production. Tea, coffee and macadamia nuts are grown in frost free areas.

Natural region 11 receives lower rainfall than region 1, but nonetheless is suitable for intensive farming based on crops or livestock production. This region covers 15% of Zimbabwe's land area.

Natural Region 111 is a semi-intensive farming region covering 19% of Zimbabwe. Rainfall in this region is moderate in total amount. It is also characterised by mid-season dry spells that make it marginal for maize, tobacco and cotton, or for enterprises based on crop production alone (Mutizwa-Mangiza 1985: 50). The farming systems are thus based on both livestock and cash crops.

Natural Region 1V is a semi-extensive farming region covering about 38% of Zimbabwe. Rainfall is low and periodic, seasonal droughts and severe dry spells during the rainy season are common. Crop production is, thus, deemed risky except in certain very favourable localities. The farming is based on livestock and drought resistant crops.

Natural Region V is an extensive farming region covering about 27% of Zimbabwe. Rainfall in this zone is too low and erratic for the reliable production of even drought resistant fodder and grain crops, and farming is based on grazing natural pasture. Extensive cattle or game ranching is the only sound farming system for this region.

The study area transcends natural regions 1V and V and these regions are basically semi-arid with erratic rainfall hence the proneness to droughts.

Despite recent trends in agricultural self-sufficiency, in the longer term Zimbabwe has been able to record generally high levels of production. Agricultural production accounted for approximately 18% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the sector employed 27% of the labour force, excluding those involved on a subsistence or self-employed basis (PlanAfric, 2000). However, the lack of a clear and coordinated agricultural policy and strategy for food reserves has led to the need, in recent years, to import food at a high cost in times of drought.

4.2 Zimbabwe: The State of the Environment

Environmental problems usually determine the type of intervention by the community, NGOs, CBOs and Government. The State of Zimbabwe's Environment 1998 report outlines the general perception that Zimbabwe's environment is getting worse with increasing soil erosion/degradation, deforestation, desertification and ineffective environmental laws. It is mainly along these problems that community interventions have been adopted. Some of these problems are discussed briefly below:

4.2.1 Soil erosion

Soil erosion remains as one of the greatest concerns in the environmental landscape of Zimbabwe. Vivian (1994: 171) notes that a national survey of erosion found that over 10 per cent of the land in the country was moderately to extensively eroded. Glaring gullies and rills are testimony to this, especially in communal lands where overstocking, poor cultivation techniques or excessive cultivation and overgrazing have contributed to this. Whitlow (1987) cited by Vivian (1994: 172) states that 23 per cent of these lands were considered significantly eroded and soil losses can be as high as 40 to 50 tonnes per hectare per year. This has an adverse effect on the productive potential of the agricultural lands (ibid).

4.2.2 Deforestation

Many developing countries are witnessing an increasingly high rate of deforestation mainly as a result of human activities. In Zimbabwe, Moyo et al (1991) cited by Vivian (1994: 173) report that forest cover is being reduced by 1.5 per cent per year, and that wood stocks in the communal areas have been reduced to one quarter of their level in 1963. The concern with deforestation is that it makes soils more vulnerable to erosion, declining access to forest products has adverse socio-economic impacts, especially in rural areas and that trees improve water retention, an especially important consideration in drought-prone areas (ibid). Like soil erosion, deforestation in Zimbabwe is concentrated in communal areas due to anthropogenic activities.

4.2.3 Land degradation

According to SADC/IUCN/ZRA/SARDC (2000:10) land degradation refers to the process by which the quality of the natural or existing land surface deteriorates. This compromise in quality comes about through soil erosion, reducing potential

46

productivity, vegetation clearance, landscape alterations, the introduction of toxins into the soil and the accumulation of surface waste materials. Additionally, overstocking of domestic livestock and wildlife results in land degradation, especially when combined with poor cultivation techniques and/or excessive cultivation, particularly in marginal areas, (ibid). Land degradation contributes to the reduction of crop yields.

4.3 The Research Area

As already noted, the research was undertaken in Insiza District of Matabeleland South Province in agro-ecological region 1V and V. Within the district, one specific area, Sanale Village, was chosen. The area is described in detail below.

4.3.1 Matabeleland South Province

Matabeleland South Province has an area of 54 172 square kilometres and a population of approximately 650 000 as of 2002 census (CSO, 2002). The province is made up of 7 districts, namely Beitbridge, Bulilima (North), Mangwe (South), Gwanda, Insiza, Matobo and Umzingwane. Gwanda is the provincial capital. As noted by the Family Health International, Matabeleland South is Zimbabwe's poorest province (http//www.fhi.org/en/HIVAIDS/pub/guide/corrhope/corrfin2.htm).

4.3.2 Insiza District

This is one of the 7 districts that make up Matabeleland South province. The district has an estimated population of 86 307 as of 2002 (CSO, 2002). The study area is the communal and resettlement areas (Sanale) of Insiza district. Insiza district is mainly located in the agro-ecological zone 1V and part in zone V. The district is characterised by low and erratic rainfall. The communal areas are classified as vulnerable to land degradation and the granite outcrops have lost much of their vegetation due to over-utilisation.

4.3.3 Baseline Settings of Sanale Village

This section provides an overview of the existing natural and socio-economic environment for the specific study area.

4.3.3.1 Topography and Geology

Vegetation

The area is agro-ecological region 1V and V of Zimbabwe. The dominant vegetation is acacia. Though the area is virtually bare from over harvesting of trees for firewood, there are crops of acacia punctuated by short grasses.

Climate

Sanale village of Filabusi communal lands, in Insiza District is situated in agro-ecological regions 1V and V of Zimbabwe where the temperatures range between 30 – 38 degrees and rainfall range between 200mm to 650mm. Most of the rainfall is received during the months of November to February. The prevailing winds are southeast to north westerly. In general the area is predominantly dry and is classified semi-arid (Sibanda and Magaya 2001).

4.3.3.2 Socio-economic baseline

Sanale is an area found in Filabusi's ward 9 under Mpumelelo village of the Insiza district. Insiza district has 18 wards. Ward 9, under which the project falls, has 17 kraal heads, 1 headman and a councillor. The ward is made up of 8 villages, namely, Gwenyimo, Mpumelelo, Ukuthula, Vukuzenzele A and B, Qubekani, Sibambene and Bambanani. Each village has about 500 people.

4.4 Demographic Characteristics of sample population

4.4.1 Gender

The study sought to establish the gender composition of the respondents. Table 4.1 below presents the gender composition of the sample population. In depth household interviews were held with 10 respondents. Of these respondents, 6 were female and 4 were male. The focus group comprised of 9 respondents of which all were females. These were from the same village. Moreover, 2 females and 1 male were interviewed as key informants. One key informant represented government department in the area and the remainder were from donor groups that assisted the community in question.

48

Table 4.1

Characteristics	Household	Focus Group
Female	6	9
Male	4	0
Total	10	9

As noted by UNDP (2000) 60% of the households in rural areas are headed by women who run family holdings. The same is true when it comes to participation in projects. Since the project is run predominantly by women it meant more female headed households were intentionally selected.

4.4.2 Marital Status

The study also sought to understand the marital status of the respondents. This is presented in Table 4.2 below. The study results highlight that a larger proportion of informants are married. Out of the 10 household respondents 8 are married with 2 respondents being widowed. The same scenario also prevailed in the focus group. In this category, of the 9 respondents, 8 were married whilst 1 was a widow.

Table 4.2

Characteristics	Household	Focus Group
Single	0	0
Widowed	2	1
Divorced	0	0
Married	8	9

All the women interviewed took an active role in the execution of projects in Sanale as a way of deriving benefits for the whole household.

4.4.3 Number of people in Household

Whatever their marital status, the study wanted to ascertain the number of people in sample households. As presented in table 4.3 below all respondents have numerous

children and dependents. The size of households ranged from 5 – 12 members. Such households included parents (biological or in-laws), siblings and relatives.

Table 4.3

Household size	Household
1 - 5	1
5 - 8	2
8+	7
Total	10

In a rural setting household size, its structure and the availability of income earners are fundamental conditions for determining household vulnerability. The smaller household is likely to experience labour shortages, which is a critical factor in communal or subsistence economies. The other reason for extended families is to pool the labour resource which undoubtedly is a factor determining output. However, this is in contrast to Kandlhela's (2002: 63) assertion that poverty is more prevalent in large households and that poverty ratios increase with each additional household member.

4.4.4 Age of Respondents

Table 4.4 below shows the age distribution of the sample population. The table highlights that most household respondents fall between the ages of 36 and 55 years. This was also the case in the focus group. 3 respondents in household interview and 1 in focus group fell in the 56 and 65 years category. Few respondents, 2 in household and 1 in focus group, fell in the 26 - 35 years category. There were no respondents in the 8 to 25 years category. The age distribution into various categories was deliberate.

Table 4.4

Characteristics: age	Household	Focus Group
8 - 15	0	0
16 - 25	0	0
26 - 35	2	1

36 - 55	5	7
56 - 65	3	1
Total	10	9

The fact that there were no respondents in the 8 -25 years category may be due to the fact that the sample did not conveniently include youth, or it was biased or were not around during the research period. It can also be due to the fact that the involvement of the youth is limited. If the latter is true, this could be due to the fact that most youths at that age prefer to migrate into cities in search of paid employment. Working the land is viewed as work of elders who cannot find paid employment. In Matabeleland one of the economic activities, though detrimental to the environment, is gold panning. Most youths in Sanale are leaving their community to go on gold panning escapades. The fact that most respondents fell within 36 and 55years of age may be an indicator that those involved in projects are the elderly who do not entertain the idea of migrating in search of employment or have retired to rural areas where they find salvation in project activities.

The 10 respondents in the household interviews worked on the project and were conveniently available on the day of the research. The researcher was helped by the project coordinator to identify these members.

4.5 Socio-economic characteristics of sample population

4.5.1 Educational levels

The study wanted to ascertain the educational levels of the sample population. Table 4.5 below shows that household respondents have some or completed primary education. All the respondents in the focus group stated that they had some or completed primary education. In Zimbabwe primary education denotes 7 years of schooling before secondary education. Only 2 respondents in the household sample had some secondary education. Only 1 respondent in the household sample had completed secondary education. Secondary education denotes 4 years of schooling. No one in the focus group went beyond primary education. The respondent who

51

completed secondary education was younger compared to other respondents. The reason she completed secondary school may be that she was educated after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 and had access to education unlike the older respondents who may have found it difficult to attend school during turbulent colonial times.

Table 4.5

Education	Household	Focus Group
Have some/completed Primary education	7	9
Have some secondary education	2	0
Have completed Sec education	1	0
Total	10	9

The focus group was only female and none had gone beyond primary education. This shows that lower levels of education are more common among females than males. Thus, it was common for the latter to be sent to school than the former. This is an epitome of the patriarchal system which valued boy child more than the girl child. Though their education was basic, the sample population could be considered literate. In Zimbabwe anyone who is literate is considered to be one who is over the age of 15 years and can read and write in English (www.photius.com/wfb1999/zimbabwe.htm).

4.5.2 Assets

The study also sought to establish the assets of the sample population as a way of gaining insight into the lives of the rural villagers. As noted in the sustainable livelihoods framework, livelihood assets determine livelihood outcomes. A household with access to assets is more likely to have more income, increased well being, reduced vulnerability, improved food security and more sustainable use of natural resource base. Table 4.6 below indicates that most rural households included in the sample have basic assets to sustain their livelihood needs.

Table 4.6

Assets	Household	Focus Group
Land	10	6
Plough	10	8
Livestock	Not asked	6
Hoes	10	6
Donkeys	Not asked	1
Biogas stove	8	Not asked
Vehicle	0	0

All household respondents stated that they have land, hoes and ploughs. Most respondents in the focus group noted having the same assets. These normally constitute the requisite assets necessary for subsistence farming which to a large extent defines communal agriculture. In as far as land is concerned; no respondent had more than 10 acres. Additionally, most respondents in the focus group confessed owning livestock and 1 respondent stated that she owned donkeys. According to Kiire (1995 69) access to factors of production in food production and the rural economy is very important in the communal areas. Such factors of production include land, draught animal power and other agricultural inputs. Livestock constitutes the most important bundle for the communal farmer as this provides draught power and manure for farmers (ibid).

Most household respondents noted having biogas stoves. This question was not asked in the focus group. These stoves were brought about by households' joining the Biogas project. This meant the burden of women walking long distances in search for fuel wood could be reduced and might enable them to devote time to other activities.

None of the respondents in the household or focus group owned a vehicle. This shows the peasant nature or hand to mouth existence of Zimbabwe's rural peasant communities. This is supported by Kiire (1995: 49) who noted that in a typical Zimbabwean rural area, there is no middle class unless there was a Master Farmer in

the neighbourhood, who was given preferential treatment by the colonial system to buy modern technology.

4.5.3 Income Generating Activities

Income generating activities are vehicles through which rural villagers meet their livelihood needs. Table 4.7 shows that the community is deriving some form of income from agro-based activities such as gardening and farming.

