

# **A Comparative Analysis of the use of Participatory Practices by Indigenous Trusts and Mainstream Development NGOs in Zvimba Communal Area Zimbabwe**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

POLITICAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

at

RHODES UNIVERSITY

by

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January 2020

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis compares the extent to which participatory practices have been used by Caritas Zimbabwe, a mainstream NGO, and the Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust (ZvCSOT), an indigenous Trust, in Zvimba District, Zimbabwe. Participatory development initiatives are common practice in NGO and government development work in Zimbabwe. The thesis begins with a discussion of two aspects of participatory development (PD). Firstly, PD is discussed in relation to decentralization processes where central government transfers administrative and financial authority to sub-national government units in order to enhance the participation of rural communities in development interventions. Secondly, PD is discussed in relation to the increased role of NGOs in development work. During the 1980s and 1990s, shifts in development thinking resulted in NGOs being perceived as important actors who could attend to the development gaps left by an economically incapacitated state. Both NGOs and sub-national government units were seen to be closer to rural communities and so were thought to be in a better position to enhance the participation of these communities in meaningful development projects. An analysis of the practices of the NGO and CSOT under consideration in this study shows that while there has been much rhetorical commitment to participation, community participation in the development interventions of the NGO and the CSOT is inadequate. In introducing and implementing development interventions, there has been a tendency by both the NGO and CSOT to give priority to organizational preferences over local needs. While recognizing the participatory efforts made by mainstream development NGOs (Caritas in particular) and indigenous Trusts (Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust in particular) in Zimbabwe, this thesis also considers the impact of other factors on participatory development initiatives. A major observation from the study is that in as much as we expect genuine participatory approaches which include grassroots communities' inputs from the project's conceptualization all the way to its evaluation, the challenge is that the elites at the higher level (central government and donor offices) have their own development preferences and interests while the elites at the lower levels (local government and NGO offices) also have their own priorities and needs. Consequently, local communities tend to be confined to implementing development projects foisted on them by elites at the higher level as well as those at the lower level. Worse still, the study shows that elites at the lowest level (community) sometimes hijack or take advantage of the imposed projects. Participation has been stalled by elites at various levels of the participatory development ladder. Thus, unless power imbalances are seriously addressed at all levels, participatory development will remain elusive.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to the following people who contributed either directly or indirectly towards the completion of this thesis:

My supervisor, Professor Sally Matthews, has been amazing throughout and deserves my utmost gratitude. Her invaluable assistance, guidance, insightful thoughts, encouragement and empathy remain immeasurable. Similarly, her material and moral support is beyond any measure. In addition, her patience with all the delays in my work is very much appreciated.

Similarly, Professor Kirk Helliker, a co-supervisor with Professor Sally Matthews deserves my utmost gratitude as well. His invaluable guidance, strong academic insight, material and moral support had a huge impact on the success of this study.

Professor Louise Vincent also deserves a very special thank you. You introduced me to Doctor Sally Matthews and also encouraged me to pursue my PhD studies. I will pass your wise words to my daughter and son as they grow older.

Tarisai Nhlanhla Gurajena my research assistant, you similarly deserve a big thank you!

During fieldwork, I met many individuals, groups and organizations whose assistance remains invaluable to the completion of this work. Similarly, I made many friends and I remain greatly indebted to their contributions to this study. There still remain many more unmentioned brave women and men whose contribution is ingrained in this work. I remain greatly indebted to Mr. Percy Hove and Mrs. Sarah Hove for using their study room during the writing of this thesis.

I am greatly privileged to have wonderful friends like Doctor Desire Chiwandire, Herbert Sithole, Kudakwashe Kadzere, Doctor Paul Svongoro, Mrs. Cecilia Razemba to mention a few. Doctor Panganai Kahuni greatly assisted during the duration of the whole fieldwork by offering his Toyota 4x4 Wheel Drive as well as his driver Elvis Kanonda. To you Doc, and Elvis, I say thank you so much. My gratitude also goes to Lameck Gonzo, a true friend and brother indeed. I won't forget those sleepless nights and insightful academic bursts that left me mentally bruised. I forever remain indebted to your invaluable perceptions, opinions and brutal yet forthright criticisms during the elementary stages of this work.

My wife Rumbidzai (Makanidzana) has been a constant buddy, very understanding, a pillar of support and encouragement. The birth of our son Tanyaradzwa Mbanje on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2015 has been a great source of inspiration. Tata as we affectionately call him came 13 years later after his older sister Chiedzachashe Samantha Mbanje. I say to Chi and Tata, the pace has been set for both of you. Please follow suit! My gratitude also goes to my mother (Agnes Mudimu), brothers (Brian and Allan), sisters (Bridget and Brenda) and in-laws (Mr. Kiri and Mrs. Susan Makanidzana) for their constant prayers! This thesis is equally dedicated to the memory of my late father, Ben Berry Chengetai Mbanje, a principled trade unionist and a book worm.

Above all, I say *Matenga NgaaKudzwe!* (Glory is to Jehovah!).

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to all rural community members whose development insights, knowledge, visions, ideas, perceptions, views, opinions, preferences, needs and priorities can at times far surpass those of NGO and Government development ‘experts’.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAG	Affirmative Action Group
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANGOs	Advocacy Non-Governmental Organizations
ARDA	Agricultural and Rural Development Authority
AWC	Association of Women's Clubs
BCSOT	Bindura Community Share Ownership Trust
BUA	Bottom-Up Approach
CADEC	Catholic Development Commission
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CAMPFIRE	Community Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CBOs	Community-Based organizations
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization
CCMT	Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation
CPP	Catholic Parish Priest
CRF	Catholic Relief Services
CSOTs	Community Share Ownership Trusts
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSSD	Commission for Social Service and Development
DA	District Administrator
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DDCor	Diocese Development Coordinator

DDCom	District Development Committee
DNGO	Development Non-Governmental Organization
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
FYDP	Five Year National Development Plan
GCSOT	Gwanda Community Share Ownership Trust
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GRO	Grassroots Organization
GRSO	Grassroots Support Organization
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IBWO	Indigenous Business Women's Organization
IEEA	Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRIN Africa	Integrated Regional Information Network Africa
LTP	Long-Term Development Project
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
M-N-C-Z-CSOT	Mhondoro-Ngezi Chegutu Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust
MPs	Member of Parliament
MSOs	Membership Support Organizations
MYIEE	Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment
MYWA	Ministry of Women and Youth Affairs

NANGO	National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations
NC	National Coordinator
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NEC	National Executive Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIEEB	National Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Board
NITZ	National Investment Trust of Zimbabwe
NPA	New Policy Agenda
ORAP	Organization of Rural Associations in Progress
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PA	Provincial Administrators
PD	Participatory Development
PLA	Participatory Action and Learning
PM	Programme Manager
PO	People's Organization
PPM	Policy and Procedures Manual
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PVO Act	Private Voluntary Organizations Act
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
RDC	Rural District Council
RDDC	Rural District Council Development Committees
SEDCO	Small Enterprises Development Corporation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SNGO	Southern Non-Governmental Organization
STP	Short-Term Development Projects

TDA	Top-Down Approach
TLA	Traditional Leaders Act
TTL	Tribal Trust Land
UK	United Kingdom
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VA	Village Assembly
VIDCO	Village Development Committees
VO	Voluntary Organizations
VTC	Vocational Training Centres
WA	Ward Assembly
WADCO	Ward Development Committees
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WOA	Welfare Organization Act
WOZA	Woman of Zimbabwe Arise
YMCA	Young Men Christian Association
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZCBC	Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference
ZIMASSET	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation
ZIMPLATS	Zimbabwe Platinum
ZIMVAC	Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee
Z-MCSOT	Zimunya-Marange Community Share Ownership Trust

ZVCSOT

Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

*Who participates and how they participate, are as important to consider as whether there is participation and what kind of participation it is. Just saying that there was participation tells us little. We need to know who participated and how (Uphoff, 1998:443).*

### 1.1 Introduction

Academically, my strength has always been in political science and international relations. The idea of treading in an area (participatory development) not familiar to me was as a result of two somewhat related events. Firstly, in October 2012 when accompanying my wife's uncle to collect government-donated maize seed and fertilizer at Shinja Business Centre in Chimanimani District, I came across community members who also wanted to collect the same government provisions. As we sat under the huge baobab tree waiting for the government distributions a very interesting conversation came up which was to later influence my interest in participatory development approaches. The discussion was on NGO and local government (Rural District Council) development projects. During the debate, both men and women complained about lack of consultations regarding the interventions. An elderly woman around her late sixties blamed the village head (who was also present) for failing to tell Rural District Council (RDC) and NGO officials to first consult community members on development priorities. Avoiding eye contact with the village head she said, 'The borehole which the NGO drilled is quite far from our village. Who can walk that long distance? We would rather congregate at the old borehole'. A man I assumed to be in his early forties complained about top-down development interventions carried out by both the RDC and NGOs in the area. The chance occurrence of hearing what this group of community members felt about development interventions in their area made me realize the importance of community involvement in decision-making processes on development interventions.

