ABSTRACT

Development thinkers and practitioners have been pondering over community participation for the last decades. Some even called the 1980s a decade of participation in development discourse while others also view the current decade of social movements, Non-Governmental Organizations, and Community-Based Organizations as a manifestation of organized community participation. The Sangwe Communal Lands is one such area that researchers in the last decades have been pondering over the role of community participation in project sustainability. Likewise this study evaluates the effectiveness of community participation in Sangwe where it has been hypothesized that the current participation discourse has not lived up to its billing of ensuring sustainable projects. The research therefore explores some of the politics surrounding community participation in Sangwe and Zimbabwe at large. From one angle to the other, the research overviews some of the different theoretical orientations, goals, processes and practices that are commonly used but not always recognized to constitute genuine community participation. The research is intended to clarify some of the differences that emerge when projects are designed, and to stimulate discussion about community participation more generally.

This study shows that the local communities who in this case are the reason for being of NGOs and their programmes are quite critical in development projects undertaken in their own areas. This to a larger extent determines the success of development initiatives at all levels. Such a scenario calls for a proper sustainable and pro-rural community legal and policy framework as a pre-requisite for sustainable projects. The study further highlights the need for development workers and agents to change their attitude towards communities and their indigenous knowledge systems. They need to co-opt community indigenous knowledge as a system that has a unique contribution to sustainable development. Above all, attitude change is the pillar for the New World System and 21st century development paradigm that respects local values, concerns, culture, and aspirations and that these should be taken on board in the management of development programmes.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is a product of several minds. As a result the researcher would like to pass his sincere appreciation to all who helped in drafting this document. I am therefore very grateful to my heavenly father, for the courage and the strength he gave me to complete this research. I also wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Buthelezi, my supervisor, without whom this research would not have been successful. To the library staff, I say hats off to you. You have done a wonderful job by providing me with the reading material I needed at any particular time. I am also deeply indebted to Gladman Chibememe of the Chibememe Earth Healing Association for offering great support and advice where it mattered most. My friends and family, I salute you for you have stood by me during difficult times. To Easter Ndlovu, I say thank you a million times. Your encouragement was worth the cause. You were the pillar of my strength and without you this research was going to be something else. The community leaders and the locals without whom this study would not have been possible, I say thank you. Last but not least I wish to thank the discussants, my two old friends Taurai Nyemba and Blessing Zindoga for their extremely useful comments. Any remaining errors are of course mine.
DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my late brother Taurai Dzinavatonga who passed on in May 2007 in Pietermaritzburg after he was shot. He would have wanted to live to see the content of the research since he was the pillar behind me in financial terms. May his soul rest in peace.
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## ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALNP</td>
<td>Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>AREX</td>
<td>Agriculture Research and Extension Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMPFIRE</td>
<td>Community Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>DNR</td>
<td>Department of Natural Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Convention on Bio-diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBOs</td>
<td>Community Based Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHIEHA</td>
<td>Chibememe Earth Healing Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEFSGP</td>
<td>Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLTP</td>
<td>Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLTP-TFCA</td>
<td>Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park – Transfrontier Conservation Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IKS</td>
<td>Indigenous Knowledge Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITCs</td>
<td>Information Technology Centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDC</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRA</td>
<td>Participatory Rural Appraisal</td>
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<tr>
<td>RDCs</td>
<td>Rural District Councils</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAFIRE</td>
<td>Southern Alliances for Indigenous Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBNRM</td>
<td>Transboundary Natural Resources Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRANSPRORUCONET</td>
<td>Transfrontier and Protected Areas Rural Communities Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIDCOs</td>
<td>Village Development Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>WARDCOs</td>
<td>Ward Development Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSSD</td>
<td>World Summit on Sustainable Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZANUPF</td>
<td>Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)</td>
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