Table 4.7

Characteristics	Household	Focus Group
Gardening	5	7
Farming/Agriculture	6	1
Buying and selling	0	2
Weaving	0	3
Remittance	1	0
Employed	1	0

The community was assisted by NGOs such as UNDP Africa 2000 Network and FOS Belgium to set up a garden under irrigation. This boosted some form of market gardening where produce is sold to locals such as teachers, health personnel and villagers who are not part of the project. At the same time household needs were catered for from the garden. Gardening as source of income is attributable to 7 respondents out of 9 in the focus group and 5 respondents out of 10 in the household sample. Most of the respondents in the household also shared the notion that farming of small grains, groundnuts, round nuts, cowpeas and pumpkins brought about cash if there was any surplus sold. However, this was shared by 1 respondent in the focus group. 3 out of 9 respondents in the focus group stated that they derived income from weaving activities. A further 2 respondents in the focus group highlighted that buying and selling of merchandise in the locality was an important source of income. One respondent in the household sample noted that remittance was a source of income for their household. Their son in England consistently sent income to the parents. From the above mentioned income activities it is clear that local employment opportunities

are very limited as there is no one formally employed at local schools or clinics. Only 1 respondent in the household mentioned being employed as a security guard at the project warehouse. Although selection of respondents may have played a part in responses derived, local employment opportunities were not evident in the project.

The analysis of income generating activities shows that there are limited sources of income. Farming activities rely on natural rainfall which in this part of the country is very unreliable and low. Formal wage employment and "piece jobs" are scarce in the area. The only reliable source is the garden where participants are guaranteed produce throughout the year as a result of irrigation.

4.6 Background to Initiatives undertaken by the Sanale Community

The Sanale community of Insiza was not spared from the environmental challenges outlined above. This acted as a catalyst for community action in alleviating some of the environmental challenges facing the community. This resulted in a project proposal that was funded under the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEFSGP). The project then came to be known as Insiza Biogas, Woodstoves and Gardening Project. As noted in the proposal (see appendix) the project has three major components namely biogas digesters, wood saving stoves and consolidated gardens. These components are described below according to the proposal.

4.6.1 Biogas Digesters

Of paramount importance to the Insiza community was the construction of 5 biogas digesters in the Sanale area. Biogas is a valuable vehicle of energy which is a cheap and clean fuel. It contains 55 – 70% methane and 30 – 45% carbon dioxide as well as quantities of various gases (Centre for Renewable Energy Efficiency Technology, 2002). This energy is derived from biogas digestion of cow dung using digesters. As part of the introduction of technology, 10 local builders were to be trained in construction and operation of the digesters. This was part of the capacity building component of the project. The community would also learn how to use the digesters. Thus, areas hard hit by deforestation were selected and Mpumelelo village in Sanale was chosen to be the pilot site. This area has approximately 100 households.

4.6.2 Wood Saving Stoves

This entailed the construction of 200 wood saving stoves at homesteads of Sanale community. These stoves are energy efficient, as they do not use much firewood. Community workers with prior knowledge of this technology were to assist the community in the construction and use of the stoves.

In their proposal the Sanale community stated that the introduction of biogas and wood saving stoves were innovations that could effectively replace some of the uses of firewood. These also had the potential effect of reducing deforestation, air pollution and helping conserve biodiversity of the area. This would also help reduce the workload of women who are mainly responsible for firewood collection and thus enable them to have time for other chores.

4.6.2 Consolidated Gardens

The project also proposed the establishment of consolidated gardens with the aim of improving food security for participants. These gardens are communal and fenced with members holding individual plots. The principal aim of the garden is provision of food to the community with any excess produce sold locally. This livelihood option helps alleviate food shortages and at the same time act as an incentive for people to conserve their environment. In this instance, the indiscriminate cutting of trees to fence individual gardens.

With the above-proposed activities, the community had long term and short-term objectives to meet these. Among the long-term objectives the community sought to:

- introduce energy innovations which will achieve global environmental benefits of biodiversity conservation, and combat global climate change;
- improve the livelihoods of the people in the area.

In the shorter term, the objectives among others include:

- to reduce the rate of deforestation and desertification in the Insiza district as a whole.
- To improve food security in Sanale area.

(see proposal appendix for all objectives)

The objectives and activities of the project fit into the set criteria for GEFSGP outlined below, hence the funding was provided under this programme. The project was thus funded under the focal areas of biodiversity and climate change as the curbing of deforestation and desertification is one of the key aims of the project and a move towards sustainable development.

4.7 Development Programmes accessed by Insiza Community

Having looked at the initiatives undertaken by the Sanale community, it is important to look at the assistance they accessed in the form of programmes. This is because development assistance has been important vehicles through which rural communities have kick started programmes that have impacted positively on their lives. The Sanale community accessed funds for their programmes from GEFSGP, ERF, FOS Belgium and Heifer Project International. Brief descriptions of these programmes and participating agencies are given below.

4.7.1 Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The global Environment Facility is an international entity born within the spirit and mandate of the Earth summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The GEF was created to protect the global environment through funding programmes and projects within four focal areas, viz biodiversity, climate change, international waters and ozone layer depletion. The GEF is the interim financial mechanism for the convention on biological diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (GEFSGP Zimbabwe Country Strategy, 2004). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank implement this programme.

4.7.2 About the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEFSGP)

The programme ensures the provision of financial and technical support to projects in developing countries that conserve and restore the natural world while enhancing well-being and livelihoods. It also demonstrates that community action can maintain the fine balance between human needs and environmental imperatives (Small Grants Programme brochure, undated). This forms the very essence of sustainable development.

The SGP is premised on the notion that global problems can be overcome through the participation of local people. Hence, GEF provides opportunities for the direct participation of local communities, NGOs and community-based groups. The SGP emphasizes participation of local people, democracy, synergy through partnerships, gender and indigenous peoples, geographical distribution and replication and sustainability (GEFSGP Zimbabwe Country Strategy, 2004). This is made possible through the provision of small amounts of funding, up to US$50 000. This facilitates undertaking of projects whose impacts make a substantial difference to their immediate environment and cumulatively to global environment (ibid).

4.7.3 GEFSGP Focal Areas

SGP funds community-based sustainable development projects that enhance environmental quality in three areas, namely, biodiversity, climate change and international waters. These are explained briefly below:

Biodiversity

SGP activities promote conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in arid and semi-arid ecosystems, marine and freshwater ecosystems, and mountain ecosystems. The programme also supports the equitable sharing of benefits derived from the use of biological resources, as well as respect for and preservation of traditional knowledge (SGP Brochure, undated).

Climate Change

SGP demonstrates that renewable energy sources, sustainable transportation alternatives, and the removal of local barriers to energy conservation and energy efficiency can be both cost-effective and environmentally sound (SGP Brochure, undated).

International Waters

SGP addresses the pollution of marine and freshwater bodies, including land-based sources of pollution, such as persistent organic pollutants, shared by two or more countries (SGP Brochure, undated).

4.7.4 Sustainable Agriculture Programme

For people to conserve their natural resources there is need for them to be food secure. One such livelihood option is the implementation of sustainable agriculture programmes. This premise formed the basis for the initiation of the Africa 2000 sustainable agriculture programme with a bias towards the production of small grains. The programme is targeted at the drought prone areas of Zimbabwe where food deficits are common. Among other objectives, the programme aims to:

- promote the use of locally acceptable, and adapted food crop species that are more appropriate and more productive under drought conditions and in areas of low fertility;

- empower smallholder to farmers, especially women, in order to produce food grains on a sustained yield basis; and

- encourage the use of alternative methods for soil enrichment to the use of expensive inorganic fertilisers and reduce the use of pesticides where possible (It's Ours Newsletter, 2000: 10).

This programme was initiated in 1998 with funding from FOS Belgium.

4.7.5 Environment Responsive Fund (ERF)

On the environment front, CIDA works with private and public sectors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) ands community-based groups to identify and solve environmental problems with a view to enhancing sustainable development. The vehicle for this is the Environment Responsive Fund (ERF).

The ERF stresses the need to support institutions and community-based organisations to mange the country's natural resources in a sustainable manner. The ERF supports local environmental initiatives such as effective waste disposal and recycling, improved community sanitation, alternate sources of energy, eco-tourism, improved agriculture and agro-forestry practices (http://www.cidajamaica.org.jm/cidaprog.htm).

4.8 Description of Participating International Organisations

4.8.1 Africa 2000 Network/GEFSGP

This programme is part and parcel of the implementation of Agenda 21, the blueprint of the 1992 Rio United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Zimbabwean chapter of the Africa 2000 Network was launched in 1989 as part of a larger network of 12 African countries. Its activities have been controlled and operated from the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in New York and supported by field offices of UNDP in each country (UNDP 2001: 8).

Africa 2000 supports participation of rural communities in creating awareness of their environmental situation and engaging in activities to rehabilitate and conserve the environment. According to UNDP (2001: 7) Africa 2000 empowers rural communities to manage their environment and advocates full participation by community members. The overall goal is to promote changes in behaviour of communities by getting them to wean themselves off outside assistance and enabling them to take part in activities that improve their environment and livelihood.

In Zimbabwe, the Africa 2000 Network compliments the GEFSGP outlined above and the two programmes are operated by one office.

4.8.2 FOS-Belgium Fonds voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (Belgium).

FOS is a Belgian Non Governmental development organisation. It supports organised groups within the most impoverished and marginalized sectors of the population in a number of countries in the South. The overall goal of FOS is to help in improving the standard of living (both social and economic) of these groups. This entails assisting local organisations in order to enhance their capacity to empower and respond effectively to the needs of their stakeholders (FOS website).

FOS sees its role as one of facilitating, supporting, sharing, experiences and information, and building strong relations and solidarity with organised groups of marginalized people in both North and South to improve their power relations. Therefore, FOS is of the view that sustainable improvement of the lives of people can be done by people themselves, hence it has chosen to work with organised groups in the South.

Activities undertaken by FOS include: support to farming and marketing cooperatives, strengthening of farmers associations and trade unions, support to local and community-based credit schemes, to small scale industrial production, and to democratisation processes in the countries in the south (FOS website).

4.8.3 Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

CIDA supports the social and economic development programmes of its partner countries and organisations, including governments, non-governmental organisations and institutions, community groups, businesses and international bodies such as the World Bank and UNICEF. CIDA's support takes many forms: financial contributions to existing programmes; technical support such as information, skills or equipment, or dialogue with partners on issues important to Canadians, such as human rights, environmental sustainability and more effective aid programmes. All assistance is based on the needs and priorities of developing country partners (CIDA website).

CIDA's work is governed by a set of basic principles for effective development:
- focus on local priorities and local ownership;
- better coordination among donors;
- Stronger partnerships;
- Consistency between aid policies and other policies affecting aid, such as trade; and
- Emphasis on results.

(www. CIDA website)

With these principles in mind, CIDA's priorities include:
- social development: basic education, child protection, health and nutrition and HIV/AIDS;
- economic well-being: economic growth and improved living standards for the poor through agricultural development and private sector development;
- Environmental sustainability: protection, conservation and management of the environment;
- Governance: human rights, democracy and good governance; and

- Gender equality: supporting equality between women and men to ensure sustainable development.

(CIDA website)

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has laid out the contextual details for the study by describing the country and the research area for the study. The research is located in an area that is semi-arid and hence confronted by environmental and livelihood challenges. Community action to alleviate these challenges is set against the background of different strategies and initiatives. Of note are different programmes funded by international donors, and these act as catalysis for action in managing the environment and at the same time fulfilling the livelihood needs of the community. All this is set against a backdrop of policy that evolved over a period of time, that is, pre and post-independence eras.

On the basis of the background given in this chapter, I proceed to chapter 5 to provide a presentation and analysis of the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

Research findings on Conservation and environmental issues

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study that was undertaken to investigate community participation as a way to achieving resource conservation and household food security needs. It focused on Sanale community in Insiza District of Zimbabwe. The study starts by looking at environmental and livelihood issues with a specific focus on community and key informant description of the project in this regard. This section basically looks at the evolution of the project over the years. This entails a juxtaposition of events, that is, before and after project inception. The section concludes by looking at how community mobilization through various projects has impacted on conservation and livelihood efforts. In this chapter, use of qualitative methods such as focus group discussion, key informant interviews, household interviews, secondary sources of information and observation is demonstrated.

5.1 Conservation and Environmental Issues

5.1.1 State of the forest before project inception

There was consensus among all the households interviewed that their forest has witnessed massive depletion. This is mainly through anthropogenic means or human activities such as tree felling to open new areas for agriculture purposes or to avail wood as a source of fuel. Construction activities have led people in the area to engage in brick molding ventures and this requires lots of wood when it comes to burning the bricks in the kiln. Use of sledges was also advanced as leading to degradation of land. The felling of trees has led to soil remaining bare, an act that has brought forth the erosion of the soil. This has resulted in land degradation, which according to household respondents is evidenced by gullies in the area. Several respondents also indicated that this has led to deteriorating pastures for the livestock. The problem that beset the forest of Sanale was aptly highlighted in the focus group. The respondents were of the opinion that:

"There were plenty of trees (dense forest) but now the forest is bare, one would not go in too deep to fetch firewood…"

There was consensus among households that the damage has been vast and extensive to the extent that people are now talking of desertification. The seriousness of the problem is witnessed by the death of livestock, poor harvests, dusty winds, loss of trees and gullies.

The Sanale case shows land degradation and deforestation as a conspicuous and severe problem in communal farming areas due to overcrowding and insecure ownership. Land degradation refers to the process by which the quality of the natural or existing land surface deteriorates (SADC/IUCN/ZRA/SARDC 2000: 10). This loss in quality comes about through soil erosion, reducing potential productivity and vegetation clearance among other factors. Further, excessive exploitation of forests results in increased soil erosion, sedimentation and siltation, (ibid). This phenomenon is widespread in communal areas, Sanale included, and this minimizes the region's capacity to prevent climate change since forests act as sinks of carbon dioxide.