The second incident that sparked my interest was an article in the *NewsDay* newspaper of 29 November 2012 where Obey Manayiti, a Business Reporter, indicated that 20 villagers in Marange rural area were demanding to know why they were not being consulted on affairs of the Marange-Zimunya Community Share Ownership Trust. One community member who was quoted in the newspaper stressed that:

There are a lot of unexplained issues in that Trust. Since its launch, not even a single meeting was called to discuss the way forward. Almost three quarters of boreholes in my area are down and we are struggling to raise funds to rehabilitate them. Only if we knew the people to approach concerning the Trust, probably we could have accessed funds to develop our community (Manayiti, 2012).

In the Marange case, community members were never consulted concerning the operations of the Trust and how they could also benefit from it through meaningful development interventions.

This thesis is therefore inspired by two events which happened in two different localities, but which share a similarity in the way in which participatory approaches were undermined. The two events reflect my keen interest in the discourse on participatory development especially in relation to how NGOs and central and local government in Zimbabwe really operate in rural areas in terms of community development initiatives. This gap needs to be filled by comparing the participatory approaches used by both an indigenous Trust and a mainstream development NGO.

In this thesis, I provide a comparison of an indigenous Trust and a mainstream NGO in Zvimba, with the aim of determining similarities and differences between the ways in which the two make use of participatory practices. Community Share Ownership Trusts (CSOTs) are being touted as more participatory and ‘bottom-up’ than NGOs and the study will help us get a better sense of whether such claims are being borne out in the Zvimba Trust. While some media sources have refuted such claims, other media sources as well as some academic literature suggests that they have indeed been participatory. Given that the Trusts are new and are part of the indigenization programme which is intended to promote the livelihoods of ordinary Zimbabweans, it is important to get a clear sense of how these Trusts operate on the ground. I also want to explore the nature of decision-making in the Trust and NGO to better understand the way in which participation happens on the ground in Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwean government has over the years developed an anti-NGO stance (discussed in Chapter 4) and this has given it confidence to believe that CSOTs are better equipped to empower rural communities (discussed in Chapter 6). This study seeks to find out whether we can indeed expect the Trusts to behave in a way that is more empowering than standard NGO practice or whether the rhetoric about the Trusts is not reflected in the reality of their everyday functioning. This is important for thinking about how best to promote participatory development in Zimbabwe and for assessing the Zimbabwean government’s general indigenisation policy.

In Zimbabwe, there is abundant contemporary literature about CSOTs (for example Mawowa, 2013; Mabhena and Moyo, 2014; Tshuma, 2015; Warikandwa and Osode, 2017) and NGOs (for example Knight, 2013; Tanga and Mundau, 2014; Wash Connector Newsletter, 2016). Interestingly, none of these authors provide a comparative analysis of both NGO and CSOT development interventions. In Zimbabwe, contemporary studies on NGOs and CSOTs have been undertaken as unconnected areas of academic analysis. No attempts have yet been made to undertake a comprehensive comparative study of both CSOTs and NGOs in terms of their participatory practices.

This study is therefore needed due to this lack of comparative literature on participatory practices in CSOTs and NGOs in Zimbabwe. By identifying and assessing how decisions are made in line with the development priorities, needs and interests of the rural communities, this study attempts to overcome the current lack of a critical and vigorous comparative analysis of participatory decision-making processes in indigenous Trusts and mainstream development NGOs.

In Zimbabwe, NGOs are recognized for the important role they play in development initiatives (Tanga and Mundau, 2014). Moyo *et al.* (2000: xii) concur that the role of NGOs in national development cannot be brushed aside. Bornstein (2005:5) emphasizes that most NGOs have performed much of the work that a radically downsized Zimbabwean state could no longer accomplish.

The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) has promulgated some legislative regulations aimed at fostering the participation of the rural grassroots in development interventions (discussed in Chapter 3). One way of doing this has been through the establishment of CSOTs in various rural districts in Zimbabwe (an area to be extensively covered in Chapter 5). In 2011, the GoZ mandated the Ministry of Youth, Indigenization and Economic Empowerment (MYIEE), now the Ministry of Women and Youth Affairs, to actively participate in the setting up of Community Share Ownership Trusts (CSOTs). It is important to note that on 30 November 2017 the new ZANU PF President, Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, merged line government ministries which had functional duplications. This saw the Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment (MYIEE) and the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development merge to form the Ministry of Women and Youth Affairs. This was done in order to reduce the number of government ministries from 26 to 22. However, for the

purpose of this thesis, I will retain the name MYIEE since the study was carried out during the time of this ministry. It is noteworthy that the new Ministry will incorporate the previous functions of the former two ministries with a special bias towards indigenisation and the empowerment of women and youth. The main objective of CSOTs was to reinforce the role of communities in economic development by enabling them to make decisions on their development priorities (Ankomah, 2013:42).

According to Mabhena and Moyo (2014:73) ‘the CSOTs were launched by the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) in order to empower indigenous Zimbabweans and to address imbalances spawned by colonial dispossession’. Under CSOTs, it is believed that development projects are decided by the local communities thus challenging the advantages mainstream NGOs used to enjoy in rural communities (Guvamatanga, 2013:10). The purported rhetoric that underlies the claims being made about the centrality of grassroots participation in CSOTs is discussed at length in Chapter 5.

The Zvimba CSOT is not the only scheme in Zvimba which emphasizes participation. Local NGOs also claim to promote participatory development and these include Caritas Zimbabwe which has been assisting 220 Zimbabwean communities found in various districts (Zvimba included) that live in marginalized rural areas through programmes and projects that are designed and geared towards meeting the needs of concerned communities that are left behind in development initiatives (Jerie 2010). In Chapter 7, I highlight such claims in detail.

## **1.2 Context of the study**

Robert Chambers’ work in the 1980s made a huge impact on participatory development (PD) approaches. His Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) employed ‘techniques used to mobilize local knowledge in the conduct of development programmes’ as well as to mobilize ‘indigenous capacities for self-management of development projects’ (Williams 2004:557). These issues are further explored in Chapter 2. PD has been associated with local NGOs (Parfitt, 2004:540), foreign development agencies (Cornwall and Pratt, 2011:263) and with governments (Chhotray, 2004:328). Governments and NGOs both have roles in promoting participation though the evidence for who is better is patchy, but ‘the widespread belief is that NGOs are’ (Shepherd, 1998:183). Atack (1999:860) adds that ‘NGOs possess development capacities and capabilities that states and governments lack’.

Participation first caught the attention of mainstream development agencies, grappling with how to make their interventions more effective, in the mid-1970s (Willis, 2011). While many writers emphasize the importance of participation to development, some authors criticize participation for being illusory rather than real (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Mosse, 2005). The very act of being drawn in as a participant can be an exercise of power and control over an individual. It is therefore important to ‘specify who is participating in what and why’ (Edwards, 1989:126). Uphoff (1998:443) argues that, ‘who participates and how they participate, are as important to consider as whether there is participation and what kind of participation it is’. According to Kothari (2005:441), the process of participation is also not as transparent as it may seem.

Literature on PD shows that particular projects undertaken in rural communities have not always been a high priority for the village, but have often been carried out at the suggestion of an NGO (Mohan, 2001; Kothari, 2001; Mosse, 2005). This type of participation is referred to as top-down. Crewe and Harrison (1998:69) note that ‘local organizations which work with donors are treated as passive recipients who are unable to manage their own affairs’. This view is supported by Mosse (2005:15) who also observes that project designs are ‘shaped by the interests and priorities of agencies’. According to Chambers (2008), the top-down approach (TDA) is a way of imposing one’s reality on others. Freire’s (1972:73) banking concept of education where ‘the teacher chooses the programme content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it’ clearly captures some pertinent qualities of the TDA. Under the TDA, decision making and prioritization of development projects and programmes is initiated by outside experts (Mosse, 2005; Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Adler, 2012; Craig, 2007).

Bottom-up participation extends the participatory process by recognizing the important role played by the locals in decision-making processes. This alternative approach assumes that the process to restore community capacities is collective and bottom-up, guided by holistic principles residing in the communities’ own practices (Adler 2012). The main focus of this approach is on community-initiated projects that centre on local voices or decisions rather than on projects brought from the outside (Mansuri and Rao, 2013; Cooke and Kothari, 2001). Datta (2003) is of the view that people ought not to simply participate in development projects for the sake of participation; rather, they must have control in the process, decisions and follow-up.

The dominance of participatory development thinking in development discourse has resulted in policy shifts in both NGO and government development plans. Furthermore, as noted by Long (2001:4) and Todaro and Smith (2012), powerful institutions like the World Bank also now include bottom-up participation in their development interventions. It is against this background, that Caritas and the Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust (ZvCSOT) claim to carry out needs assessments or baseline surveys where the grassroots are given the chance to decide on their own development initiatives.

