

## **Social Services in the Aftermath of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP): The Case of Mupfurudzi Farm (Shamva District, Zimbabwe)**

Tom Tom

*Zimbabwe Open University, Faculty of Applied Social Sciences, Department of Development Studies, National Centre, Harare*

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**Abstract:** *The impacts and outcomes of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) are varied, complex and often misunderstood due to lack of empirical studies. The researcher sought to understand the state of social services and social services needs in the aftermath of the FTLRP at Mupfurudzi farm in Shamva district. A mixed methods approach was applied and the study shows that the land beneficiaries at the farm are experiencing problems in accessing quality education, health care, transport services and potable water. The land beneficiaries are not passively experiencing these problems; they are actively responding to these problems through social organisation and agency. However, the land beneficiaries' efforts should be complemented by the other development actors. All the stakeholders on community and national development should network and collaborate on social services delivery to the new farming communities and Zimbabwe at large. Appropriate policy interventions should be informed by empirical studies.*

**Key words:** *development, land reform, agrarian reform, social services and wellbeing*

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### **I. Introduction**

The impacts and outcomes of Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform (FTLRP) are marred by misconceptions, misunderstandings and contestations. One such area is the impact of the FTLRP on social services. Social services are among the essential components of development in any country. The need for social services is universal although variations exist within and among societies. Farming communities that emerged after the Fast Track Land reform Programme (FTLRP) in Zimbabwe are not exceptions. Accordingly, evaluations of the impacts and outcomes of land and agrarian reforms should also focus on the adequacy and quality of social services in the aftermaths of the reforms.

Much of the existing literature on Zimbabwe's land reforms, particularly the Fast Track Land Reform (FTLR) does not focus on how the reforms influenced social services (such as education, health, potable water and recreation). In addition, there is scanty literature on the social services that are appropriate in supporting the land and agrarian reforms in Zimbabwe. Such knowledge gaps lead to lacunae in policy practice. There is need to address this gap and related ones to improve the overall impact and outcomes of land and agrarian reforms in Zimbabwe.

#### **1.1 Brief background to the study**

This study complements an earlier study by Tom and Mutswanga (2015) on the transformative social policy approach to the FTLRP at Mupfurudzi resettlement in Shamva district. The need to enhance the transformative role of land reforms in Zimbabwe through research-based policies is a crosscutting theme in both studies.

The need for social development occupied Zimbabwe's development agenda in both colonial and post-colonial eras. The only difference is that colonial development efforts were primarily race-based, with the whites being given core priority on participating and enjoying the benefits of development over the other races (Murisa, 2010). Accordingly, colonial social development was predominantly race and elite-biased. Based on the socialist ideology, the post-colonial government prioritised broad-based social development. People of varying race, ethnicity, gender, geographical location and other differentiating factors were in principle expected to benefit from all development efforts.

The three phases of land reform in Zimbabwe; the first Phase of Land Reform and Resettlement, Second Phase of Land Reform and Resettlement and the Fast Track Land Reform Programme are among the several initiatives targeted at reversing the colonial imbalances. The reforms were aimed at broadening social development through land and agrarian reforms as key instruments for development. These reforms were meant to decimate the asymmetrical race-based practice in social development of the colonial era. The impact and

outcomes of these reforms are varied and complex therefore cannot be easily generalised (African Institute for Agrarian Studies, 2009).

A striking argument is that the government of Zimbabwe invested more in social services in the first two phases of land reform than was done in the FTLRP phase. However, in terms of land redistribution, the FTLRP was better than the first two (Moyo, 2004). In addition, there are calls for the Zimbabwean government and other stakeholders on land reform to progressively improve social services in the aftermath of the FTLRP (Sachikonye, 2003; Sachikonye, 2005b; Ruswa, 2007; African Institute for Agrarian Studies, 2009). This background affirms the importance of land and agrarian reforms and emphasises the importance of social services in supporting the success of the reforms.

## **II. Selected Literature on Social Services and Land Reforms in Zimbabwe**

Social services are essential facilities and benefits for enhancing the social wellbeing of a community or country. These include education, health care, housing, water and sanitation (Zimbabwe Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, 2010). Within the context of this study, the wellbeing of the land beneficiaries at Mupfurudzi farm and the overall success of land reforms depend partly on the social services.

Adesina (2010) argues that a narrow view of social wellbeing places the responsibility of providing wellbeing solely on the government. However, the wider view emphasises a complementary relationship among the government, private sector, community-based organisations, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) etcetera.

Ruswa (2007: 12) explains that the government of Zimbabwe is the core actor responsible for post land, farm and beneficiary development through its various Ministries. The government of Zimbabwe performed this role in the three phases of land reform. As the key actor in national development, this responsibility is mainly resting on the government. However, given that the government has a wide array of development issues to resolve and lacks the resources to do so, the development of social services at most resettlement areas lag behind.