5.1.2 Initiatives before project inception to combat forest depletion

Having acknowledged that their community was experiencing serious environmental degradation, the study sought to ascertain if the community had done anything to reverse the grave situation. Most household respondents were of the opinion that the community took some initiative to rehabilitate their environment. This was after the realization that mismanagement of the environment could result in poverty. Hence, they engaged in environmental conservation activities such as gully reclamation, planting aloes in gulleys and vertiva grass planting. As stated by one household respondent "measures were taken before the project such as digging furrows to hold water in fields and planting of aloes in gulleys after realization of severe land depletion". It was further stated that people took the initiative following the "discovery of the bad effects of land denigration, gulleys becoming rivers and livestock not getting enough grazing". As noted by Africa 2000 Network (2001: 14) environmental protection is achieved through environmental awareness and education. This is true of the Sanale community who engaged in awareness campaigns and workshops among themselves on the need to educate one another on

the need to conserve resources. This was achieved through community meetings and workshops. In other words, people will only manage the environment if they consider the benefit to be worth the cost.

The other initiative taken by the community to combat forest depletion before project inception was a concerted effort to discourage tree felling. This led to the crafting of by-laws by the community. This meant penalties or fines were imposed on those who felled trees unnecessarily. Chiefs who happen to be custodians of the local environment oversaw the process of imposing fines on offenders. The above-mentioned initiatives were also confirmed in the focus group discussion. The respondents noted that the "community tried to fight erosion by filling dongas or gullies. Emphasis was also put on minimizing the cutting of trees and fines were imposed by chiefs". The Sanale case shows the existence and probably the effectiveness of local institutional structures such as traditional leadership in helping combat problems besetting their communities. It also shows that such structures can take the initiative without prompting from an external agency. One can thus argue that traditional institutions are broad and diverse mechanisms by which Africans regulate social and economic affairs and exercise and control political power which promulgates and enforces access rules which help combat environmental degradation.

5.1.3 Initiatives after project inception

Realizing the imminent threat of environmental degradation despite their efforts, the Sanale community sought to come up with new ways of managing their environment. One way of doing this was to engage in projects that conserved the local resources while at the same time helping to meet livelihood needs of the community. This lead some Insiza Development Association (a grouping of locals interested in the development of the area) to craft a proposal on biogas digesters and sustainable agriculture which was sold to the greater community and submitted to donors for funding. As noted by several respondents in the households, the community undertook the biogas and small grains programme. It was believed or expected that the biogas project meant the rate of tree felling in the community would decrease and the small grains would cater for the livelihood aspect. These projects would also act a vehicle to raise awareness on the need to conserve the environment. As noted in the funding proposal submitted to UNDP in 1997 the community through the project

sought to introduce energy innovations that would achieve global environmental benefits of biodiversity conservation and combat global climate change.

This shows that development projects are conduits through which communities can take control of their environmental needs. This view is shared by Bromley and Cernea (1989: 25) who state that, "…if people have no influence on the way natural resource projects affect their lives, then it follows that projects will have no influence on the way that individuals at the local level interact with natural resources". Thus, the initiative taken by the community is part of the environmental management framework which puts emphasis on both financial and technical resources, and the organizational and institutional capacity to use these in appropriate and cost-effective ways, (National Environmental Policy Second Draft, 2003).

5.1.4 Changes since project inception

The Sanale community of Insiza District set out a long term objective of their project as:

> "To introduce energy innovations that will achieve global environmental benefits of biodiversity conservation and combat global climate change", (Proposal submitted by Insiza Development Association to GEF Small Grants Programme, pg2).

This was followed by a shorter-term objective, which was:

> "To reduce the rate of deforestation and desertification in the Insiza district as a whole", (Proposal submitted by Insiza Development Association to GEF Small Grants Programme, pg 2).

Looking at such a background, this dissertation wanted to ascertain whether any changes or benefits have accrued since project inception. Almost all household respondents were convinced that changes to their environment were visible since they undertook the project. They noted that trees were beginning to thrive and the bush thickening such that small rabbits can now be seen. As stated by one respondent "there are changes, for example, around the dam area forest is thickening and many gullies have been filled". It was further noted by another household respondent that it was as if a conservancy had been created adjacent to their consolidated gardens. Of all the household respondents, one was cautious not to overemphasize the environmental gains in the community. Instead it was noted that there has not been much change to

the environment except for the attitudes of the community, which now values conservation. From my observation I tend to agree with this sentiment. Although the area is shrubby it is far from a thickening bush. But it is important to note that attitudes have changed a great deal. The language in the community is about conservation of resources which is a positive aspect. However, the sentiment was not shared by the focus group whose response was "with the biogas project trees have regenerated". This view was also shared by the key informant for GEFSGP, who stated that "yes, there are changes in Insiza, biogas digesters have been an alternative to fuel wood and this has reduced the rate and levels of tree-cutting allowing the rejuvenation of biodiversity", (Interview with Key informant 1, 2004). The key informant from CIDA acknowledged that changes are there in the community as they now have available alternative energy in biogas, available water for irrigation of garden and protected area for food production, (Interview with Key informant 2, 2004). Although there is a convergence of views between household respondents and key informants on the positive environmental changes, there is need to analyze the other view one that was not positive. Such a contradiction serves to highlight some of the biases inherent in the project. There is a possibility on the part of the respondents to cast the project in the positive light because they are unlikely to want to show that something they are responsible for is a "failure" or they may have a vested interest in the project continuing, which is predicated upon it being successful. The same could be true of key informants especially that they are funders of the project and would want to see the project as impacting on the community in question.

5.1.5 Importance of the environment to the community

Following changes to their environment after project inception, all household respondents noted that their households attached great importance to the environment. This was mainly because they believed that maintaining forests resulted in improved rainfall patterns. This could be attributed to the awareness of the community on the need to preserve the biodiversity of the area.

It also emanated from household respondents that the environment is the mainstay of rural survival. As a source of life the environment could be exploited for food, herbs, wild fruits that supplement diet and for shelter. Thus, the symbiotic relationship between people and their environment is emphasized in Sanale community.

5.2 Livelihood and Food Security Issues

5.2.1 How households obtain enough food for the month

In order to arrive at the issue of livelihoods, the study sought to understand how various households sustained themselves for the month. The most obvious response was that households sustained themselves through farming activities that also included market gardening. Even though most respondents noted farming and market gardening as a source of livelihood, some respondents thought that the food they obtained was usually not enough. This was due to poor harvests brought about by poor rains that characterize the region. As highlighted by one household respondent "we do not get adequate food due to poor rains" and "there is usually not enough food due to poor harvests". Takavarasha and Rukovo in Rukuni et al (1990) confirm this when they noted that food insecurity in Zimbabwe is present at both micro and macro levels, though the major area of concern is the availability of food at the household level. One such insecurity is caused by drought among other insecurities. Thus, Swift and Hamilton's (2001: 67) assertion that agriculture is central to household food security and rural livelihoods in Africa is confirmed in this research as households pin their hopes on agriculture as a source of livelihood. However, this is threatened by environmental or ecological risks such as drought and land degradation that trigger episodes of household food insecurity. Hence, the fact that half of the household respondents expressed food inadequacy means that the status of households does not fit the food secure households which is "access to adequate food by households over time", Eide cited in Maxwell and Frankenberger (1992). This situation is compounded by the fact that the Government of Zimbabwe did not do much at micro level to assist food insecure households despite the announcement of first priority to the development of the agricultural sector. Even though over 70 per cent of lives in the rural areas depend on farming as their primary source of livelihood, it seems the impact has not been felt at the community level as none of the respondents mentioned government's attempts to alleviate food deficits in the community.

5.2.2 Food availability before Project

As alluded to above, most households stated that they had problems with food availability before the project inception. Various reasons were advanced for this

68

situation. The common reason was that of lack of knowledge and skills that led to poor farming methods that resulted in food deficits. This was exacerbated by ecological factors such as poor rains that characterize the region. Problems with food availability were also highlighted in the focus group, where the common response was:

"Problems of hunger as rains are very erratic in the region. People did not know what was suitable for the area, for example, people wanted maize but this is not the best for agro-ecological region 4 and 5. Thus, the area suffered from food deficits".

This brings to the fore the issue of knowledge as a determining factor of food availability. As noted in the context chapter, Insiza District falls within agro-ecological region 4 and 5. This is a semi-arid region characterized by low rainfall. The region is mainly suitable for ranching and crops that thrive are those that are drought resistant such as sorghum and millet among others. Lack of such knowledge resulted in people continuously planting maize even though the region is not best suited for such a crop. Hence, knowledge of what's suitable for different regions can have an impact on what a household yields at the end. In as much as the people of Sanale knew this there was resistance owing to the fact that maize is viewed as a staple crop. Thus, for Sanale community it is important to know that millet and sorghum are sustainable local seed varieties appropriate for and more productive on drought-prone and low fertility lands, (Africa 2000 Network Zimbabwe, 2001).

5.2.3 Initiatives to increase food availability

There were varied responses as to what initiatives households had taken to increase food availability. Half of the household respondents noted that they had not taken the initiative themselves to increase food. One respondent felt the household was self-sufficient hence no initiative was taken. However, the other half had taken the initiative to increase food. One such initiative was to expand existing gardens in order to increase hectrage under crop. The irrigation project that the community engaged in also boosted the market gardening ventures. This venture catered for consumption as well as sale. On one hand, the focus group was unanimous in stating that the community had taken the initiative in increasing food availability. The most common response concerning initiatives undertaken by the community was that:

"Community lobbied the councilor to do something about food shortages but this was to no avail. The next thing was to work hard in farming and join the food for work scheme. Eventually, people joined projects such as small grains and gardening to address food deficits".

The above quotation brings out the important issue of projects in rural development. It shows that community development invariably takes place through projects. These have been described by Honadle and Rosengard (1983) as "discreet activities, aimed at specific objectives". They have become a vehicle through which development efforts are brought to the grassroots or ground level. As noted by Rondinelli (1983) projects are advantageous as they are identifiable, defined and organized sets of development activities. They, thus, make easy translation of development plans and policies into specific courses of action. However, it is important to note that some projects are only sustainable with donor support. Projects that suffer are usually those which continually require capital injection. The study also shows the importance of resources and how helpless people would be without any form of resources. The local leadership (councilor) was helpless in this regard leaving people with no option but to mobilize around projects which are usually donor driven and has implications on sustainability.

5.2.4 Has household food security improved with project?

Having alluded to the importance of projects, it was not surprising that almost all respondents noted that household food security had improved with their joining or participating in the project. This was because the sustainable agriculture project, with emphasis on small grain production had brought with it skills that resulted in improved farming methods that were not detrimental to the environment. It also brought with it knowledge such as what is suitable for a particular agro-ecological region. As such most respondents noted that the sustainable agriculture project had brought with it knowledge of the best land use options for the region. In addition, participants in this regard also acquired new skills. This resulted in an improvement in food security as people were practicing what is suitable for the region. As noted by one respondent "the move from maize to small grains has increased yields because maize is not very suitable for the area". This realization resulted in increased yield, with some households having surplus grain which is sold. This was also confirmed in the focus group discussion where the common response was:

"With joining the project people realized that small grains were suitable for the area and food availability improved as yields doubled compared to maize production. At the moment production caters for households. There have been surpluses for sale for a few", (Focus group discussion, 2004).

The two key informants for donors concurred with the above view. For example, the key informant for GEFSGP stated that:

"In terms of livelihoods, Insiza has an integrated programme that includes livestock rearing, small grains and the garden, and these have been useful windows not only for improving household consumption but also for sale to generate income for fees and farming implements", (Interview with Key informant 1, 2004).

The above confirms that agriculture is at the heart of food security as it is the source of the food we need. Thus, projects, as one Sanale undertook, remain the primary means through which development policies are translated into programmes of action.

Having looked at food availability before project inception, subsequent initiatives to increase food availability and the impact of such initiatives one cannot avoid juxtaposition with the sustainable livelihoods framework as advanced by DFID (1999). Although the Sanale project is not a mirror image of this framework, it is clear that there are many aspects that fall within this framework. As shown above, the Sanale community suffered food deficits (vulnerability context). To redress this, the community had to summon its social capital, human capital, natural capital and financial capital with the help of various stakeholders, government or non-government, who helped in setting the field for implementation of desired strategies (policies, institutions and processes) resulting in livelihood outcomes such as improved food security, reduced vulnerability and more sustainable use of natural resource base. It is important to note that participation of the community in decision-making, planning and establishing contacts with external institutions would not have been possible had the community not reached higher levels of participation. This is where people participate in joint analysis, action planning, taking initiatives independently and networking for resources. Success can only be achieved if there are high levels of participation in as far as policies, institutions and processes are concerned. This confirms the earlier notion advanced in the literature review that participation of people in action planning, local decision making, networking and

71

resource control has a bearing on livelihood strategies that communities adopt eventually leading to beneficial outcomes. Thus, this thesis has argued for the inclusion of levels of participation in the same category as laws, culture, policies, institutions and processes.

5.3 Reaction to project

Having looked at whether the project improved household food security, the study sought to understand how the community in general and households in particular perceived projects. All household respondents noted that their community had benefited one way or the other from the projects they had undertaken. The most common reaction was that the project had brought socio-economic benefits, new skills and knowledge to the community. Most respondents noted that food security had improved in the community due to increased yields brought about by new farming methods. The activities brought about by the projects meant employment was created for some community members, which also contributed to improved incomes. This enabled some members to raise school fees for their children. As noted by one household respondent there were "significant benefits from farming and gardening as both were income generating and helped supplement food supplies, school fees and general upkeep of family". Also the availability of livestock brought about by the project was a booster to family diet and food security. However, material gain can be a source of bias to the whole project as participants choose to highlight the positive ahead of negative issues

On the other hand, several household respondents noted that the project had brought about new skills, techniques and knowledge. As noted by one household respondent, the community had "benefited greatly from new and improved farming methods, use of environmentally friendly nutrients, food security and availability of improved incomes". Raising awareness and imparting skills has been an effective tool in rural development and often cheap. This is aptly put by Africa 2000 Network (2001: 8) that:

> "Often the immediate assumption by donors and organizations is that large amounts of money are needed to revitalize or rehabilitate the environment. Usually the only investment needed at the outset is information and awareness – which is not only inexpensive but also, has long-term benefits".