Zimbabwe's population is still predominantly communal with the last census carried out in 2013 showing that around two thirds of the population lives in communal areas. I leave a more detailed analysis of Zimbabwe's communal areas to Chapter 3, but will note at this point that most communal areas experience widespread poverty. The majority of those in communal areas live on less than a dollar a day (Walsh, 2016). Communal areas have remained highly under-developed constituencies where poverty is rife. However, poverty is now pervasive across Zimbabwe as urban areas now also experience high levels of poverty.

The root causes of rural poverty in Zimbabwe among many other factors can also be traced back to the pre-independence period when the colonial government came up with the Land Apportionment Act in 1930 (Moyo and Yeros, 2004; Herbst, 2002; Malaba, 1980). The Act legalized the division of the country's land into European land and native reserves commonly known as Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) for Africans (Herbst, 2002; Malaba, 1980). During this period, 50.8 % of the total land was declared 'European' while only 30% was reserved for the black population (Herbst, 2002). The remaining percentage was kept for national parks, forestry and state land.

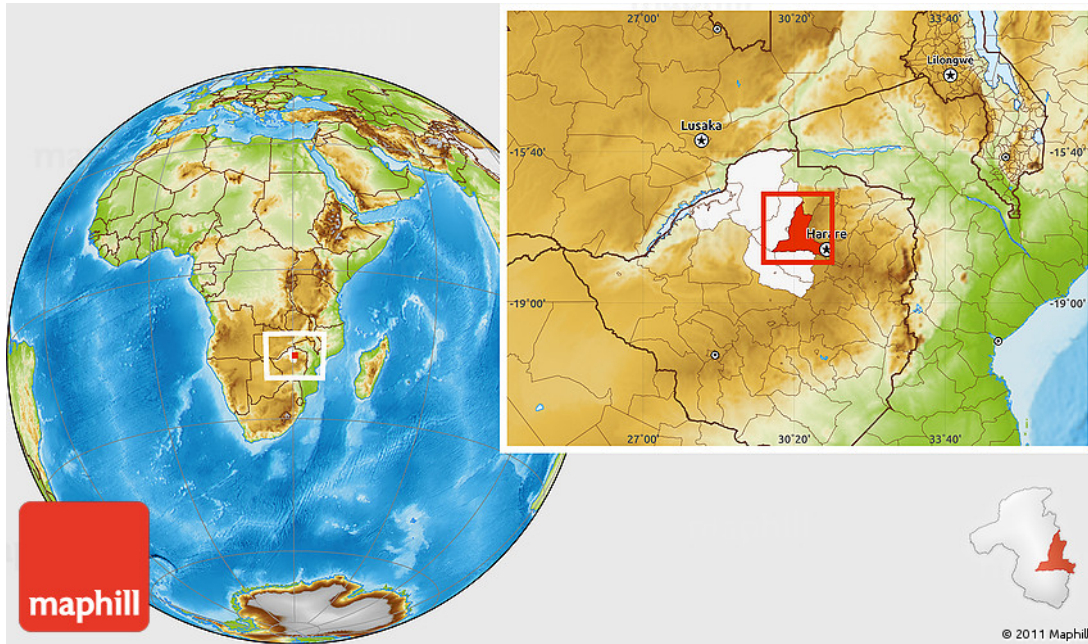
A high percentage of Zimbabwe's communal population depends on agriculture which is rain-fed while a small percentage relies on irrigation schemes. In the event of a drought, peasants' ability to cope with such adversity is over-stretched thus leaving them vulnerable. Droughts have become a recurrent phenomenon in Zimbabwe (1982-83, 1987, 1991-92, 1994, 2008, 2015-16) because of the changing climatic conditions and those who have been particularly hard hit by such occurrences have been the rural communities. In such dire circumstances NGOs, International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and other donors have given support to the government in terms of relief aid or development assistance.

Based on the last population census carried out in 2012, Zimbabwe's communal population has continued to increase despite the migrations to urban areas. The growing numbers of communal inhabitants earn their livelihoods on land. The food consumed by most communal households has been seen to be unbalanced with a clear dominance of carbohydrates at the expense of protein rich foods (Zim-VAC, 2013:146). Cases of malnutrition have been recorded in some Zimbabwean communal districts. It has also been noted that only 33% of communal households have access to improved sanitation facilities (Zim-VAC, 2013:145). The nature of poverty and the degree to which it has grown has been a major reason why relief and development NGOs have had a heavy presence in most of Zimbabwe's communal areas.

Some of the key development priorities which communities in communal areas believe can uplift them from poverty as recorded in the Zim-VAC (2013:142) *Rural Livelihoods Assessment Report* include community gardens, livestock restocking, increased grazing areas, provision of agriculture inputs and implements, income-generating projects, irrigation, and improvement of water and sanitation facilities. High levels of poverty among communal constituencies, worsened by a poorly performing Zimbabwean economy, coupled by the failure of both central and local government to meet the basic needs of communal constituencies, have been to a large extent the major reason why both NGOs and CSOTs have tried to expand development opportunities to these vulnerable communities.

This thesis is based on intensive and investigative field work in Zvimba District situated approximately 115 kilometres west of the Zimbabwean capital Harare (see map below) and is part of a communal area. The District is one of 60 rural districts found in Zimbabwe. Located in Mashonaland West Province, it comprises 35 administrative wards and a total of 54 villages. The District is made up of four constituencies namely Zvimba North, Zvimba South, Zvimba West and Zvimba East. These four constituencies are beneficiaries of the ZvCSOT and of the NGO Caritas.

**Figure 1: Zimbabwe map locating the study area**



**Source: Maphill 2011**

In relation to the research sites and organizations selected in this study, I used purposive sampling (discussed in detail in a section below). The major criterion for choosing Zvimba as my area for investigation is that it has both a long-standing NGO and a relatively long-standing CSOT. This makes the district quite relevant and appropriate for a comparative study. It is among the first three districts to benefit from the disbursement of funds to CSOTs. It is noteworthy that Zimbabwe Platinum (Zimplats), a South African mining company, was the first in Zimbabwe to officially launch a Community Share Ownership Trust through the founding of the Mhondoro-Ngezi-Chegutu-Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust (M-NCZCSOT) on October 13, 2011 (Kasukuwere, 2012; Mabhena and Moyo, 2014; Matsa and Masimbati, 2014:152). Unlike other districts which have also received such funds, Zvimba has already made some progress in using the revenue for community development projects such as the construction of clinics, schools, dip tanks, bridges, drilling of boreholes and so on. The Zvimba district also has quite a number of well-established mainstream development NGOs which include Christian Care, Catholic Relief Services, Caritas and Red Cross among others. This thesis will focus on Caritas, a Roman Catholic NGO, which runs various development projects in the area.



### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The major objective of the thesis is to provide a comparative analysis of the participatory practices used by the Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust (ZvCSOT) and Caritas, a mainstream NGO in Zvimba Rural Community, Zimbabwe. To achieve the above objective, I will be guided by the following subsidiary objectives:

- To examine the participatory discourses and practices of the Trust and the NGO.
- To examine the organizational structures of the Trust and the mainstream NGO to see whether they influence the adoption of either a top-down or bottom-up model.
- To determine the influence of donors/government on the development projects of the NGO/ Trust.

I address these subsidiary objectives through a detailed analysis of how NGOs and CSOTs in general, and Caritas and Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust (ZvCSOT) in particular, carry out needs assessments and decision-making processes within their organizational structures. I also examine the influence central and sub-national government units have on ZvCSOT's development projects and, similarly, I analyse the influence donors have on Caritas' development interventions.

### **1.4 Significance of study**

As evident from the above background, the calls made by some development commentators have been for the prioritisation of local views, opinions and interpretations on how best development interventions should be undertaken. In other words, it is now widely believed that the grassroots need to be consulted on how best they can be helped.

This thesis compares the use of participatory methods by a non-state actor (an NGO) and a state actor (an indigenous Trust) in order to determine which promotes the most broad-based, participatory and inclusive development initiatives. This is in light of the introduction of Community Share Ownership Trusts (CSOTs) in Zimbabwe's rural districts and claims by their architects that these Trusts are more participatory than NGOs. The architects of CSOTs are not just presenting them as an alternative to NGOs, but as an improvement upon them. These claims have been a direct challenge to the dominance of Zimbabwean NGOs regarding participatory rural development.

The thesis has broader significance by way of a comparative analysis of state-led and NGO-led participatory development. Thus, any far-reaching understanding of participatory

development approaches in Zimbabwe, requires scholars and development agencies alike to broaden their focus by carrying out comparative studies between state and non-state actors in terms of grassroots participation in development interventions. This thesis is quite important in that regard as it gives a comparative analysis of the participatory approaches used by an indigenous Trust and a mainstream NGO which is lacking in contemporary Zimbabwean literature on NGOs and CSOTs.

The Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust (ZvCSOT) and Caritas are particularly attractive case studies for someone interested in the various contradictions between discourse and practice. The architects of the indigenous Trusts and those who are within the national and international organizational structures of the Caritas network have made claims of being participatory. I highlight these claims in Chapters 5 and 7. This makes the activities of the indigenous Trust and the mainstream NGO relevant as a comparative study. Many of the claims made by both Caritas and the architects of CSOTs seem to echo the views expressed by participatory development theorists. Moreover, their insistence on empowerment, people's own development, ownership, needs assessments, baseline surveys and participation in general have been partly motivated by a desire to respond to participatory development concerns. Therefore, the study is justified because the CSOTs are new and are claiming to be more participatory than NGOs, but this claim has been questioned. Both CSOTs and NGOs claim to be participatory and it is important to investigate these claims.

## **1.5 Research methodology**

In order to make sense of the world, society, and human behavior, there are different approaches used by social researchers to perceive and interpret social reality. This concerns ontological and epistemological principles regarding social inquiry (Barron, 2006). Ontology is viewed to be 'about the theory of social entities and is concerned with what there exists to be investigated' (Walliman, 2006:15). In other words, it focuses on 'the way the social world is seen to be and what can be assumed about the nature and reality of the social phenomena that make up the social world' (Matthews and Ross, 2010:142).

The ontological debate centres on two contrasting perspectives namely objectivism and constructivism (Matthews and Ross, 2010; Walliman, 2006; Barron, 2006) and these ideas are also referred to as the realist and nominalist ontological divide (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Ontological questions on social reality are therefore conceptualized quite differently by those

who subscribe to the objectivist/realist (objective) approach and those who subscribe to the constructivist/nominalist (subjective) schools of thought.

For the objectivist/realist social researcher, the world is knowable as it truly is (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). This implies that ‘the social phenomena that make up our social world have an existence of their own, apart from and independent of the social actors (humans) who are involved’ (Matthews and Ross, 2010:25-26). In other words, ‘social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is not dependent on social actors’ (Walliman, 2006:15). Thus, social phenomena have a reality of their own which is not determined or created by social actors. Burrell and Morgan (1979) further stress that objectivists/realists consider reality to be of an objective nature and that it is out there in the universe we live in. As such, the objectivist/realist perceives the social world as having an existence which is equally as hard and concrete as the natural world. This implies that the researcher’s relationship to the social world as well as the social phenomenon being studied is supposed to be based on objective observations which can be scientifically measured or statistically analysed (Matthews and Ross, 2010). As will be discussed below, the objectivist/realist approach to ontology is supported by a positivist epistemology.

Social researchers who subscribe to the constructivist/nominalist (subjective) ontology, believe that the social world or social phenomenon can best be understood through meanings ascribed to them by individuals (Matthews and Ross, 2010). This implies that the reality to be investigated is created through individual awareness which is subjective and this makes social phenomenon a creation of an individual’s cognizance (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). In other words, social phenomena making up the social world are perceived quite differently by individual actors (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). In this regard, though the world is very real, ‘we can only experience it personally through our perceptions which are influenced by our preconceptions and beliefs; we are not neutral, disembodied observers’ (Walliman, 2006:37). As such, the constructivist/nominalist researcher is ‘guided by the desire to investigate the differing ways in which social actors are constantly interpreting the social world from their own particular perspective’ (Barron, 2006:2002). This implies that social reality is understood to be perceived in a more personal and subjective way. As will be discussed below, the constructivist/nominalist (subjective) approach to ontology is supported by an interpretivist/anti-positivist epistemology.

Closely linked to ontological issues are epistemological concerns. Epistemology refers to ‘the theory of knowledge and how we know things’ (Matthews and Ross, 2010:18). It focuses on

how one can have knowledge of truth or reality (Sumner, 2006). The main argument is on whether knowledge can be acquired (objective school) or whether it can be personally experienced (subjective school) (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). As such, the epistemological debate is based on two opposing views namely positivism and anti-positivism/interpretivism (Matthews and Ross, 2010; Walliman, 2006; Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

Positivism is premised on the idea that ‘knowledge of a social phenomenon is based on what can be observed and recorded rather than subjective understandings’ (Matthews and Ross, 2010: 27). This implies that a positivist researcher believes that the social world and social phenomenon ‘can be objectively and scientifically measured in much the same way as the subject matter of the natural sciences’ (McNeill and Chapman, 2005:16). The researcher has to understand the social world and social phenomenon from the outside. Such a position resembles natural science where the behaviour of animals, plants and chemical components are studied in their natural setting/form.

In this regard, Matthews and Ross, (2010) summarize the positivist approach as involving the following: the collection of quantitative data; the measurement of some aspect of the social world or social phenomenon; an attempt to determine the underlying relationships between some aspects of the social world; and the widespread use of large data arrangements and statistical analysis. In other words, positivists rely on quantitative techniques of ‘collecting data that is numerically based and amenable to such analytical methods as statistical correlations, often in relation to hypothesis testing’ (Walliman, 2006:37). Data is collected to test a hypothesis emanating from existing theory (Matthews and Ross, 2010). The researcher is expected to be objective and to have no influence or control on the data (Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

Interpretivism/anti-positivism, on the other hand, ‘prioritises people’s subjective interpretations and understandings of social phenomena and their own actions’ (Matthews and Ross, 2010:28). This implies that for one to have a deeper understanding of the social world one has to obtain first-hand information directly from the individual(s) being investigated. Thus, Matthews and Ross (2010:28) characterize the interpretivist/anti-positivist approach as comprising of the following: the collection of qualitative data which is ‘rich in detail and description’ and the interpretation of subjective meanings within a given context. In other words, interpretivism/anti-positivism mainly relies on qualitative techniques which focus ‘more on language and the interpretation of its meaning, so data collection methods tend to involve close

human involvement and a creative process of theory development rather than testing' (Walliman, 2006:37).

The interpretivists/anti-positivists' approach to knowledge emphasises individuals' own interpretations and understandings of the social world (Matthews and Ross, 2010). Individuals are considered to be very conscious of what goes on around them and they are quite capable of making their own choices (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The researcher can have deeper knowledge of social phenomena by occupying the frame of reference of the individuals in action (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Thus, data is mainly collected in order to come up with a theory (Sumner, 2006).

The above ontological and epistemological approaches inform a researcher's style of research and methodology. The selection of the research problem, the designing of the research questions to be answered, the methodology or methodologies which will guide the research study as well as the type of data sought, are all influenced by the ontological and epistemological viewpoint held. As such, depending on the ontological and epistemological views of the researcher, the methodology used can either focus on quantitative or qualitative techniques or a mixture of both techniques.

My study is a qualitative one that uses an interpretivist/anti-positivist approach through the collection of detailed, descriptive accounts of the participatory practices of an indigenous trust and a mainstream NGO. In order to understand how the trust and NGO operate, I conducted in-depth interviews and focus discussions and supplemented these with observation and collection of documentary evidence.

The research design for this study is a comparative case study. It takes a comparative approach by selecting two different organizations, a mainstream NGO and an indigenous Trust with the aim of determining differences between the ways in which the two make use of participatory practices. Yin (2009:32) defines 'a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident'. The main focus of a case study is on events, activities or processes as they happen in a given environment. In relation to organizations:

Case study researchers aim to identify ... or attempt to identify the various interactive processes at work, to show how they affect the implementation of systems and influence the way an organization functions (Bell, 2005:10).

In this study, both the indigenous Trust and a mainstream NGO claim that their development interventions are participatory. However, it remains to be seen whether the claims made by these two entities match the real situation on the ground. This study relies on multiple sources of evidence, for Yin (2009) argues that, in a case study, many sources of evidence should be used with a goal of converging the data through triangulation.

Case study findings have been criticized for their difficulty in generalizing as well as for not being widely applicable to other settings or backgrounds. Yin (2009) argues that there is a difference between statistical generalizations and analytical generalizations. Statistical generalizations are 'based on drawing logical inferences from a sample of cases to a specified population' (Blatter, 2008:69). It concerns bringing out the relationships between the particular case and the general population. In this regard, rational conclusions about an identified population are said to be drawn by relying on a selected sample (of the population). This specifically applies in quantitative case studies. Regarding analytic generalizations, they are 'characterized by drawing interpretive inferences from a variety of observable objects to meaningful abstract concepts' (Blatter, 2008:69). Here, the researcher's focus is on understanding a situation through various perceptions or practices and then linking that understanding with studies which are more or less similar to the one being undertaken. Analytic generalizations aim at 'narrowing the gap between concrete observations and abstract meanings using interpretive techniques' (Blatter, 2008:69). Analytic generalizations mainly apply in qualitative case studies since 'qualitative data ... cannot be accurately measured and counted, and are generally expressed in words rather than numbers' (Walliman, 2006:212).