Jacobs (1989: 129) explains that both the first and second phases of land reforms in Zimbabwe were marked by lack of supporting infrastructure. These include clinics, shops, schools, transport networks market. This is a gap in social services delivery at the resettlement areas. The FTLRP phase was marked by the same challenges because the fast-track process did not allow for planning and implementation of social services infrastructure that is in line with the reconfiguration of the former white-owned commercial farms.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2002: 6) argues that it in the first two phases of land reform and resettlement, the construction of road networks that would adequately service the beneficiaries throughout the country was problematic. The government only managed to construct 10% of the planned roads in the resettlement schemes. In addition, the government merely managed to construct 34% of the planned blair toilets. Most of the schools that were constructed were not within walking distance for young children. Accordingly, the social wellbeing of the beneficiaries was compromised due to shortage of schools, water and sanitation services.

The setting up of a Resettlement Loan Scheme under the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) in 1981, 1983 and 1984, was meant to provide the financial resources to facilitate farm improvements and agricultural production. However, merely 60% of settlers accessed loans. Loan repayments were hampered by successive droughts, rendering the loan scheme unsustainable. Despite these challenges, some resettled families managed to invest substantially in permanent housing, production equipment, transport and land improvements (Masiwa, 2004: 94-5).

During the First Phase of Land Reform and Resettlement, the government of Zimbabwe extended its support to the new farmers through community education on conservation measures, wildlife utilisation, afforestation and reforestation programmes. Education and skills development on measures of conserving arable land and other natural resources were achieved through conservation programmes. The CAMPFIRE programme catered for sustainable wildlife use.

The Forestry Commission (FC) implemented afforestation programmes in most of the schemes. The FC provided extension services to enhance the management of natural woodland (Ruswa, 2007). Despite the challenges experienced, the government tried to provide the necessary post settlement support to the land beneficiaries. However, the initial gains of such agrarian support were hampered by fiscal constraints, subsequent droughts and lack of broad financial support from the other stakeholders.

## **III. Methodological Components of the Study**

Broadly, the three elements that informed the research framework are outlined. These are the philosophical assumptions of what constitutes knowledge claims, the strategies of inquiry (general procedures of research) and the methods (detailed procedures of data collection, analysis and writing). Flick (2006), Maxwell and Creswell (2003) are among the authorities on social sciences research.

### **3.1 Research design**

The researcher used a descriptive research design that was based on the Mupfurdzi resettlement case study. This design was based on mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative) approach. Mixing the methods has been chosen because the research problem has both qualitative and quantitative aspects. The collection of qualitative and quantitative data was done sequentially.

The researcher based the study on the assumption that collecting diverse types of data best provides an understanding of the research problem. Knowledge claims were based on pragmatism. The study began with a survey in order to generalise the results to the population. The second phase was qualitative and based on in-depth open-ended interviews to collect detailed views from participants.

### **3.2 Population and Sampling**

The 50 household land beneficiaries, 7 teachers, 1 headmaster, 2 traditional leaders, 1 district education officer, 1 District Administrator (DA), 1 district health officer, 1 official from the local District Development Fund (DDF) and 1 agricultural extension officer composed the population for the study. However, not everyone could be included for the study. Purposive and simple random sampling strategies were applied to select participants for the study. Purposive and random sampling techniques catered for the qualitative and quantitative approaches and were used sequentially.

### **3.3 Types of data and data sources**

The researcher gathered both qualitative and quantitative data in conformity with the mixed methods approach. These were in primary or secondary form. These were gathered from respondents/participants and existing publications respectively.

### **3.4 Data collection instruments and methods**

The researcher used questionnaires, in-depth interview and observation guides to gather data. These were used sequentially, with questionnaires preceding in-depth interviews and observations. Triangulation of data collection was meant to attain a comprehensive understanding of social services in the aftermath of the FTLRP and the current social services needs.

#### **i. Questionnaires**

The state of social services and community social services needs were surveyed using questionnaires. Questionnaires were designed for the District Administrator, district education and health officials and community members who are literate. Questionnaires were meant to achieve generalisability.

#### **ii. In-depth interview**

In-depth interviews were done after the administration of questionnaires. The land beneficiaries, traditional leaders, school teachers and headmaster and selected community members were the key participants for in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews were intended to create a platform for direct interaction and discussion on pertinent aspects and issues on the FTLRP and social services.

#### **iii. Observations**

Observations of social services infrastructure and activities (based on community social organisation and agency) to improve social services were done based on a flexible observation guide. Observations and interviews were done concurrently.