72

This was the case at Sanale as people managed to change attitudes towards their environment due to information received at no cost. At the same time they acquired knowledge that enabled them to use farming methods that are environmentally friendly. Thus, with Sanale the issue is what the community can do with available resources not huge sums of money. Hence, communities can implement simple solutions to problems afflicting their environment if they are armed with knowledge and skills.

5.3.1 How is community supportive of project activities?

Almost all household respondents were of the opinion that the community is supportive of project activities. The reason for being supportive was that communities had derived benefits from the various projects the community was running. As noted by one household respondent "support is adequate, which has come through the realization that the project is improving people's lives". To show their appreciation of the benefits brought forth by the projects, the community has involved itself morally and physically. Morally, the community encourages positive contribution among members, hence building unity of purpose. As implementers of project activities, the community commits labour as and when the projects demand. For example, in the biogas project lots of physical work was undertaken when digging the digesters. According to one key informant for donors "digging of the digesters was very hard work especially for women, this tested their endurance and level of participation and appreciation of the cause", (Interview with Key informant 2, 2004). The same can also be said of the community providing labour in livestock, small grains, and information center and gardening projects. Thus, community participation in project implementation determines the level of buy-in and this is the key to the sustainability of community projects.

5.3.2 Has household benefited from project?

All household respondents stated that they and their families had benefited from the project. Almost all household respondents were of the opinion that food security had improved as a result of the project. The gardening project had enabled households to improve food supplies that also led to improved diets. Some had managed to raise income to pay school fees for their children from market gardening activities. It was

further noted that crop yields had improved with their joining the project. The sustainable agriculture project as noted earlier emphasized the growing of drought resistant crops in the region by virtue of it being dry. Such realization, to switch from maize to small grain, improved crop yields thereby boosting household food security, which according to Devereux (1997: 33) is the ability to acquire, through production, purchase and transfers – sufficient food for healthy, active life. As such key determinants relate to household food production and the limited availability off farm income earning opportunities.

The respondents also noted that they had benefited from livestock brought forth by the heifer project. With the heifers' milk allowing for improved and balanced diet, the respondents also felt that their draught power woes would be a thing of the past. This was summed up by one respondent who noted that "certainly the household has benefited as food supplies improved, livestock, draught power also improved including balanced diet". Some respondents also felt that household chores and burdens had been lessened by the introduction of the biogas project since women do not have to walk long distances in search of firewood. Thus, household members and their families have been supportive of the projects through active involvement such as providing labour for various activities within the projects. Several respondents also noted that they actively encourage and motivate each other when it comes to their projects. This shows the community is acting on its own volition. In other words they are not prompted by anyone but they see the need of working together in order to achieve desired goals. This fits well into the typology of participation as advanced by Pretty et al. Aspects of interactive participation and self-mobilisation such as control over local decisions, maintaining a stake in practices and participating by taking initiatives independently of external institutions is emphasized here.

5.4 Are women benefiting from development programmes?
The study sought to establish if women were specifically benefiting from development programmes. This is because in most African rural communities females are in the majority among the adult population. This may be due to the fact that adult men have migrated to seek work or have died. Furthermore, women contribute over 80% of labour in subsistence or near subsistence agriculture. Despite being responsible for planting, weeding, watering, harvesting, transporting and storing of

crops, women also bear the full responsibility for household chores, (Burkey, 1993). This means they must obtain food, firewood, and water to keep the household functioning and this is done in ever increasing distances which is time consuming and tedious. It is against this backdrop that the Insiza Biogas and Woodstoves Project was instituted. As noted in the project proposal submitted to UNDP for funding, the project aims at reducing the rate of deforestation and desertification, while at the same time reducing the burden of fetching firewood on women and improving the standard of living for the local people. Most household respondents confirmed that the biogas project had brought with it enormous benefits especially reducing the burden on women to walk long distances fetching firewood as biogas had brought fuel at their doorstep. This was supported by the key informant from donor agencies who noted that the majority of project participants are women, about 75 – 80%, and that the project is earmarked to reduce the burden on women of fetching firewood.

Several household and focus group respondents were of the opinion that development projects in their community have resulted in income generation. For example excess produce from agricultural activities has been sold and income used as household deems necessary. Such projects were also viewed as a vehicle through which women in the community minimized their dependence on men. This self-reliance is necessary in the community as many households are female-headed. This supports the notion put forward by the United Nations (1995) that rural women are assuming increasing responsibility for generating income and assuming the well-being of families.

Although in many instances African rural women are at the end of the distribution chain for productive resources and social services, they are at the beginning of the food production chain, (UN 1995: 35). In the Sanale project women are responsible for the food grown and provide labour in the construction of biogas digesters. According to several respondents in the focus group this has led to the emancipation and increase in self-esteem of women. As noted in the focus group, "…with projects women are able to have extra income without necessarily depending on men. Women are now supplementing or complementing the efforts of men in farming" (pg2). Such self-empowerment has helped the Sanale women to have a say in decision making, gain more control over their lives generally, and gain more independence and self-reliance which accords them self respect and dignity, which in turn improves their self

75

and social images. Thus, van Zyl's (1994) assertion that "development occurs inside people, either the people do it themselves or development does not occur at all" is true of Sanale project.

It is common knowledge that food security is an important element of sustainable rural livelihoods. The reason some households are food insecure are rooted in ways entire livelihood systems have changed and adapted, or failed to adapt, to challenges from the ecological and economic environment, including drought. Several household respondents were of the opinion that their participation in the various developmental projects has brought with it improved access and availability of food to households. As noted by one household respondent, "there is an improvement as the family is able to get something for consumption and for sale from agriculture". The same respondent also stated that market gardening and the livestock venture had brought about household access to food. This also led to improved diet and health of the households concerned. This implies that the burden on women eased as they are the ones mainly concerned with availing food in rural households. Therefore, food security initiatives in Sanale community consider food as a primary need, basic to all human needs and the organization of social life. This is closely linked to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that recognizes food as a right to an adequate standard of life.

Most of the respondents in the household were of the opinion that women contributed immensely to the identification of priority needs of the projects they engaged in. According to one respondent, women in the Sanale project "take all decisions concerning the garden". The fact that the project benefited women accorded them the opportunity to contribute to the decision making process. The same sentiments were echoed in the focus group discussion. It was noted, "women are the main actors since they are the ones who know the problems in communities hence they take an active role" in decision making. The key informant for donors concurred by noting that women have been in the forefront of the project as evidenced by the fact that "the coordinator of the project is a woman and even in the committee, there is equal representation of men and women". This view was buttressed by the IRDC key informant who noted that women and the youth played an active role in the affairs of the project. This implies that women have a stake in the decision making process.

Although another key informant from CIDA acknowledged that while participation was female dominated, there was some reservation that this could be due to the absence of males in the community. Thus, the participation of women in decision making shows that any rural development programme that does not include the active participation of women will be a programme benefiting primarily a privileged minority: men, (Burkey, 1993: 67). Therefore, it is important for women to participate in decision making as this is the process in which the direction and pace of most development plans are determined.

The Sanale project in as much as it has improved the welfare and status of women, it still shows the stereotyped triple role of women as brought forth by Moser (1993). The project highlights the reproductive work, productive work and community work of women in development. The reproductive aspect is shown in the maintenance of the household and its members, collecting water and fuel. In most instances such work is labour intensive and time consuming. On one hand productive work is shown in the production of goods and services for consumption or trade and obviously this is undervalued as well. The participation in Sanale revolves around women who engage in collective organization of events to improve the community. However, such community work by women is seldom considered in economic analyses yet it involves a great deal of volunteer time and leads to development of communities (Moser 1993). The Sanale project even though it has impacted positively on women still has long way in changing gender relations which exist in developing countries.

The activities of Sanale as highlighted in this Chapter are collated into a historical time line shown below. This will trace the activities of the community before the inception of the project in 1997. It will look at the year of inception and the post inception phase up to the present moment. This will enable the reader to have a picture of the Sanale project.

Table 5.1 Timeline for Livelihood and Conservation Issues before and after Sanale Project Inception.

Year	Event
Pre-1997	- Massive forest depletion due to anthropogenic means. - Manifest land degradation as evidenced by gullies, soil erosion, sedimentation and siltation. - Poor harvests leading to food deficits. - Community took some initiative to rehabilitate the environment such as gully reclamation, planting aloes in gulleys and planting vertiva grass, digging furrows in fields to hold water. - Environmental awareness campaigns and workshops. - Crafting of by-laws that brought about penalties for those who felled trees unnecessarily. - Community mobilizes to tackle their problems.
1997	Project Proposal submitted to UNDP/GEFSGP and US$50 000 funding granted under biodiversity protection and climate change focal areas.
Post-1997	- Project kick-started to introduce energy innovations to achieve biodiversity conservation and combat global climate change. - Biogas digesters constructed. - Protected garden project under irrigation established. - Adoption of small grains programme. - Adoption of sustainable agriculture or environmentally friendly farming methods. - New farming methods adopted as a result of new knowledge and skills. - Changes to the environment noticeable such as forest thickening and reclaimed gullies. - Improved food availability due to irrigation and small

	grains programme.
2000	- New partners for the project such as CIDA, FOS Belgium and Heifer Project International assist the initial project.
2005	- Project still in progress and up scaling to include information technology centre.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the Sanale community was in a precarious position before the inception of projects. This is because the community was threatened by environmental degradation and constant food deficits. By mobilizing themselves around such problems of conservation and food security the community managed to exert control over their life situation. This is because it had acquired knowledge and awareness which led to an understanding of their problems and left them in a better footing to improve their situation. Thus, the initiatives which centered mainly on project activities had impacted positively on the lives of the otherwise poor Sanale villagers including women.

CHAPTER SIX

Research findings on Participation

Introduction

This chapter continues to present findings of the study undertaken to investigate community participation as a way to achieving resource conservation and household food security needs. It explains the reasons, inclusivity, barriers and the stages of participation in this community under study. This is meant to strengthen the hypothesis that interactive participation and self mobilization lead to resource conservation and household food security. It goes on to look at how various stakeholders in development have engaged the community in this regard. It concludes by exploring the importance of community development projects as a way of bringing people together in a quest to achieve rural development. All this would help to derive key lessons learned. Again the usefulness of qualitative methods outlined in chapter five is demonstrated.

6.1 What is community?

Before looking at community participation and its implications for development, the study sought to establish what constitutes a community in the view of the respondents. This is based on the premise that many development practitioners claim to be involved in community development, hence the need to ascertain from them what constitutes a community. According to the key informant for GEFSGP there are various levels of communities and sizes. These range from a village, ward or even to a district. As such, a community is a group of people usually residing in the rural community facing similar problems, having a common vision to address these problems and mobilized to take action to rectify the situation. It comprises both men and women, young and old and above all there is an element of homogeneity in terms of socio-economic characteristics such as traditional practices and means of survival (Interview with Key informant 1, 2004). This conception was not different from that given by the key informant from CIDA who noted that a community could be a group of people with common interest, people with shared attributes such as shared needs, cultural, social values or even resource base, in the same geographical area such as ward or village. It could also be based on interest, that is, people coming together to

fulfill a temporary interest. When it comes to CIDA statutes it was noted that such a community should be disaggregated or separated into women, men, girls and boys based on gender, (Interview with Key informant 2, 2004). The key informant for IRDC shared the same sentiments as the other key informants when he stated that a community is an organized grouping at village or ward level and or can be the whole village or ward.

It is important to note that the above conceptions of community are not universal; they vary with individuals and organizations. However, there was convergence when it came to geographical location, shared needs or interests, some form of organization and composition. These definitions seem to be in line with Midgley's (1986) definition which sees community in terms of geographic locality, of shared interests and needs, or in terms of deprivation and disadvantage. This is also subject to criticism, as one may argue that what is implicit in this conceptualization is the image of the traditional African village. As we all know these traditional villages have undergone some form of transformation. Thus, the variedness of definitions means there is no general agreement on the meaning of community. As alluded to above, it is important to base community on characteristics such as closeness of people, shared needs or interests, willingness to participate in development and some level of deprivation, (de Beer and Swanepoel 1998: 18).

6.1.1 What is community participation?

When it came to community participation, there was general consensus among key informant respondents, that communities, which ever way defined, should be the main actors in the development process. This is shown in the definition given by the key informant from GEFSGP who stated that effective community participation is:

> "...whereby the community is central and takes a pivotal role in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and decision making. They are not passive recipients or people who are just pushed by an external force to produce results, but they themselves are willing and full of enthusiasm to correct whatever situation that needs their attention", (Interview with Key informant 1, 2004).

Key informant 1 added that participation is defined when a community finds their own solutions to problems. In other words, they are proactive rather that reactive.

Being proactive entails even pushing those who assist them, having own vision and willing to push it and above all being achievers and results oriented. This is in line with UNDP's (1998) assertion that active participation should entail letting the beneficiaries of development and programmes identify their needs, initiate and plan interventions and even seek assistance from interested partners. Such participation is expected to extend to the monitoring and evaluation stages of activities.