In analytic generalizations, the researcher gathers the subjective opinions, perceptions and practices of participants with regard to what is going on concerning a specific programme or intervention. These opinions, perceptions and practices can best be understood by relating them to other cases with similar circumstances to the case under study. Case study researchers examine data within a small geographical area or with a very limited number of people who are well versed with what will be going on (Zainal, 2007). What is important to consider regarding case studies is that if they 'are carried out systematically and critically ..., if they are relatable, and if by publication of the findings they extend the boundaries of existing knowledge, then they are valid forms of ... research' (Bassey, 1981:86). Ignored by some researchers is also a

‘possibility that, case studies can offer important evidence to complement some other studies’ (Yin, 2009:32) which this study attempts to do.

Walliman (2006:46) emphasizes that ‘both quantitative and qualitative methods are appropriate for case study designs’. In this thesis I use a qualitative research method for my case study. According to Creswell (2014), Yin (2009), Patton (2002) and many other scholars, qualitative research encompasses several approaches to research that are quite different from one another, yet all qualitative approaches have two things in common (which could be equally claimed to be also found in quantitative studies). Firstly, they focus on phenomena that occur in a natural setting, that is, in the real world. Second they involve studying the phenomena in all their complexity. Thus the qualitative research process includes the rigorous collection of numerous forms of data through in-depth interviews, observations, group discussions, documentary evidence and so on. This will lead to an explanation of the views of participants by ‘building composite accounts of the process based on data from triangulation’ (Woodside, 2010:8).

Basically, qualitative researchers seek to understand the phenomena being examined as ‘they use all the senses noticing what is seen, heard, smelled, tasted, or touched. The researcher becomes an instrument that absorbs all sources of information’ (Neuman, 2007:292). This implies that the researcher should have a ‘deep understanding of the actors, interactions, sentiments, and behaviors occurring for a specific process through time’ (Woodside, 2010:6). In this study, qualitative research attempts to understand the reality on the ground by giving the divergent views of respondents interviewed (formally and informally) *vis-a-vis* the participatory approaches used by ZvCSOT and Caritas.

## **1.6 Research Process**

Aware that one cannot simply carry out research in any District in Zimbabwe without first informing the responsible authorities of one’s intentions, I first had to get a letter from the respective Ministry (former Ministry of Youth, Indigenization and Economic Empowerment) in order to authorize me to carry out the research in Zvimba District without any hindrance. This authorization enabled me to carry out my interviews and also to take photographs of sites or locations I thought would be of relevance to this research (see Appendix 1 for the letter of approval to carry out research on CSOTs). Before I started collecting data, I made appointments with some respondents. These included officers within the MYIEE, National Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Board (NIEEB), local government and the District Administrator as

well as Caritas officials at the national and district level. In Zvimba I engaged with Caritas volunteers, Catholic parishioners, village heads, councillors, ZANU PF youths, former Board members of the Trust and many other individuals and groups who were more than willing to assist me in carrying out my field work. In some of the subsequent paragraphs I will explain briefly how I managed to enter into, and negotiate, the field.

I used the following sources to collect data: interviews, focus group discussions, observations and documents. It is sometimes said that case study research is based on subjective judgments. The argument is that in qualitative case studies the researcher largely relies on participants' 'subjective understandings, feelings, opinions and beliefs' (Matthews and Ross, 2010:142). This implies that the researcher interprets meaning based on 'participants' self-perceptions of their own thinking processes, intentions, and contextual influences' (Woodside, 2010:1). This concern can be resolved by having multiple sources of evidence to provide converging lines of inquiry that could then be taken as reliable. Patton (2002) notes that strict and rigid adherence to a single method when doing fieldwork 'become[s] like confinement in a cage'. By implementing different methods of data collection, my intention was to increase the authenticity of facts gathered, since the different methods would complement each other (Mertens, 1998, Bell 2005). Furthermore, any findings or conclusions from this research can only be valid, convincing and accurate if they are based on several sources of information and have therefore been triangulated (Ary *et al.*, 2006).

According to Creswell (2009:191) 'validity ... is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account'. Some researchers fall in the trap of largely selecting information that fits into their preconceived ideas and others tend to magnify data that interests them while ignoring information that opposes their views. Creswell (2009:192) emphasizes that researchers are supposed to 'present information that contradicts the general perspective of the theme. By presenting this contradictory evidence, the account becomes more realistic and hence valid'. Research work should symbolise the various views gathered during field work. In this study, divergent views are presented in order to capture the contradictory claims made by some respondents. Cohen *et al.* suggest that:



... qualitative data validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:131).

In this study, themes were identified by considering the various views presented in the data. Similarly, as a way of improving on the validity of the study, I used the triangulation method where I collected my data using various methods (interviews, focus group discussions, observations and documents). In paragraphs below I explain the strength and weaknesses of each of the data collection methods which I used as well as discussing how these methods helped complement each other in strengthening the data collected as well as in addressing the objectives of my research.

Regarding the sampling of participants for the study, I used purposive sampling. With purposive sampling, there is a desire for in-depth understanding of a case and this leads to the selection of individuals who can provide rich information about ‘issues of central importance to the purpose of the research’ (Patton, 2002:46) or ‘individuals who will best help [the researcher] understand the research problem and the research questions’ (Creswell, 2014:294). This view is supported by Cohen *et al.* (2007:116) as they stress that in this type of sampling, ‘researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought’. I used purposive sampling in identifying people who, because of their experience or contacts, had special insights into this study.

This study also makes extensive use of snowball sampling where the researcher after identifying some respondents is also assisted by these respondents to get ‘in touch with, others who qualify for inclusion and these, in turn, identify yet others’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:114). This type of sampling became a possibility after I was referred to other CSOT respondents in Chegutu, by a NIEEB official in Harare. A village head also referred me to some ZANU PF youths and so on. I highlight these issues in detail in the section on data collection.

When I started my fieldwork in September 2016 (following the dictates of purposive sampling), the first groups of interviewees whom I targeted were officials from the Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment (MYIEE), the National Youth Council, and the National Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Board (NIEEB). These government offices had a direct link to CSOTs. The second group of respondents were Caritas officials both at the Harare national office and the Caritas Chinhoyi Diocese. These were knowledgeable

regarding the operations of the NGO under study. The third group was made up of officials of the Mhondoro-Ngezi-Chegutu-Zvimba CSOT (M-NCZCSOT), Zvimba CSOT Trustees, Zvimba RDC and the Zvimba District Administrator (DA). These were directly involved in the day to day operations of the Trust. Mhondoro-Ngezi-Chegutu-Zvimba CSOT (M-NCZCSOT) is the umbrella body of which ZvCSOT is a part. Zvimba CSOT is funded by Zimplats which also funds Mhondoro-Ngezi CSOT and Chegutu CSOT thus making all three CSOTs members of the main Board, the M-NCZCSOT. These interviews touched on the structure of the CSOT vis-à-vis project prioritization, political interference, needs based assessments and so on (for more detail see Appendix 2 - interview guide).

The fourth group consisted of University interns who were previously doing ‘work-related-learning’ at the Zvimba RDC and Caritas Chinhoyi offices. These were well versed on the management of ZvCSOT (RDC interns) as well as Caritas Chinhoyi (Caritas interns). The last group was drawn from local villagers who had benefitted from either a CSOT or Caritas project in their area or those in whose area the CSOT or Caritas had undertaken a project. It is the local communities who were the major focus of this study and it would be their input or narratives in this thesis, that would help authenticate the participatory claims made by either ZvCSOT or Caritas. The number of those interviewed were as follows: five MYIEE officials (both Harare and Chegutu); two NIEEB officials; two NYC officials; two M-NCZCSOT Board members; three ZvCSOT trustees (including one former one); three Caritas officials; four University interns – two from Zvimba RDC and two from Caritas Chinhoyi; three village heads (*sabhuku*); four Caritas volunteers; five teachers; five ZANU PF youths; two councillors; five Caritas beneficiaries comprising of a male youth orphan, a female youth orphan, a woman who was taking care of an elderly man (and therefore was present to represent elderly men) and two elderly women; and twenty-five ordinary villagers made up of eight youths (five males and three females), seven men and ten women. The total number of respondents involved in this study adds up to 118, with 70 through in-depth and informal interviews, and 48 through focus group discussions.