### **3.5 Ethical issues and considerations**

Despite the existence of ethical dilemmas in some cases, the researcher prioritised the ethics of social sciences research. The researcher provided all the pertinent information about the study to all the participants. In cases where participants requested or demanded confidentiality and privacy, these were accorded. Moreover, social, political and psychological harm were avoided. All the participants were entitled to feedback.

## **IV. Analysis**

The analysis is organised around the key themes that emerged from the data collection stage.

### **4.1 Education**

The availability, accessibility and quality of education are key factors when evaluating development programmes such as the FTLRP. Education influences the development and growth of society. Despite the

importance of education, there were no schools at Mupfurudzi farm during the era when the farm was owned by a commercial farmer. This is a critical gap in the wellbeing of the former farm and domestic workers of the white commercial farmer.

The children of black people residing at the farm accessed pre-school, primary and secondary education at schools in the surrounding communal areas that are on average thirteen (13) kilometres away. Most of the children in the school going age cannot walk on average twenty-six (26) kilometres to and from the farm. The long distances are an obstacle to accessing education.

Through social organisation and agency, the new land beneficiaries converted a farm house into classrooms. In addition, they are moulding bricks and setting aside funds for the construction of a proper school to cater for the educational needs of approximately two hundred and ten (210) school-going children. These are sound initiatives. However, they are hampered by shortage of qualified teachers due to the lack of appropriate housing, water and sanitation facilities; shortage of learning materials, competing needs to be satisfied through the sale of agricultural produce and low support from the government and development agencies. The farm has critical needs on educational infrastructure, staff and learning materials.

#### **4.2 Health care**

Access, use and quality of health care are empathised in the health policy documents of Zimbabwe and in regional and international agreements and platforms for action. Access to health care by the land beneficiaries and their families at Mupfurudzi farm is problematic due to distance restrictions. The farm is 30 kilometres away from Chidembo clinic. Bindura Provincial Hospital and Madziwa hospital are even further. The distance barrier is further compounded by lack of public transport system. This is a general problem across the farm.

However, households who managed to purchase vehicles and those who are able to hire vehicles are at a better position. Some use ox-drawn carts.

The Mupfurudzi farm community has organised itself at two levels. Firstly, the farmers help each other with transport and money to access health care for 'free', cash or in kind. Secondly, they are moulding bricks and setting aside funds after each agricultural season for purchasing building materials for a clinic. However, the fund is too low and there are no funding partners to complement the efforts of the farming community. These initiatives are evidence of social organisation and agency in the context of barriers to accessing health care.

#### **4.3 Potable water and Sanitation**

The Republic of Zimbabwe National Water Policy of 2013 emphasises universal access to portable water by all the people residing in Zimbabwe. The water infrastructure of the previous land regime is inadequate given that there are more households at the farm. In addition, the households are dispersed as opposed to the cluster settlement that was created for the farm workers of the former white commercial farmer. Most households have dug wells. In addition, all households have Blair toilets and latrines for disposing waste. However, community education to keep the wells safe is low.

#### **4.4 Roads and Transport services**

The main road linking the farm to the Bindura-Mount Darwin highway is highly degraded. The District Development Fund that serviced the road is under-resourced. Transporting farm inputs is problematic. The state of the road reduces marketing opportunities because transporting farm produce to the main markets is difficult. Large scale buyers who intend to buy at source find the farm inaccessible. The state of the road also limits potential public transport operators who may have interest in servicing the people at the farm. The farmers are maintaining the section of the road close to the farm but their capacity and resources are too low.

### **V. Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Complementing the farmers social organisation and agency**

The current social organisation and agency by the new farmers on road maintenance, health care, education provision and infrastructural development are important and should be complemented. The government, private sector, non governmental organisations, bilateral and multi-lateral organisations should complement the current efforts by providing funding, materials and technical expertise.

#### **5.2 Educational materials and staff**

Networking and collaboration are essential among the various individuals and organisations are needed in providing educational resources for the pupils and teachers. In addition, decent accommodation, reliable potable water availability and sanitation will attract teachers to the farm.

### 5.3 Mobile clinics and health promotion

There is urgent need for mobile health providers to deliver health care through mobile clinics. These are important for all the residents at the farm but more so for people with mobility challenges and children. General health care, immunisation and health care for the chronically should be catered for through mobile clinics until a clinic has been built at the farm. Health education and promotion programmes should be provided on protected wells.

## VI. Concluding Remarks

- Social services are essential in human development;
- Access to and use of quality social services are universally essential in enhancing the wellbeing of the farmers at Mupfufuruzi farm;
- Enhanced social wellbeing of the farmers partly translate into maximum contribution of farming activities to national development;
- All the stakeholders on community and national development should network and collaborate on social services delivery to the new farming communities and Zimbabwe at large.
- Appropriate policy interventions should be informed by empirical studies.

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