On one hand, the key informant from CIDA emphasized that effective community participation entails "involvement of the community in all stages of the project cycle", (Interview with Key informant 2, 2004). However, there is need to be wary of the loose use of the involvement as it can be viewed as co-option or the mobilization of communities to participate or be involved in the execution of top-down determined development plans and projects, (de Beer and Swanepoel, 1998:22). But it is important to note that the emphasis is on community as the actor, that is, it is in the forefront when it comes to project inception, implementation and up to monitoring and evaluation. The key informant from IRDC buttresses this notion by stating that effective community participation is the "hands on" in the implementation of a project or programme.

The views expressed by various respondents as regards community participation echo Moser's (1989:81) view that "participation is always connected to the actions of communities, groups or individuals related to the development, improvement or change of an existing situation". This even points to the promotion of institution building, that is, the creation of democratic decision-making at the local level and the involvement of the people in these procedures, (Midgley cited in Nhira 1992: 128).

6.2 Involvement, decision-making and participation in Sanale

Having had the picture of what constitutes community and participation, the study sought to ascertain the involvement or participation of the community in the decision-making process involving their livelihood and environment. Most of the households interviewed noted that the community is involved in the biogas project, small grain farming, livestock rearing, irrigation, information technology centre and market gardening. In terms of these projects, there were varied responses as to who initiated them. Most of the household respondents were of the opinion that Africa 2000

Network worked hand in hand with the chief of the area, Chief Mafu, to initiate the biogas and woodstoves project which gave rise to other projects. It was noted that the parties had realized the degradation besetting the community and offered alternatives to conserve their resource base. In a few cases, interviewees or respondents pointed out that the Rural District Council was the agent that brought a donor to the community. It was also suggested that the local project coordinator, Mrs Mafu (not related to the Chief), was instrumental in the initiation of the projects. From the above, one can note that there is a tendency to see the donor as the "owner" of the project, hence the view that Africa 2000 Network was the initiator since it availed financial resources to start the project. The fact however remains that the idea was conceived by community members as shown by secondary sources of information. Secondary sources of information such as the project proposal submitted to UNDP for funding in 1997 notes that the project was initiated by Insiza Development Association, which is a grouping of locals interested in the development of Insiza with the blessing of the chief. The association through various networks liaised with donors to fund projects in Insiza District. The view of community as initiator is supported by a key informant from Africa 2000 Network/GEFSGP who noted that:

"Our approach to funding is more on the reactive side in that these are demand driven. As a result communities participate in coming up with the project idea or concept, development of proposal and the actual implementation", (interview with Key informant 1, 2004).

The fact that the project concept or idea originated from the community brings to the fore the notion of community as an actor, if not only beneficiary, of development, (de Beer and Swanepoel 1998:19). This is viewed as a local initiative which recognizes diversity and results in self-reliant communities which define their goals, control their resources and direct processes affecting them.

Sustainable human development emphasizes that humans are vital cogs in development and should not be treated as mere passive recipients (UNDP 2000). This view was supported by members in the focus group who noted that:

"Work is done by people and is dependent on unity hence people or communities are important in development programmes. Also people need to work in groups in order to achieve success".

Most household interviewees emphasized the fact that communities have a significant role in projects since they provide labour in the actual implementation of activities. However, one should be wary of the fact that participation can be viewed as cheap labour in what Knoetze (1983) cited in de Beer and Swanepoel, (1998) refers to as "sweat equity". Munguti (1989) is also skeptical of the labour input of the community as participation. He asserts that "...by community members offering themselves for manual work ...many implementers of programmes have reported high levels of participation", (pg 13). However, in the case of Sanale community one would argue the case for participation as a process in which the community not only provide labour but also plan, take decisions and accept responsibility for sustenance of projects. This is evidenced by the fact that "they come up with their own action plan which is a set of activities they have to systematically follow and implement", (interview with Key informant 1, 2004). This view was supported by the focus group which stated that "communities are instrumental in coming up with action plans. Any work that the community does is contained in the action plan", (page 1). The common response from household respondents was that communities have a role to play in ensuring success of given project by participating physically or otherwise. As noted by one household respondent "communities have a role to play in development as development is dependent on communities who provide labour, unity, encouragement, coordination and facilitation". This shows there is more than labor that is provided by the Sanale community in their projects.

6.2.1 Reasons for participation in development projects

There are different motives and factors for environmental conservation. Various factors or motives have been advanced from philosophic, environmentalist and developmentalist perspectives. According to Todaro (2000) poverty remains one of the chief characteristics of third world countries. It was, therefore, not surprising that most of the households noted the need to alleviate poverty as one of the chief motivating factors in engaging in development programmes. Poverty alleviation programmes are viewed as a gateway to self-sufficiency. As one household respondent noted communities involved themselves in development programmes "in order to alleviate the poverty that had struck the area". This shows that poverty is

considered to be unacceptable and represents a major failure of development, hence the need to eradicate or alleviate it.

Women are the main victims of poverty. As highlighted by United Nations (1995: 34) more than 550 million women or 60% of the world's population lives below the poverty line in rural areas. This is compounded by environmental degradation, which affects the smallholder and subsistence agriculture in which women predominate. Such a scenario calls for integrated programmes to redress the situation. The Sanale community through various programmes realized that benefits can accrue through participation in development programmes. Benefits which accrued to pioneer project members, such as improved livelihood, improved crop yields, less burden and income generation, inspired other community members to engage in programmes meant to conserve the resource base and enhance livelihood status. Hardship was also taken as a factor that led people to participate. As noted by one household respondent, "hunger and starvation was instrumental in leading the community to involve itself in meeting livelihood needs". The need to meet the livelihood of households also meant the need to conserve the resource base because "without resource conservation, food output decreases", (Household interview). This view was supported by respondents in the focus group who noted that people realized the need to regenerate depleted forests by engaging in energy saving projects that would result in more trees for the area and eventually more rain. It was further stated in the focus group that people got involved in projects "because of suffering, hunger, and poor rainfall and food deficits. Projects have material expectations and poverty alleviation", (page 1). This is in sync with Moser's (1993) view of participation as a "means" and "ends". As a means the Sanale project has shown that participation has become a form of mobilization to get things done, achieve specific objectives and obtain a greater share of resources. As an end participation is an outcome of a process which makes the development process meaningful. Such views are buttressed by Murphree's suggestions that people seek to manage the environment for two reasons:

a) Because its management improves the conditions of their livelihood.

b) Because its degradation is perceived to be threatening, either to life-sustaining processes, for example, population, soil erosion or people's aesthetic values, Murphree (1991: 1).

In other words, Murphree proposes that people seek to manage the environment when the benefits of management are perceived to exceed its costs, (page 2). Hence, people may thrive to conserve the environment for better production or to safeguard against its deterioration. Thus, people will only conserve the environment if they consider the return or benefit to be worth the cost and if they have the means to meet these costs, (Murphree 1991: 2).

Most household respondents noted that education was a reason for them to be involved in development programmes such as those encouraging resource conservation and meeting livelihood needs. As noted by one respondent, "...through education, people became aware of their surrounding hence the desire" to conserve it. Such educational campaigns were achieved through community workshops before project inception and gained impetus with the inception of the project. With the inception of the project workshops were run by donors or stakeholders who provided technical assistance. Such workshops were part of the project component (refer to project proposal). These enlightened people on the need for participatory development. Communities, thus, participate after realizing benefits that are detailed at workshops. Hence, education and awareness efforts are significant ingredients for successful and sustainable environmental management as they help to change the attitudes of community members. Lack of information or misinformation perpetuates unsustainable utilization of the natural resource base which eventually affects production. This shows participation as key to empowerment. According to UNDP (1998) this entails strengthening the capacity, capability, authority and will of an individual to define his or her development needs and act on them in accordance with his or her own priorities and choices of solutions.

Several household respondents also gave land degradation and forest depletion as a factor that led them to participate in mitigation programmes. As highlighted by one respondent "non-participation would have further destroyed the natural resource base". Such an environmental threat was seen as heightening the food insecurity, which was epitomized by low crop yields. Thus, the threat of land degradation, which is a loss of utility or potential utility through reduction of or damage to physical, social, cultural or economic features and /or reduction of ecosystem diversity, inspired people to engage in resource conservation and meeting livelihood needs,

http://www.environmental-expert.com/magazine/wiley/1085-3278, accessed 15/12/2004. This was supported by members in the focus group who noted that:

> "People realized the need to regenerate our depleted forests, hence, engaging in biogas project. This was seen as a way of addressing hunger and poverty besetting the community".

6.2.2 How is participation in Insiza inclusive of women, youth and elderly?

For full participation to be achieved, various stakeholders especially the vulnerable such as women, youth and the elderly need to have a stake be it in decision-making or activities concerning programmes. In the Sanale project there was consensus from the key informants that the vulnerable were catered for in project activities. As noted by the key informant from IRDC, women and youth are the most active participants in development projects or programmes at Sanale. The same sentiment was shared by the key informant for GEFSGP who noted that:

> "In Insiza, the majority are women, about 75 – 80%. Women have been in the forefront. They have managed to dig the digesters and there are few cases where men actually dug the pits. The coordinator of the project is a woman and even in the committee there is an equal representation of men and women", (Interview with Key informant 1, 2004).

The view of women taking an active role in the project was also supported by the focus group whose response was "women…are the main actors since they are the ones who know the problems in communities hence they take an active role", (pg 2).

One can thus argue that the Sanale project fulfills some of the tenets of Agenda 21. As stated earlier, Chapter 3 of Agenda 21 states that "people's organizations, women's groups and non-governmental organizations are important sources of innovation and action at the local level and have a strong interest and proven ability to promote sustainable livelihoods". Moser (1993) supports this by stating that projects rely on women's participation as means to ensuring project success as has been demonstrated in Sanale.

It was further stated that the youth were also participating in project activities, for example:

"The biogas digester builders that there were trained and even building in other areas are the youth. Even at the information centre, most of the people who will utilize this in terms of receiving training in computers are youth", (Key Informant 1).

However, this statement was not supported by the focus group, whose common response was "the youth are always running away from projects in rural areas to urban areas. They are involved in taxi industry and illegal gold panning…" (pg 2). From my own observation, I believe that few youths are involved. For example, those who derived direct benefits such as builders were involved in the projects. Most youths are indeed absent from the community especially those not deriving direct benefit. The key informant may have taken the few youths involved in biogas construction as representing involvement of a broad spectrum of youths in the area, but in terms of numbers they are few to warrant a blanket statement that youths are involved.

As far as the elderly are concerned, it was stated:

"The elderly are also in the project especially at the garden and small grain programme. Participation is somewhat limited since the work requires energy and strength", (ibid).

The focus group was of the opinion that the elderly were catered for in the form of benefits accruing to the household. It was stated "proceeds (tomatoes and grain) from the project would be used to cater for the elderly" (pg2).

6.2.3 Involvement, why, why not? In what way?

Most of the respondents in the household noted that they are involved in the project one way or the other. The common involvement was in labour provision in the digging of biogas digesters, ploughing, working in the garden, feeding slurry into the biogas digesters and selling of garden or field produce. Some respondents even noted that their family members are providing skills training such as conducting computer lessons at the Information Technology Centre (ITC) and teaching other communities in construction of biogas digesters. Several respondents also noted that those who were not involved were children of a school going age, those who are too young to assist, the elderly and those who are away on gold panning escapades. Further, those

people who reside in areas where the project has not extended are also not able to participate. This is in line with UNDP's (1998) assertion that communities in a participatory process should draw work plans and contribute in cash and kind, including labour. According to Makumbe (1996) such involvement results in the democratization of the development process.

It was expressly noted by the household respondents that people got involved in the project owing to the realization of benefits such as learning varying skills hitherto unknown in the community. This augers well with the earlier sentiment that the community now has people who possess skills, such as computer programming and biogas construction technology. This was also viewed as easing employment problems besetting the community and thereby lessening the burden of supporting families.

6.2.4 Project stages where participation should occur

Having earlier looked at the inclusive nature of participation in Insiza, the study sought to ascertain the stage in the project cycle best suited for community participation. There was consensus among respondents that participation should occur at all stages of the project cycle. This means participation should enable beneficiaries of projects and programmes to identify their needs, initiate and plan interventions, and seek assistance from interested partners. The importance of participating in all stages of project cycle is emphasized by key informant from GEFSGP who states that:

> "...this is because, the foundation for people to participate is that they have been involved in the planning. It helps them to have a vision and to rally behind if they have set it up themselves rather than an external element doing it for them", (Interview with Key informant 1, 2004).

6.2.5 Stage at which Insiza Project is

The key informants for IRDC and GEFSGP highlighted that the Sanale community has reached a stage where people participate in joint analysis which leads to action planning and local decision making. They further stated that the project community is in a position to participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions. As stated by the key informant from IRDC the:

> "People of Sanale now fully understand the stages in the project cycle, as such they are now able to carry out any project as they see fit without much external interference. Instead it is now them who consult external agencies where necessary", (Interview with Key informant 3, 2004).

These views were also confirmed in the focus group where it was stated that the community was in the forefront in the execution of the project. There is always community report back or feedback, where issues concerning the project are deliberated upon. Furthermore, work does not proceed without a decision from the community. As stated in the focus group, gardening members always deliberate on issues, for example, before buying goods for the project. It was further stated that the community is instrumental in coming up with action plans. Such plans contained all work that the community intended undertaking. This shows that the community is not a mere cog in the development process but a vital organ responsible for charting its own destiny. In other words, the community is able to initiate action as it is able to take the initiative in terms of actions pertaining to a project. This supports the earlier view of Paul (1987) that community action is the intensity of community participation as it implies a pro-active capacity and the confidence to progress on one's own.