Focus group participants were purposively sampled. To simplify the recruitment process, I relied on pre-existing neighbourhood groups and engaged intermediaries to assist me. These consisted of village heads and Caritas volunteers. To prevent ‘forced participation’ as might happen when participants are recruited via an intermediary (Bloor *et al.*, 2002), we drove around

the villages on different days with village heads and Caritas volunteers in order to locate and organize the eligible participants. The eligibility of participants who were purposively recruited from existing neighbourhoods was based on what LeCompte and Preissle cited in deMarrais (2004:59) termed *criterion-based selection*. This is a process where a researcher constructs a list of characteristics or attributes that the participants in the study are supposed to have. Some *criterion-based selection* strategies include network selection and typical-case selection. In network selection strategy, the researcher locates one person who clearly matches to the selection criteria and that one person then refers the researcher to others who have similar knowledge or experience (snowball sampling). In typical-case selection, the researcher sets out criteria that are typical of a person within a group and this may include age, sex, knowledge or experience of area under study and so on (DeMarrais, 2004). Bloor *et al.* (2002:30) highlight that, ‘purposive sampling can be used where researchers can be guided by their particular research questions and key characteristics that are considered relevant and individuals recruited accordingly’. I used purposive sampling since I wanted participants who were well-versed about the topic under study. It was going to be fruitless for me to select those who lacked the necessary or proper knowledge and experience of my study area.

In the seven focus groups chosen, which consisted of eight participants in each group, I purposively selected those who were knowledgeable about either the Trust or NGO. In each of the four focus groups representing the Trust, and similarly in each of the three focus groups representing the NGO, I selected people who had first-hand experience and knowledge of either the NGO/Trust’s development projects. For the NGO, I also selected in each of the three focus groups two individuals who had directly benefitted from Caritas’ projects, one of whom was Catholic and one non-Catholic. I got the lists of names of the Caritas beneficiaries from the Caritas volunteers. These individuals were located in different areas within the same villages. Regarding the CSOT projects, I got the lists of the households living close to and within the radius of the development interventions from village heads and councillors. I then purposively selected participants in different areas in the same villages, but having knowledge and experience of the Trust’s development interventions. Similarly, in Trust/NGO focus groups I separated male and female groups; and in each of these groups I selected participants whose ages ranged from 20-35/36-45/46-55/56-65. I did this in order to have a well-balanced group in terms of age. Focus groups are supposed to be reasonably homogeneous (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, it is

important that the participants have ‘particular experience or knowledge about the subject of the research’ (Walliman, 2011:100).

As regards the selection of villagers for interviews, I used purposive sampling by merging it with both network and typical-case selection strategies just as I had done for focus group participants. For snowball sampling or network selection I was assisted by village heads and Caritas volunteers. The village heads had a list of villages as well as specific names of beneficiaries of the Trust’s development projects and similarly Caritas volunteers were in possession of documents with the areas and beneficiaries where Caritas had carried out its projects. The participants for my study were found at Murombedzi and Jari Business Centres as well as in the following villages: Marevanani, Mazezuru, Kazangarare, Chimanikire, Madzorera, Kutama, Masiyarwa, Mbumbu, Mariga and Chikambi where development interventions of either Caritas or the Trust or both Caritas and the Trust had been carried out. These people were also well versed about what had transpired before, during and after the intervention. Participants interviewed were different from those who had participated in focus groups. However, the interviewees were also selected according to sex (as highlighted above), age (ranging from 20-35/36-45/46-55/56-65), and experience or knowledge about the area under study. The only overlap was that these participants were from the same villages as those identified for focus group interviews. Regarding the collection of my data for this study I used in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observations and documents.

### **1.6.1 In-depth interviews**

Interviews are regarded as ‘an exchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest’ (Kvale, 1996: 14). Interviews enable participants to give their own perspectives or interpretations of the world they live in (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). An in-depth interview is when a respondent is asked about the facts of a matter as well as their opinions about some occurrences. In some circumstances the researcher asks ‘the interviewee to propose her or his own insights into certain occurrences and may use such propositions as the basis for further inquiry’ (Yin, 2009:127). When conducting in-depth interviews, the researcher seeks to understand the interviewee or respondent by perceiving the world through the perspectives or opinions of the respondent thus gaining an appreciation of the worldview of the interviewee (Marvasti, 2004). According to Johnson (2002), in-depth interviews help the researcher to probe into the ‘deeper self’ of the respondent in order to come up with more truthful data. I chose in-depth interviews in

that I was able to enquire on some ideas as the interview progressed. Cohen *et al.* (2007) and Bell (2005) note that a researcher is in a position to probe responses of the interviewees for clarity or elaboration of views, opinions and perceptions.

The study is based on primary data gathered from in-depth interviews recorded on a Samsung J 5 phone, during field work taking place in Harare, Chinhoyi, Chegutu and Zvimba over a period of six months from September 2016 to February 2017. Some follow-up interviews were also subsequently conducted from 2017 up to July 2019 whenever I felt there was need to address some outstanding issues. I later transferred the audio-recorded data on to my laptop and desktop. Before I started collecting data, I made appointments with some respondents as to set dates for the interviews. The dates were to be convenient for both of us. Bell (2005:167) recommends that in terms of interview dates, the researcher is supposed to ‘fit in with *the interviewee’s* plans, however inconvenient they may be for you’ (emphasis mine). For in-depth interviews with the villagers I visited their homesteads to collect data.

I first used the English language when I started with the first group of interviewees in Harare and Chinhoyi. It was after these interviews that I realized that, though the previous respondents had a good command in English, there seemed to be some limitations in the way they explained certain issues. When other interviews commenced in Chegutu and Zvimba, we started carrying them out in local vernacular (Shona). This made the interviews more cordial as the respondents in various offices were able to express themselves fluently and freely in their mother tongue. I doubt if most of these respondents could have done so if interviewed in English. All the interviews I carried out in the villages in Zvimba were therefore done in Shona. This enhanced communication and understanding between the interviewer and interviewee. By letting respondents take on the role of teachers while we who were interviewing them took on the role of pupils (Chambers, 2008), the respondents were made to feel quite confident to ‘lecture’ to us on the various weaknesses of both the indigenous Trust and the mainstream NGO (see Appendix 3 for interview guides).

In collecting some of the data I was assisted by a research assistant who was selected because of his experience in field work. I assigned him to carry out informal interviews and at times formal interviews with villagers. During the focus group discussions, he was responsible for the recordings. He also helped in orchestrating productive dialogue by encouraging group members to elaborate on their views. During observations of research sites, he was responsible

for taking the photos. Finally, he also assisted me in transcribing some of the English audio tapes which were easier to transcribe since they did not need any translations. This was unlike the Shona ones which needed to be transcribed and translated to English. This was a task I gave to a University of Zimbabwe English lecturer. Below, I discuss the different categories of interviewees I used.

#### ***1.6.1.1 Interviews with government, CSOT and NGO officials***

The interviews with officials were challenging in that while these officials appeared to be very cooperative, they treated me with a lot of suspicion, especially when I wanted to see the records of meetings and development interventions carried out by the CSOT and NGO as well as the minutes of those meetings. Research by an outsider on the internal operations of an organization is often treated with suspicion by those who work for these institutions and, in my case, some of those interviewed willingly gave vital information while a few others were not very willing to divulge information that mattered most.

Cohen *et al.* (2007) note that a disadvantage of interviews is that some respondents deliberately evade some questions which they deem to be sensitive to the organization. Similarly, further probing of MYIEE, NIEEB and RDC officials during in-depth interviews showed some discomfort among them especially on issues pertaining to patronage, cronyism, underhand deals and the general way decisions on development interventions were reached by CSOT Trustees (see Appendix 3 for interview guides).

Bell (2005:156) observes that during interviews the way in which a respondent reacts to a question, especially ‘the tone of voice, facial expressions, hesitations and so on’, can provide rich information which written responses or questionnaires can conceal. In Chapters 6 and 8, I mention words and phrases like ‘made claims’, ‘claimed that’, ‘hesitant’, ‘quite clear’ among many others in trying to highlight the type of response given. Both CSOT and NGO officials provided important information that greatly helped in addressing the subsidiary objective concerning the organizational structures of the Trust and NGO and the various official claims on the participatory practices adopted by ZvCSOT as well as Caritas. The interviews were also helpful in getting a sense of the influence of government and donors over CSOT and NGO participatory practices.

### ***1.6.1.2 Interviews with key informants***

During fieldwork, researchers always come across people who are more than willing to assist in the research owing to their expertise and experience in the area being studied (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). These people have come to be known as key informants and they are defined as:

... people who are particularly knowledgeable about the inquiry setting and articulate about their knowledge – people whose insights can prove particularly useful in helping an observer understand what is happening and why (Patton, 2002:320).

Key informants are supposed to have experience in relation to the population under study. They are expected to be well placed or central to the situation such that they can identify crucial issues and make efficient explanations about what is happening on the ground (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). The researcher is supposed to make several interactions with some key informants (Patton, 2002:321; Yin, 2009:127). According to Morse (1994:228) a reliable key informant is one who:

... has the necessary knowledge, information and experience of the issue being researched, is capable of reflecting on that knowledge and experience, has time to be involved in the project, is willing to be involved in the project, and, indeed, can provide access to other informants.

This study is guided by Patton (2002), Cohen *et al.* (2007) and Morse's (1994) views of a key informant. In addition, as pointed out by Cohen *et al.*, the key informant is supposed to be reliable and well placed about the state of affairs to the extent that he/she provides insightful information which other respondents might not be aware of, or information which some participants/informants might avoid responding to during interviews. However, Patton (2002) cautions that researchers ought not to over-rely on key informants since their views may be limited, selective and biased. Yin (2009:127) suggests that 'a reasonable way of dealing with this pitfall ... is to rely on other sources of evidence to corroborate any insight by such informants and to search for contrary evidence as carefully as possible.' An advantage of key informants as noted by Yin (2009:127) is that they 'can suggest other persons for you to interview, as well as other sources of evidence'. It was when I was carrying out in-depth interviews that I found myself in Chegutu, after being referred by other respondents to individuals they said were quite knowledgeable about ZvCSOT. Similarly, at the Caritas national offices in Harare, I was also referred to some Caritas officials in Chinhoyi. Snowball sampling was also quite handy in the selection of some respondents who included ZANU PF youths, former RDC interns and former Caritas interns, and former ZvCSOT Trustees, some of whom later became reliable key informants. Most of their information helped in determining what effects the ZvCSOT and

Caritas organizational structures had had on the adoption of either a top-down or bottom-up model.

#### ***1.6.1.3 Interviews with villagers***

The first thing my research assistant and I did was to identify villages which had benefitted from either ZvCSOT or Caritas' projects as well as those villages which had benefitted from the development interventions of both the Trust and the NGO. As such, in purposively selected villages, interviews were carried out at the homesteads of villagers. The lists of those to be interviewed were obtained from village heads and Caritas volunteers. We carried out the interviews at the homesteads of the villagers on a face-to-face basis. Some villagers also referred us to other people whom they suggested had more information concerning the study area. Some of the information collected was on community participation in the conceptualization, planning, implementation and evaluation of the Trust and NGO's development interventions among many other issues. As we drove around the villages under study, we listened to people talking and we kept hearing comments along the lines of 'Someone needs to do something about the way CSOT funds are being used'. The local communities saw my research assistant and me as people who could raise their grievances to the MYIEE, NIEEB and other government departments on their behalf. What was encouraging was that, in the end, we managed to make many friends in these communities as well as among NGO and CSOT officials. While in most cases it is unavoidable to create friendship with respondents during fieldwork, care must be taken to ensure that this does not lead to bias (Bell, 2005; Cohen *et al.*, 2007, Yin, 2009). The researcher is supposed to remain focused on the research aim and objectives and to rely on multiple sources of information. I observed that if you listen to what the grassroots have to say, you will learn quite a lot. Most of the information collected from villagers' experiences and knowledge about the participatory practices of the Trust and NGO helped in determining what effect their organizational structures have had on the adoption of either a top-down or bottom-up model.

#### ***1.6.1.4 Interviews with village heads, ZANU PF youths, Caritas volunteers and University interns***

Chambers (2008:76) observes that, 'information can be gathered by rural residents' yet this source of information has 'often been underused'. True to this assertion, some community members who included village heads, Caritas volunteers, ZANU PF youths as well as some



interns proved to have significant information which the CSOT, government and NGO officials were not comfortable to share with us. A village head referred us (snowball sampling in practice) to a group of ZANU PF youths in Chimanikire village whom he said were more knowledgeable about the Trust's operations since they had had their project proposals approved by the CSOT, but were still waiting for funding. He also mentioned that the youths were quite bitter about the Trust's procrastination in assisting them.

At first, we thought we would not get much information from these ZANU PF youths because we assumed that their loyalty to the party would make them reluctant to criticize some senior party officials who happened to be Trustees of the ZvCSOT Board. True to what the headman had said, these disgruntled ZANU PF youths proved they had much information regarding the operations of the Trust owing to their close links with RDC officials and the DA's office. I bring out some of the information they provided in Chapter 6. Two of the youths continued to provide me with current information I needed about the Trust, long after I had completed most of my fieldwork. They were able to quickly and effectively find out and provide information on pertinent issues I wanted to know about the management of ZvCSOT.

Regarding Caritas' volunteers, apart from helping my research assistant and me in identifying the beneficiaries of the NGO's projects as well as some project sites, they also provided us with valuable information about the NGO's development practices in communities where they lived. Theirs was information emanating through their many experiences and knowledge gained through working with the NGO in relation to its development projects in the villages. The information provided by the Caritas volunteers helped in addressing the subsidiary objective on what effect Caritas' organizational structures have had on some participatory practices.

During in-depth interviews, some former University interns who had been previously attached at the RDC offices provided valuable information regarding the management of ZvCSOT. They were very much aware of the party politics that influenced the CSOT's operations (issues I discuss in detail in Chapter 6). Apart from the interns who were once at the RDC offices, I also interviewed two former Caritas interns referred to me through snowball sampling by a key informant. These two interns had had the privilege of being in attendance in some Caritas development board meetings where they were privy to some discussions on project proposals. They also worked in collaboration with the NGO's field officers on various

development projects. The interns were in the know about the NGO decision-making processes especially on various development interventions. A Caritas field officer whom I engaged in an informal discussion said his group was operating in Mount Darwin District. He mainly focused on general issues regarding Caritas Chinhoyi's organogram and development projects. The information provided by former RDC interns as well as former Caritas interns was important in that it helped address the subsidiary objective on the effects of the organizational structures of the Trust and the NGO on participatory practices.

This repository of information gathered through in-depth interviews proved to be quite helpful in better understanding the organizational politics surrounding the selection of development projects which the NGO personnel were not quite comfortable to share with me (an issue discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8). In-depth interviews can be regarded as open-ended interviews in that the respondents, in my case the RDC and Caritas interns, were not limited to a set of fixed answers, but were able to freely express their views and opinions about various issues I presented to them. Johnson (2002:106) adds that 'by not limiting respondents to a fixed set of answers, in-depth interviewing has the potential to reveal multiple, and sometimes conflicting, attitudes about a given topic'. The conflicting views about the CSOT and NGO that came from the interns are further elaborated in Chapters 6 and 8. These views were pivotal in addressing the subsidiary objective related to the influence government has had in CSOT participatory development interventions. A second objective addressed in these interviews concerned the effects the ZvCSOT and Caritas organizational structures had on the adoption of either a top-down or bottom-up model.

### **1.6.2 Informal interviews**

In addition to the in-depth interviews I also carried out informal conversations with people at Murombedzi Business Centre, people at various projects sites as well as those in Chinhoyi town who were aware of the operations of Zvimba CSOT and Caritas. Cohen *et al.* (2007:353) note that informal conversations have an advantage in that the questions emerge directly 'from the immediate context and are asked in the natural course of things', thus making the questions relevant in that they address pertinent issues or important areas of the study. Informal conversations were carried out in order to better understand the participatory practices used by the CSOT and NGO under study. The informal discussions proved to be a fountain of unsanctioned information, unlike that given by some respondents in formal interviews whom I at

times suspected of holding back some information. Some of this information equally helped in determining what effect the ZvCSOT and Caritas organizational structures have had on the adoption of either a top-down or bottom-up model.

### **1.6.3 Focus groups**

I chose to conduct focus group interviews as they could be carried out in a short space of time and produce very credible results (Dawson, 2009). Creswell (2003, 2014) notes that, a focus group is usually made up of six to eight people and attempts to elicit various views and opinions from them. The main advantage is that ‘in one hour, you can gather information from eight people instead of only one, significantly increasing sample size’ (Patton, 2002:386). According to Berg (2002:117), focus groups work quite well if one wants to collect data through ‘comprehensive and open discussions about certain topics or issues.’ As mentioned earlier, I purposively selected members at particular sites in the villages through the assistance of village heads and Caritas volunteers. During the interactions with the participants, I gave them adequate information about the study and the duration of the focus group interviews (one and a half hours) as suggested by scholars such as Bloor *et al.* (2002), Patton (2002), Marvasti (2004) and Bell (2005) (see Appendix 4 for focus group guides). Participants were keen to take part as a number of them hoped that their views, opinions and perceptions would be considered by the NGO and CSOT in future development interventions. Bell (2005:138) suggests that ‘a research project could be designed in a way that benefits the subjects and their communities’. While some participants might have imagined that I would be able to directly communicate their concerns to the CSOT and NGO and ensure that their concerns were addressed, I made it clear to them that the aim of my study was only to make a general scholarly contribution. In other words, I told the participants that the study was specifically for academic purposes. The venues for the focus groups were local churches which willingly approved that we use their premises and furniture. I later realized that community members felt comfortable to meet us at the village churches since NGOs and RDCs regularly used the same venues for grain and fertilizer distribution.