The same respondents noted that this had been achieved as a result of empowerment. This is a process of strengthening the capacity, capability, authority and will of an individual to define her or his development needs and act on them in accordance with her or his own priorities and choices of solutions, (UNDP 1998: 10). The vehicle for this empowerment has mainly been training workshops and exchange visits facilitated by Africa 2000/GEFSGP. The old adage of experience as the best teacher holds true of Sanale community. As stated by the key informant from GEFSGP the community had:

> "...been left in challenging situations which they had to solve themselves and this has built their capacity and strengthened them", (Interview with Key informant 1, 2004).

This notion was also shared in the focus group where it was stated that:

> "If there are problems relating to the project, members always sit and give themselves targets when solving matters even if it means forking out of their own pockets to pay for services. Even if there are problems in the projects, members take an active role in trying to redress the problem rather than waiting for project funder" (pg 1).

Even though the Sanale community is mapping its course of development, it has managed to establish external contacts with resource agencies as a way of adding value to their work. This was mainly as a result of initial linkages established between the community and other resource agencies by Africa 2000/GEFSGP. This has benefited the community in terms of resources and technical advice. It even controls the use of resources. This view was supported by the key informant for GEFSGP when it was stated that:

> "They have managed to retain control in that it is them who prescribe where they need assistance and evaluate whether the technical person has delivered according to their expectations. They are not at the mercy of these people, but these people are at their mercy", (Interview with Key informant 1, 2004).

The above views fall within a typology of community participation as advanced by Pretty et al (1995) in the literature review. It supports the community as having achieved interactive participation and self-mobilization where people's participation leads to action plans and the group takes control over local decisions independently of external institutions, develop contacts with external institutions and still retain control over how resources are used.

6.2.6 Barriers to Participation

According to UNDP (1998) cited in Nyathi (2003: 51) participation is defined as "all aspects and forms of taking part in life and society. On this basis non-participation implies failing to take part, being excluded". In this regard most household respondents felt there were no major barriers curtailing their participation and that of the community. The key informant from IRDC supported this view. One reason that emerged was that since these projects are donor funded, there is no discrimination as to who participates. This is because funders such as UNDP do not discriminate on the basis of political or religious affiliation. Similarly, a focus group discussion was held to determine any barriers to participation that households and the community in general encountered. The typical response was as follows:

> "There are no barriers for those who want to participate but there is no room for laziness", (pg 2).

This implies there is no discrimination as to who participates in projects, but people can choose not to participate if they are not equal to the task demanded by the project. On the other hand, the level of physical work is taken as barrier. For example, "the digging of biogas digesters was very hard work especially for women, it was a test of their endurance and participation" (Key Informant 2, 2004). As stated earlier, this is because the project is female dominated owing to the fact that men are absent on gold panning escapades or they have migrated into cities in search of paid employment or they are drinking the day away. Thus, such a barrier can play a role in keeping households and communities from taking part in life and society.

Although most respondents in the household were of the opinion that there were no major barriers in the participation process, a major barrier emerged. It was noted that some individuals wanted to politicize the nature of the projects. In Zimbabwe if a project is given a political tag it means some people will not take part for fear of reprisal from members of the other party. This political barrier was also noted by the key informant from CIDA who noted, "...a grouping of people for a particular cause could be misinterpreted to be politically motivated". Related to this, is a barrier identified by the IRDC key informant who noted "...local leadership may be a potential barrier if they do not have a direct benefit". Thus, traditional power holders can be a barrier if they resist people's participation as way of preserving their vested interests. This supports a view held by Botes and Rensburg (2000: 49) who noted that:

> "It is well known that in cases where the community leadership favors a project the chances of success are far greater than where leaders are opposed".

Hence, gate keeping by local elites may be able to effectively thwart attempts to engage directly with beneficiaries, because this threatens their control, (ibid). From observation, I concluded that the elected local councilors had the power to demonise the project if they deemed it politically incorrect if their overtones were anything to go by. However, there were no signs of this happening in Sanale.

Not only were political barriers but it was noted by Africa 2000/GEFSGP key informant that financial resources are an obstacle to effective community participation as well. Most rural development projects are donor driven and their survival depends

on whether funds are flowing in or not. With the Sanale project, it was indicated that the resources were not adequate to cover everyone hence some households were left out. This is why the project had to start with pilot homesteads.

On the other hand, health problems were advanced as another barrier to effective community participation in the Sanale project. The key informant for GEFSGP further noted that the area has "serious cases of HIV/AIDS and some project members are sick and some have even died". As the nature of the project involves a certain level of physical work, it means those who are sick are constrained in taking part in project activities. This shows that those infected with HIV/AIDS are stigmatized as not being able to partake of project activities once they fall sick. Thus, ill-health can shut doors for those who otherwise would want to be involved in programme activities.

One other aspect that emerged was that of technology as a barrier to effective participation. Biogas technology is a new technology and the Sanale community is a pioneer of this technology in Matabeleland province of Zimbabwe. As the key informant from GEFSGP noted, "…at first the process of technology transfer was not well handled and they were increasingly having problems in terms of the functionality of the digester". The community initially had problems with digester pipes, where initial pipes were of the wrong diameter and meant gas would not reach homesteads. This was a test of character as some project members now doubted the project. Such initial failing could have broken the hearts of many resulting in non-involvement. It could have had the same effect on potential project participants. But the desire to succeed and unity of purpose helped the group to eventually prevail. This scenario shows that technology can limit the effectiveness of participation and at the same time can lead to non-participation of those not yet involved. In the same vein, communication can be a barrier to effective participation, if the community is having problems communicating with the resource agencies either through telephone or postal services, (ibid).

The Sanale case shows that there is wide spectrum of factors that could curtail and indeed thwart the promotion of community participation. As highlighted by Botes and van Rensburg (2000:42) "such obstacles prohibiting participation abound, ranging from institutional to socio-cultural, to technical, to logistical, and are spread over a

seemingly endless spectrum". Such barriers could be external, internal or a combination of both. Botes and van Rensburg note that external obstacles refer to those factors outside the end-beneficiary community that inhibit or prevent true community participation taking place. On the other hand, internal obstacles refer to conflicting interest groups, gate-keeping by local elites, and alleged lack of public interest in becoming involved, (pg 42).

6.3 Institutions and Development

6.3.1 Assistance from Government Departments

The state through its various institutions or departments has a definite and decisive role to play in development. According to Swanepoel (2000: 87) successful development needs a firm government commitment, which means that development must be given a climate in which to grow and prosper. However, there were mixed feelings as to whether households had received assistance from government departments such as AREX and RDC for project activities. Half of the household respondents noted that they had not received any assistance from the government department, AREX, for project activities. Very few noted that they had received assistance from the RDC. Household respondents who received assistance from AREX stated that the help was mainly in the form of advisory services, such as the imparting of agricultural knowledge and, at times, the provision of seed. On the other hand, most household respondents stated that they had encountered the assistance of the RDC in project activities. The RDC provided the community with transport for ferrying material used in projects. It was also the link between the community and donors when it came to communication. The RDC also helped with input provision and grain through the food for work programme. General advisory services, such as the use of available funds and facilities, were also provided to the community. Such views were shared by the focus group whose response was that:

> "Government departments assisted with drought relief, food for work programme, liaising with donors. Local government and social welfare assists the elderly in the community. AREX officers impart knowledge on water harvesting techniques".

The key informant from IRDC also confirmed that they assisted communities in "planning and implementation of development projects and programmes". This would be achieved through establishing initial linkages between community and donors. It

was further noted by the informant that technical advice was also given to the community when it came to proposal write-up, action planning and monitoring and evaluation. This supports the sentiment raised in the literature review that local government is vital role-player in community development as it helps to increase the people's understanding and support of local development activities. This is in line with de Beer and Swanepoel (1998) view that government institutions should be seen in a supportive role. This entails that decision making is vested in the people and government institutions provide them with the necessary support to carry out their decisions successfully (ibid). However, this role is weakened by the limited funds at its disposal. Of all respondents no one highlighted financial assistance from Rural District Council that falls under the local government ministry.

Despite government departments not providing financial assistance to projects, which may be viewed by others as drivers of projects, it still plays an important facilitator role. Thus, the role of government institutions is manifested in national policy support and national planning and programming among other issues.

6.3.2 Assistance from NGOs for Project Activities

This section looks at the role of NGOs in community development. This study wanted to ascertain if any assistance was received from NGOs for project activities. It emerged that most household respondents unanimously stated that they had received financial assistance from NGOs for project activities. In other words, the projects had taken off the ground because of funding from donor NGOs. This is evidenced by the fact that the community in question first applied for a US$50 000 grant from the GEFSGP for the biogas project which was granted. It further received financial assistance from CIDA for the expansion of the project in the ward. FOS Belgium also committed funds for the implementation of the sustainable agriculture project. The invaluable financial support extended by NGOs to the community was also confirmed in the focus group. It was stated that various organizations such as Africa 2000/GEFSGP, ORAP, Zimbabwe Project Trust, World Vision International and Heifer Project had assisted the community. Most respondents also stated that they had received material assistance from various NGOs. Such assistance ranged from food to input provision such as seed. It was noted by the focus group that ORAP had started a supplementary feeding scheme in the community; Zimbabwe Project Trust had

provided seed; World Vision International had given livestock to children; Africa 2000 Network/GEFSGP had helped in the initiation of environment regeneration projects, poverty alleviation and gardening projects, fencing, farm implements and the building of the information communication centre; and Heifer Project International had provided heifers to the community. The popularity of the community with donors from my observation is due to the way it is organized. The Sanale community has an elected committee which acts as management and oversees day to day operations of their activities, they hold regular meetings where important decisions are taken and have no history of mismanagement of funds. Such factors in my opinion are pull factors for donors to assist the community. This is because donors do not want to invest where people are not organized as this would scuttle their development mandate.

Several household respondents also highlighted that they had technical assistance from NGOs in such areas as programme planning and dealing with new technology such as biogas. Other respondents also noted that they had received food relief from NGOs. The key informant for main donors operating in Sanale community confirmed such assistance to communities. As noted by the key informant from GEFSGP, Africa 2000/GEFSGP had provided technical and financial support for training and procurement of materials for the establishment of biogas digesters. The organization was even involved in sourcing funds from other people, technical backstopping and monitoring and evaluation. This was meant to empower or capacity build the community to address challenges they faced. This view was supported by the key informant for CIDA who noted that her organization was involved in the "provision of resources in areas that address environmental and food security issues in general and technical support" (Interview with Key informant 2, 2004). This study supports the assertion that NGOs contribute towards the enhancement of poor people's lives. Their work shows that they are able to promote popular participation through facilitating resource mobilization and that they broaden channels through which resources and benefits can reach groups which otherwise can be bypassed, (de Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 39). As such one can conclude that NGOs are more effective in identifying community needs because of close proximity to the community than government structures. This facilitates a fairly high level of community participation that leads to legitimacy and eventually sustainability of programmes.

6.3.3 Assistance from CBOs for Project Activities

CBOs are generally viewed as platforms through which people's participation takes place. They are also viewed as channels for government and non-government attempts at development, (de Beer and Swanepoel, 1998). They provide a basis for development "in so far as they are building an organization and bringing the community together around mutual concerns and needs", (White cited in de Beer and Swanepoel, 1998). An attempt to ascertain their role in Sanale community was done. It emerged that most households had not received any assistance from CBOs for their project activities. Some respondents even professed ignorance of their existence in their community. One respondent mentioned the Insiza AIDS Council as the only CBO in the area that had assisted in HIV/AIDS prevention. Few respondents talked of the Insiza Trust, which provided them with tanks. The focus group also noted that they had not received assistance from CBOs for project activities except for Godhlawayo AIDS Trust that was involved in home-based care, training, treatment and food provision. This shows that despite their professed importance in community development CBO's role can be insignificant or by-passed. This may be due to the fact that they have limited self-sustainability and technical capacity and lack a broad programming context, (Cernea, 1988). Further, it shows that communities can mobilize around a problem and tackle it without necessarily waiting for a community based organization to identify and mobilize them. This is shown in the Sanale community where the community formed its own development committee to further their aims without necessarily waiting to work under a CBO. This shows participation starts with the will of the people and not necessarily organizations.

6.3.4 Role of local leaders in the Project

This section looked at the contribution of traditional leadership or authority to project activities. These included chiefs, kraal heads and headmen. Murphree cited in Mamimine and Mandivengerei (2001: 2) sees traditional authority as structures of authority and power whose legitimacy is based on a shared value system and collective cohesiveness. Such legitimacy is derived from kinship and descent. Owing to this community standing, traditional leadership is bound to play a role in activities that affect their constituencies. This was confirmed by most household respondents who noted, "local leaders have a role to play especially rallying support for the projects and encouragement". In other words local leaders are viewed as encouraging

community participation. Most household respondents were also of the opinion that local leaders mobilized their communities to participate in development activities. This is achieved through convening community meetings to discuss pertinent issues in the community. If there are problems or conflicts in projects, local leaders such as chiefs or headmen come in to resolve matters. The sentiment expressed by one household respondent sums up the role of local leaders in the project. It was noted that they are involved in:

> "Encouraging the community, convening or calling of meetings, conflict resolution and physically or actively participating in projects (leading by example)".

Similar issues were raised by the key informant for donors who noted that local leaders provide support and guidance, resolve local level conflicts, create an enabling environment for operation and mobilize people to work, (Interview with Key informant 1, 2004). Such a sentiment was shared by one household respondent who highlighted that local leaders are responsible for "informing community, organizing the community and canvassing for support" of project activities. Unlike the local councilors who are elected on party lines traditional leaders such as chiefs, headmen and kraal heads are not elected office bearers. Thus, they are viewed as a uniting force as opposed to local councilors who have the potential to break the projects if they deem them politically incorrect.

This sentiment, of involvement, was also confirmed in the focus group whose main response was:

> "They arrange meetings, bless the projects, provide link with the RDC, resolve conflicts and they play a ceremonial role in communities" (pg 4).

The ceremonial aspect of local leaders' involvement was also highlighted by the key informant for donors who noted that local leaders provided moral and cultural support (Interview with Key informant 2, 2004). Though acknowledging the important role of local leaders, the key informant from IRDC moves away from the ceremonial aspect and asserts that local leaders have an important role of coordinating project implementation and management, (Interview with Key informant 3, 2004).

Even though Mamdani (1996: 18) views traditional leadership as representing some form of decentralized despotism, this study has shown that they are rallying points for developmental activities. Their blessing of projects can be an inspiration to the people to work, a major ingredient towards sustainability of programmes. Such an inspirational role is highlighted by a household respondent who noted that local leaders in the project have a role to play especially in rallying support for the project and encouragement. Once again this dissertation has shown that traditional leadership is held in high esteem in rural development. However, in my opinion traditional leaders have the potential just like local councilors to stall development if they so wish as their "subjects" are likely to follow them. Hence, a fall out between a chief and a donor can have a negative impact on project implementation. Similarly if a chief does not want a certain donor he or she can declare them *persona non grata* in their constituencies. There was no evidence of this happening in Sanale though.

6.3.5 Are local leaders beneficial or not?

All the household respondents were convinced that the involvement of local leaders to project activities was beneficial. This emanated from the fact that local leaders understand their communities better than anyone else. Hence, they are able to organize the community and at the same time foster unity of purpose among the community. In other words their involvement ensures participation of the entire community. The invaluable nature of local leadership was also emphasized in the focus group, where it was felt that:

> "...they are conveyors of information to the general public; they can mobilize people to participate in developmental projects of the community" (pg 4).

The ability to foster community participation, and unity of purpose and community organization was also emphasized by the key informant from IRDC. It was noted that:

> "It is the train head that pulls the wagons along the rail to avoid derailing. If local leadership does not support the projects, it is bound to collapse".

Thus, local leaders can set the tone for effective implementation of project activities by ensuring order, (Interview with Key informant 1, 2004). They also have the power to make or break the implementation of project activities. As noted in an interview

with the key informant from CIDA the role of local leaders is important and specific and they "should be aware, as they can support or deny their people financial and technical support from outside". They can also provide land for specific activities, (Interview with Key informant 2, 2004). Hence, this study portrays local leaders as part of community self-mobilization initiative in the sense that they lead collective action towards achieving desired goals. However, as noted by the IRDC key informant, local leaders can be a potential barrier to effective participation if they do not have a direct benefit. In my informal conversation with a local councilor, who was elected on a party ticket, he seemed to allude to political correctness of the project hence his support. During the research period, I also attended the presentation ceremony where the community was being presented with a prize for the best conservation project in the country. The local Member of Parliament was present and thanked the NGOs for heeding his and party call to help the people of Sanale. Although the fact is that when the community started the project the current MP had not been elected into office. Thus, there is a potential problem if the project is given a political tag especially one that is deemed incorrect which means there will not be the support of local leadership such as councilors and MPs. The only way for the community to go about the situation is to try to divorce the project from volatile politics of Zimbabwe.

6.3.6 Role of Project leadership

Most interviewees were unanimous in noting that project leadership is an important vehicle through which rural development goals can be achieved. Most household respondents highlighted that project leadership was responsible for providing moral support to the group, coordination of project activities, and the actual implementation of the project. In as far as moral support is concerned; the respondents felt the project leadership encouraged the community to tirelessly pull towards fulfilling project ideals. This encouragement was also meant to foster unity of purpose among project members. In as far as coordination is concerned project leaders or committee is responsible for providing clear direction and support for development efforts. This entails day-to-day running of project affairs by a chosen structure (committee), such as communicating with essential stakeholders, presiding over meetings, planning and bookkeeping. de Beer and Swanepoel's (1998: 67) view supports this finding by reporting that :

"Some NGOs which have been involved in community development for a long period have weaned a number of their projects to the extent that participants are now ably running the projects and coordinating their further development".

As a follow up to the coordination aspect, several respondents noted that project leaders or committees were also involved in the actual implementation of project activities. This is supported by one key informant for donors who stated that project leadership is part of the community to benefit or to participate (Interview with Key informant 2, 2004). On one hand, they provide strategic guidance, monitoring, mobilization and implementation of project activities, (Interview with Key informant 2, 2004). In other words, they have the important role of coordinating project implementation and management, (Interview with Key informant 3, 2004). Thus, the Sanale case shows that project leadership can have a profound influence on shaping a community's future. This is because the success or failure of a community project is often determined by the presence or absence of good leadership. The fact that the Sanale project got off the ground in 1997 and has existed to this day is an epitome of good project leadership, one that has created a conducive environment for people to speak out, take risks and run with the project.

6.3.7 Effectiveness of project leadership in achieving project goals

Most household respondents admitted that project leadership was in a better position to facilitate attainment of project goals. As noted by one household respondent, project leaders are "very effective, very efficient and adhere to strict regulations pertaining to particular programmes of action". The same sentiment was echoed in the focus group. Despite the optimism shown over the effectiveness of project leadership, several respondents noted that circumstances beyond their (project leadership) control could lead to underachievement of project goals. Issues such as lack of knowledge, limited resources, half-hearted involvement and natural calamities such as death and drought were viewed as impinging on effective attainment of project goals.

The key informant from GEFSGP supported the notion that project leaders in Sanale project are effective in meeting project goals. However, to maintain high level of effectiveness, it was noted that training and refresher courses were needed for the leadership. Further, it was suggested that new people should form committees after a

period of time so that the leadership would be continually active, (Interview with Key informant 1, 2004). On the other hand, the key informant from CIDA was cautious and did not overemphasize the effectiveness of project leadership in achieving project goals. This is because they have the power to make or break the implementation of project activities. From my observation, I deduced that there is concentration of power in the hands of few committee members who are privy to all the information. It seems they know more than the general members even though they claim there is feedback and joint decision making. Such a situation has the potential of turning project leaders into demi-gods and can potentially lead to some people not participating.

6.4 Which stakeholder best helps to undertake effective participation?

In a quest to better the living conditions of the rural dwellers, a myriad of role-players is involved in community development. This is because when community groups have gone through a process of conscientization and have organized themselves to take action to improve their lives they cannot avoid interaction with outsiders, (Burkey, 1993: 164). When asked to distinguish the role-player that effectively capacity builds them to undertake resource management and fulfill their food security needs, most household respondents were of the opinion that rural development was complex and no one stakeholder could go it alone. Therefore, stakeholders had to collaborate or compliment each other's efforts in order to thwart poverty.

One interviewee who stated that aptly expressed the view of most household respondents:

> "It is difficult to highlight a single stakeholder as they compliment one another. AREX provides advisory services, which helps one to know what they are doing because you might have capital but without this knowledge you might falter. NGOs give advice and demonstrate benefits and help financially. RDC compliments NGOs especially on transport and other facilities. Local leaders are responsible for the implementation of projects and ensuring that objectives or resolutions are achieved or adhered to".

This brings to the fore the issue of coordination and collaboration. One can view coordination in a holistic manner, which is integrating the efforts of all stakeholders to development. On one hand, coordination is based on an idea of how something can be improved if two or more organizations work together, (Lippitt and Van Til, 1981).

However, for stakeholders in community development to collaborate, there is need for a nurturing process that removes uncertainties on other parties and prepares them fully to work together.

Despite the expressed complimentary role of stakeholders, few respondents were of the opinion that NGOs provide the best tangible help compared to government institutions and CBOs. Their work is viewed as very instrumental in project identification, implementation of projects and provision of requisite funding resources. In essence, NGOs operate at the grass root level, which makes them closer to the people than Government that operates mainly at policy level. Thus, their (NGOs) funding has kick started many development projects in rural areas including the Sanale project which was granted US$50 000 to start the Biogas, Woodstoves and Gardening project. Such resource allocation plays an important and facilitatory role to communities that are mobilizing around problems. In other words, NGO funding enhances community participation if well administered. But the fact still remains that their efforts have to be complimented by other stakeholders on the ground

6.5 Are household members involved in other community organizations?

Most household respondents noted that either they or their fellow household members were involved with other organizations active in their community. The most common organizations were money saving clubs and burial societies. The former are rotating funds passed to each member every month. This is driven by the need to supplement current income activities. The large sum passed onto a member in a month enables the recipient to purchase goods in bulk. The latter is a form of community insurance that takes care of funeral expenses in such an eventuality. This entails contributing to a fund every month and is released to a member when a family member dies. Some respondents noted that their fellow household members are involved with NGOs in various activities. One respondent noted that their children had benefited through cattle sponsorship by World Vision International. The project coordinator for Sanale project noted that she is involved with World Vision International, Christian Care, supplementary feeding scheme, water and sanitation programmes run in the community. This is because she is always being approached by various NGOs due to her previous record of effectiveness and development orientation. Though it is noble for her to be involved with many agencies, this raises questions as to whether she is

the only one in the community with the capacity or capability to work with outside agencies. From observation, it seems she has grown powerful to the extent that she is the community memory. This can lead one to personalize the projects or place her in a position where fellow community members owe her for "bringing" projects to the community.

The fact that household members are involved in various activities to improve their social conditions shows the community in question is no longer a passive recipient of development. Instead, it is taking an active role in its own development. Usually for communities to take such a role, it means it would have to undergo a process of conscientization that raises awareness of their plight. Hence, the Sanale case shows that Paulo Frere's theory of conscientization offers practical look for raising the awareness of poor people and for organizing them to take control of their own affairs, (Midgley, 1995: 120). This fits into the concept of human development that stresses that human beings should be at the centre of the development process, (UNDP, 2000: 6).

This scenario shows the innovativeness of rural communities. If they can not access formal institutions such as banks and insurance companies, they come with their "informal institutions" adapted to their own situation and needs. The example of savings clubs in Sanale resolve the loan collateral and borrower information demanded by "formal institutions" by enrolling only members who have mutual confidence in each other, (Adams cited in Smets 2000: 20). Thus, trust, acquaintance and socio-cultural links are very important criteria in community development activities.

6.6 Importance of Development Projects in Rural Development

As the community action in Insiza revolved around projects, it was logical for this study to ascertain their impact on the lives of rural dwellers. All the respondents interviewed shared the notion that projects were a viable vehicle through which people in rural areas could access their basic needs. Most household respondents noted that projects had resulted in employment creation in their area. As one household respondent noted, development projects were:

> "Very important to the development of rural areas to the extent of creating employment in these areas and should continue until rural self-sufficiency is achieved. Without them rural-urban migration would intensify because through these projects, people are self-employed".

As such, it was highlighted that employment creation had brought with it benefits such as poverty reduction and self-sufficiency. In other words, projects were economically empowering to the communities involved. Economic empowerment meant the standards of living of the participants had been uplifted. This was also confirmed in the focus group discussion where the common response was "projects lead to development, life with projects is far better than life without projects".

The same sentiment was shared by the key informant from IRDC who noted that "these are the only projects that can see the nation getting out of poverty". The key informant from GEFSGP also noted that projects "help in raising the standards of living of communities".

On the other hand, the key informant from CIDA, while acknowledging that project interventions made a difference to people's lives at local level, she had a word of caution. It was noted that sustainability should be built in every project if it is to make sense or build towards rural development. This is important because if projects are to make an impact on people's lives, they should be able to exist into the foreseeable future. If the sustainability concept is missing, it means projects would be reactive rather than developmental. Hence, if projects are sustainable, it means they would be long-term (developmental) rather than short-term (relief).

Community development projects were also viewed as bringing new innovations hitherto unknown to communities. As noted by one household respondent "things previously unknown now form part of our lives, new skills are being acquired…" This view was also shared by the focus group participants. They noted that:

> "Projects bring new ideas and techniques, for example, farming of small grains and inception of biogas technology".

This meant that as a result of biogas lighting, families no longer strained their eyes from smoke and fuel wood is conserved which could contribute to reduction in global

climate change. As alluded to earlier, biogas technology was the new innovation that the community pioneered in the region, hence the reason why different communities visited the community on look and learn tours. The community had also "forgotten" about the small grains because of their persistence on maize production. This shows the innovative aspect of development, that is, development can bring with it new ways of doing things in communities. However, there is need for this innovation to be appropriate. Appropriate technology has been viewed by Burkey (1993: 198) as "technicalization at the local level built up with emphasis on the people understanding, acquiring and even improving on the technology which then becomes their own". The Sanale programme, thus, shows it has components to improve the economic and social well being of participants as it extends benefits of development to those who thrive for livelihood in rural areas.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter expressly manifests that projects in Sanale have led to full realization of human capabilities, for men and women alike. The community in question presides over their own decisions, have cultivated the right attitude to plan and work and above all have managed to take a lead in conserving their natural resources while at the same time taking care of their livelihood needs. In other words, the participation of the community in their own development has been a key factor in the success of their projects. Project success was measured in terms of the improvement of the situation of the community after the inception of projects as compared to before project inception. However, this success was made possible by stakeholders such as NGOs, Government departments, CBOs and local leaders who played a facilitator role.

Chapter Seven

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This study explored whether community participation had an impact on resource conservation and fulfillment of food security at household level. This entailed an analysis of a community that mobilized around resource conservation and fulfillment of livelihood needs. In this chapter findings are summarized and combined to form conclusive evidence. Issues emanating from these results help in drawing recommendations of the study. However, before doing this it is important to draw lessons from the Sanale project that can be used in other community development projects as success normally depends on them. This chapter was constructed following the research questions posed in chapter one. In the process the chapter pays special attention to the hypothesis and objectives of the dissertation based on study findings.

7.1 Lessons from Insiza Project that can be used in other community development projects

7.1.1 Understanding agro-ecological regions and crop suitability

Several household respondents noted that, it is key to understanding the various agro-ecological regions. Different agro-ecological regions have different climatic conditions and this call for suitable crop varieties. People in Sanale were sticking to maize despite the crop failure. However, after working with agencies such Africa 2000/GEFSGP they understood that it was not the best type for the region and switched to small grain production. As noted by one respondent, despite "...low rainfall, harvests are high due to the type of crops and knowing suitability". This was also confirmed in the focus group where respondents were of the opinion that farming of small grains and intercrops in drier areas had led to food self-sufficiency. The key informant for IRDC was also convinced that project suitability was necessary if problems affecting a particular area are to be addressed. It was thus noted "...do not facilitate a biogas project where fuel is not a problem, neither do you facilitate

establishment of irrigation schemes where natural rain can see crops harvested",
(Interview with Key informant 3, 2004).

7.1.2 Pursuing Integrated Rural Development

To achieve a more rational management of resources and thus improve the environment and livelihoods, communities should undertake an integrated and coordinated approach to their development initiatives. This is meant to ensure that development is compatible with the need to protect and improve the environment for the benefit of the locals. Concerning projects in their community, one household respondent noted that:

> "It is better to have an integrated programme, for example, cow dung (from heifer project) is used in the fields as fertilizer and this is useful to the environment as it is not harmful. This leads to a good harvest and families are fed, stalks are fed to livestock which would produce more milk and dung which would be fed into the biogas digester. The dung effluent from the digester is applied in the fields. Thus, there is integration of projects which other communities should learn".

This notion is supported by the key informant from CIDA who noted that:

> "An integrated holistic approach yields better results. There is need to link up the energy and livelihood issues to ensure sustainability".

Thus, the pursuit of a holistic approach to rural development is seen as the key lesson that other communities can consider in their various endeavors.

7.1.3 Adopting Appropriate Technology

Several household respondents highlighted that setting up alternative clean energy for the rural communities as a strategy of reducing their dependency on the forests was a key lesson for other regions to adopt. This holds true especially that there is overexploitation of natural resources mainly through anthropogenic means. This makes renewable technologies one of the best ways through which problems arising from overexploitation of resources can be mitigated. The introduction of biogas technology and wood saving stoves is a way of curbing the unsustainable utilization of the country's tropical savannah forestlands. This notion is supported by the key informant from GEFSGP who noted that:

"To address environmental challenges, there is need to provide alternatives and communities must be supported in technology transfer projects".

Although technology is now part of environmental conservation in many parts of the world there is need to be wary of certain issues. As noted by Burkey (1993: 198) there is need to understand that:

"Technology, of any kind, will only be successful if it becomes an integral part of the lives of those who are to use it. They must want it. They must see that it fulfills a need in their lives...Appropriate technology will be successful when it develops from the real needs of the people as defined by themselves".

Hence, the use of technology on a sustained basis by the Sanale community shows that technology is meeting their real needs as defined by themselves. Thus, technology transfer can only be successful where communities embrace the need to reverse environmental degradation. For maintenance and to achieve sustainability, technology projects require a lot of training for "after the donor". The Sanale project has been privileged in the sense that there has been technology transfer where locals have been trained in the construction and maintenance of biogas technology. Those trained are also training others in the community. This actually goes a long way towards the sustainability of the project after the donors.

7.1.4 Benefits of Environmental Conservation

Several household respondents expressed that environmental conservation has many benefits. By managing their environment, the Insiza community feels that they are now able to fulfill their livelihood needs. As noted in the context chapter, major environmental problems that are experienced in the country include land degradation, siltation of international rivers, and deforestation. These have had marked effects on the status of biodiversity, international waters and climate change. Hence, the key lesson is that local communities can create a clear example of managing their natural resources for their own socio-economic benefit and at the same time address global environmental impact.

7.1.5 Unity of Purpose and effective community participation

Most respondents highlighted the need to work together if anything is to be achieved in community development. This collaborative effort helps instill a sense of

cooperation, hard work, diligence, dedication and commitment to work. This unity of purpose ensures effective community participation, where people participate in joint analysis that leads to action plans and undertake initiatives independently of external institutions. As noted by the key informant from IRDC, it is important that there is:

> "Total participation in project development and implementation…Strong group or community leadership skills are a gateway to project success", (Interview with Key Informant 3, 2004).

One can argue that such unity of purpose is evident in Sanale for without it the project would have folded by now. It is that which is driving the community to achieve its goals. This view was shared by the key informant from GEFSGP who noted that:

> "If communities are given space they can produce tremendous results, hence they must be given the driving seat", (Interview with Key informant 1, 2004).

Hence, the key lesson is that communities need to work together (unity of purpose) in order to achieve effective community participation.

7.2 Summary

The study found that the Sanale community decided to come together to tackle their increasing problems relating to environmental degradation and food deficits. This was prompted, in part, by frequent failure of government interventions and that there were more benefits than costs in taking an active role in environmental management and meeting own livelihood needs. To accomplish this task, the grass root community mobilized around projects as a vehicle towards their socio-economic goals. The study revealed that the community on its own crafted a project proposal which was presented to GEFSGP for funding and technical assistance. Having secured funding and technical support, the community was involved in their own planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of project activities. Successful execution of the logical framework led to donor confidence in the group leading to further funding by other donors such as CIDA and FOS Belgium. This meant the original biogas, woodstoves and gardening project expanded, new projects such as small grains programme, irrigation project and heifer project took off the ground. This in turn meant the community was now actively tackling their own conservation and

livelihood needs. In the execution process, the community participated in joint analysis that led to action plans. In other words, the group took control over local decisions and had a stake in maintaining such practice. Such initiatives were taken independently of external institutions, though they maintained contact with external institutions for resources and technical advice they needed. Thus, the study has highlighted that participation of the rural poor in their own development is a key factor in the success of projects that in turn propels rural socio-economic upliftment. This study found that local participation in decision-making during the whole project cycle was critical to project success as it led to self-confidence, initiative, responsibility and cooperation. This supports Burkey's (1993) assertion that a process that enables people to learn to take charge of their own lives and solve their own problems is the essence of development.

Hence, the Sanale project has shown that participation goes beyond mere rhetoric whereby villagers merely participate in the labour element of project implementation or attend a few village meetings where the project is explained and people asked to give comments. Instead, participation is encouraged in all elements and levels of development work.

Participation in Sanale community was made possible by awareness or realization of the community of their plight. The community realized that resource management improves the condition of their livelihood. Non-participation was perceived as threatening to life-sustaining process. Hence, the community became aware of the need to conserve the environment for better production or to safeguard against its deterioration. This study thus shows that awareness of the situation, socio-economic reality, problems and their causes and measures to redress them is the first step towards self-transformation which is a catalyst for the improvement of rural welfare.

The study also brought to the fore the initiatives of a community bent on salvaging its fast dwindling natural resource base that led to food deficits. Although the community had tried to engage in conservation efforts, such as gully reclamation and discouraging of tree felling through imposition of fines, their efforts proved not equal to the task. The task required that they reorganized into functional groups complete with a structure. Such a structure was to craft a strategy especially when it came to

dealing with resource agencies. The community then scaled up their efforts from mere gully reclamation and discouraging of tree felling to introducing advanced technological innovations such as biogas technology and new farming ways suitable for the region. Such efforts were funded by international donors such as UNDP GEFSGP, FOS Belgium and CIDA. Project acceptance was mainly based on the fact that the community had come together and shown cooperative or collaborative spirit in working as a unit. This, indeed, proved a key factor in the quest to attain project goals. This study also revealed the importance of going beyond economic criteria which is usually the emphasis of most projects in Africa. This project took into account such factors as community organization, attitude and commitment. These factors are normally ignored in many projects and equally responsible for their failure. By taking a holistic approach this study has shown that the process of development is not only an economic enclave. Thus, the study has shown that community participation leads to sustainability of programme activities. In this instance, the programme activities at Sanale have been in existence since 1997, a clear test of time. The period has also seen changes to the natural environment and livelihood situation for the better.

The study also supported Davies et al (1991: 8) assertion that there is a food insecurity and environmental degradation nexus. This is whereby vulnerability to food insecurity means in most situations vulnerability to environmental degradation and vice versa. As such during times of food insecurity coping mechanisms hinge on natural resources outside the usual production system or alternatively on intensifying exploitation of resources habitually used (page 8). Hence, the Sanale project emphasizes that the concept of sustainable livelihood security should focus on local people's ability to act in an environmentally-sustainable way, and on removing the constraints which prevent them from taking long-term view in conserving their resource base in which it is argued that they have a vested interest for food security and other reasons (Chambers, 1988).

This study has shown that rural development is a terrain inhabited by various actors. These range from government departments, community based organizations, traditional leaders and non-governmental organizations. Some of these help rural communities in one way or the other. The Sanale community acknowledged receiving

112

support from these stakeholders. However, they claimed that NGOs provided the most critical support in project activities. Most respondents in the study were unanimous that they had taken off the ground owing to financial and technical support provided by NGOs. Such donors had gone out of their way to build the capacity of the community to manage their own funds. The community was trained in action planning which included budgeting. This meant the community was at liberty to use funds according to their logical framework or action plan. This was unlike de Beer and Swanepoel's (1998: 43) claim that provision of funds places the donor in a strong position to make certain demands, thereby removing the community's ownership or decision-making power. Instead, the project in Sanale strengthened the institutional capacity of the community to manage or control the funds. This is evidenced by a project management team which liaised with local district council and donors such that transparency and accountability were achieved. Thus, this study highlights NGOs ability to promote popular participation through facilitating resource mobilization and channels through which resources and benefits can reach groups which otherwise would be by-passed (de Beer and Swanepoel, 1998: 39). The Sanale community was fortunate in the sense that of the identified stakeholders none impacted negatively on the project. However, local leaders with political ambitions had potential to destabilize projects if they gave a wrong political tag to the project.

The study highlighted that participation in resource conservation and livelihood needs is a key to sustainability of projects. The Sanale project is heading for its tenth year owing to the fact that it accords members a chance to have a stake in the execution of project activities. In other words, it is engrained in people that the project is theirs and has to thrive for its success. As noted in the context chapter, Zimbabwe's population is concentrated in rural areas with women making up the majority. As such, any efforts to alleviate poverty should include women. This is because women are responsible for half of the world's food production and between 60% and 80% of the food in most developing countries (www.acdi-cida.gc.ca, 12/05/2005). The Sanale project recognizes the important role of women in development as it has removed barriers especially those that constrain women's participation. This is evidenced by the fact that 80% of project participants are women. In the same mould, the project has also accommodated the youth to be part of project activities. This fulfils some of the major tenets of Agenda 21 which call for strengthening the role of major groups

and combating poverty. It calls for the empowerment of communities in order to achieve sustainable development. The prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making. This includes the need for individuals, groups and organizations to participate in development and to know about and participate in decisions that affect them (www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/index.htm 12/05/2005).

7.3 Conclusion

The case study has successfully answered the research question advanced in Chapter One. In the analysis provided in chapter five, various factors that brought Sanale community together in a quest to conserve their natural resources and at the same time improve their productive capacity were explored in detail. It has been made clear that given the opportunity, local communities can be powerful forces in the defense of natural resources and meeting their livelihood needs. It has been shown that even with policies, whether state or non-state, to provide the framework for activities and institutions and rules to enable people to carry out and benefit from their livelihood strategies, efforts would come to nothing if community participation is not incorporated within the framework for sustainable livelihoods.

This dissertation has also shown that communities can effectively mobilize around a problem and turn around the situation for the better. In other words, such mobilization has acted as a powerful catalyst for community institutional development in modern rural African conditions. In Sanale management institutions have been put in place as a way of advancing community commitment to managing natural resources and at the same time improving food security at household level. Thus, it has been aptly displayed that programme management and local institutional development in Sanale are mutually reinforcive.

In a nutshell, this study has shown that interactive participation and self-mobilization of communities is a necessary ingredient for resource conservation and improvement of household food security. This is evidenced by the Sanale case where food deficits and environmental degradation were encountered but changes for the better were realized once the community came together and took active involvement in matters that affected them. Being able to work independently in decision-making but at the

same time collaborating with various stakeholders led the community to achieve their goals of environmental conservation and fulfillment of household food security. All in all, the Sanale case demonstrates that communities are an important part of the Agenda 21 equation and the Millennium Development Goals which emphasize eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and environmental sustainability among other things.

7.4 Recommendations

There is need to strengthen institutional structures, national or local, to allow full integration of environmental and developmental issues, at all levels of decision-making. In order to achieve requisite decision-making there is need to improve or develop mechanisms to facilitate the involvement of individuals, groups and organizations at all levels of decision-making.

The sustenance of the Sanale programme beyond the life of grants, such as GEFSGP and ERF, should continually preoccupy such initiatives. This is because active participation in environmental programmes fades as despondency over economic problems, such as Zimbabwe currently faces, grows.

Sustainability entails that people be empowered to participate in the decisions that affect their own development. This can start at policy level where the government should foster viable multi-stakeholder partnerships among government departments, civil society, international agencies and rural people. Such partnerships should advance creation of common programme for action, information sharing, and pilot projects that epitomize the fruits of working together.

Community participation should always be fostered in the design, implementation and evaluation of rural development programmes. In this regard, it is important that all members of the project are actively involved in project management. In other words management should not be the preserve of the project leadership.

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List of key Informant Interviews

Key Informant 1 – Key informant for Africa 2000/GEFSGP

Key Informant 2 – Key informant for CIDA

Key informant 3 – Key informant for IRDC