During the recruitment process, the village heads focused on organizing separate male and female groups for discussions concerning ZvCSOT. Studies carried out have shown that men tend to dominate in focus group discussions (Poverty Reduction Forum Trust, 2013). For this reason, the focus group discussions were carried out separately consisting of groups for males and those for females in order to give women a chance to freely air out their views. The turnout

for the ZvCSOT focus groups (in late November 2016 and early January 2017) were as follows: focus group A - 6 males; focus group B - 5 males; focus group C - 8 females; and focus group D - 8 females. Caritas volunteers helped organize one male and two female groups at selected sites in the villages in early December 2016. The attendance of males in Caritas focus group A was 5 out of an expected 8. In focus groups B and C, the attendance of female group members was quite impressive. It was 8 out of 8 for each group. The women were quite enthusiastic to make their contributions in these groups unlike the men who gave unnecessary excuses for not turning up. In some focus groups, participants are paid as an incentive for their attendance though such practices are at times frowned upon by some researchers (Dawson, 2009). Rather, it is recommended to offer nonmonetary incentives such as food and drinks (Bloor *et al.*, 2002). A major reason why paying participants is frowned upon is that it may result in participants saying what they think the researcher wants to hear as they feel they are being paid to produce a particular kind of response. In my case, during the discussions, I did not pay participants, but I offered them snacks which included soft drinks, biscuits, potato crisps and some sweets. I did this as a token of appreciation for their attendance.

Before carrying out the focus group discussions, I came up with a moderator's guide as recommended by Berg (2001), Patton (2002), Marvasti (2004) and Dawson (2009) (see Appendix 4 for more detail). I designed the guide specifically focusing on the data I had concluded from interviews with NGO and CSOT officials, interviews with community members, observations of project sites, informal discussions and key informant interviews. In the guide, I came up with six topical areas which were as follows: Projects carried out by CSOT/NGO; Benefits to community; Ownership of Trust/Efficacy of volunteers in community development initiatives; Community consultations; Community's development needs and priorities as regards ZvCSOT/Caritas' development interventions; and Suggestions for improvements. I later developed these areas into open-ended questions (see Appendix 4 for focus group guides). This process of developing questions is supported by Bell (2005) who suggests that, in focus group discussions, the researcher prepares unstructured questions where his or her intervention is minimal. An objective of focus groups is 'to get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others' (Patton, 2002:386). Focus groups are intended to elicit in-depth information about the way participants perceive an

issue, their interpretation about why things are the way they are, and why they view things the way they do (Laws *et al.*, 2003).

The open-ended questions I used were appropriate in that they provided enough room for participants to elaborate on their views. In addition to the six questions, I also asked some probing questions. Where my research assistant and I felt that more information was needed regarding an issue we would politely say; ‘You mentioned ... Could you tell us more about it?’ or ‘Tell me about ...’. This is in line with deMarrais’s (2004) recommendation that a moderator or his assistant should probe the responses of the participants for more detail or explanations. An advantage of focus groups becomes that of the researcher’s ability to enable participants to expand on other participants’ answers so as to produce data which is rich (Fontana and Frey, 2000). In that regard, I would always ask questions such as ‘Is that what everyone thinks?’ or ‘Does everyone agree with abc?’ in order for participants to elaborate on each other’s answers. The focus group discussions provided insights into how the NGO and CSOT carried out their development interventions in the communities. These responses mainly helped in giving depth to subsidiary objectives determining what effect the ZvCSOT and Caritas organizational structures had on the adoption of either a top-down or bottom-up model as well as in determining what influence government had in CSOT participatory development interventions.

The focus group participants’ responses sometimes corroborated and sometimes contradicted the views given by some NGO and CSOT officials. Interestingly, though my goal in all these groups was to collect a range of views and perspectives through the participants’ experiences and knowledge and not necessarily to come up with any consensus, in my case consensus developed on its own as will be shown in Chapters 6 and 8. Focus group discussions ‘offer either corroboration of other data or insights into areas other data fail to illuminate’ (Berg, 2001:127). In my study, various claims about the participatory nature of the CSOT and NGO were made by CSOT and NGO officials (these are detailed in Chapters 5 and 7 respectively). I later compared these official claims with those of people’s lived experiences (gathered through focus group discussions and interviews with individual community members). In Chapters 6 and 8, I explain in detail the contradictions between official claims and the statements coming from community members.

It is argued that in various communities there are individuals with strong personalities (owing to their status in the community) who can dominate focus group discussions making it

difficult for other community members to say out their views. Tisdale (2004:24), Bloor *et al.* (2002) and Dawson (2009) recommend that such individuals are not supposed to be included in the group during the recruitment phase. During our recruitment of focus group participants, I paid careful attention to exclude public figures in the discussions as suggested by Bloor *et al.* (2002), Dawson (2009) among many others. I *inter alia* excluded the village heads, Caritas volunteers, teachers, headmasters, agricultural extension officers, health workers, business persons, nurses and councillors.

Nevertheless, in focus groups there are always participants who are domineering and others who are passive (Berg, 2001; Patton, 2002). Similarly, a weakness of focus groups is that some participants will never disclose much (Bell, 2005). After our group discussions, a few participants individually approached us. The participants had not contributed much during the discussions; however, information they later provided through the ‘informal conversations’ was very helpful. Similarly, others later called me disclosing more than they had done during the group sessions. I observed that with focus groups some participants might approach you individually; others call you later privately, while others never make their private information public. A disadvantage of focus groups is that some participants will always be unwilling to deliberate on delicate issues in the presence of others (Fontana and Frey, 2000).

Despite the above disadvantage, an advantage of the same disadvantage is that those participants who do not contribute much in group discussions might do so because they are fearful of being exposed by other group members for not telling the truth. Krueger and Casey (2000) note that in focus group discussions there are checks and balances among participants themselves where any falsehoods or extreme views are easily weeded out. This is not possible in individual interviews where the participant can tell outright lies when defending a specific position. I highlight some of the deliberate distortion of facts by some officials in Chapters 6 (politicization of CSOTs) and 8 (Caritas’ needs assessment exercises). It is therefore imperative that a researcher relies on multiple sources of evidence so as to build on the strength of each method in order to enhance the quality of data collected.

#### **1.6.4 Observations**

This study also made use of observations of project sites. We took some photos which were of interest to this study. This entailed physically visiting current and previous project sites to observe the sustainability of the projects and find out whether people using project resources

were consulted in coming up with the projects. This helped us to gather interesting details and information on the participatory nature of the projects. I considered observation as one of my data collection methods because I wanted to see for myself the sites/areas where the projects had been undertaken by both the Trust and NGO. I took photos of some of these sites as well as the development projects carried out; for example, the borehole and school in Chapter 6 and the herbal and goat projects in Chapter 8. Marvasti (2004:66) notes that photography is ‘a mode of understanding and analysing social reality’. Photographs also assist in conveying meaning and descriptions to readers. Observations in general offer a researcher ‘the opportunity to gather “live” data from naturally occurring social situations ... in this way, the researcher can look directly at what is taking place *in situ* rather than relying on second-hand accounts’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:396).

I did not limit myself to being a passive observer (by only taking photos) but I also engaged community members on issues concerning the development projects I had photographed. A photograph on its own cannot clearly explain exactly what is happening on the ground. Photographs of development projects cannot explain to us about who participated and how they participated in the development project. Merely showing a photograph of a development project tells us little on the type of participation community members were engaged in. Uphoff (1998:443) suggests that when looking into participatory development, ‘we need to know who participated and how’. For us, to have a better understanding of the real meanings behind the photographs we shot, it was imperative that we also engaged with community members knowledgeable about the development interventions in formal and informal interviews (which also meant an inclusion of participant-observation in that, as I observed the situation on the ground, I also sought for more information from some participants living in the given project sites). An advantage of observations is their ‘ability to perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone “inside” the case study rather than external to it. ... [S]uch a perspective is invaluable in producing an “accurate” portrayal of a case study phenomenon’ (Yin, 2009:133). This entailed getting first-hand information from what I had observed as well as from those who had witnessed the implementation of the development projects. Interviews (formal and informal) complemented my observations. In Chapters 6 and 8, I highlight what came out from the interviews and informal discussions concerning the photographs we shot at various development sites.

In addition, I used observation to validate the statements obtained from official views and documents of CSOT and NGO officials. My argument here is that, while interviews and official documents provide important information, there is also a high probability that participants may deliberately distort some information while documentary sources may similarly have some biases. Cohen *et al.* (2007:396) stress that an advantage of observations is that they help the researcher ‘to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations, to move beyond perception based data (e.g. opinions in interviews) and to access personal knowledge.’ Similarly in some interviews, participants may only say what they know the researcher wants to hear (Yin, 2009). In the case of observations, Bell (2005) points out that observation can be useful in finding out whether people do what they say or claim to do.

Relatedly, the observations of NGO and CSOT development sites were invaluable confirmations for understanding the practicality of the development projects and the potential problems encountered by the beneficiaries. In other words, for detailed information on development projects carried out by the NGO and CSOT, one could not only rely on interviews with officials of these organizations as well as from documentary sources available. Other sources of information were also needed to validate some views, perceptions and opinions. This required that I visited project sites in order to observe and have a better understanding of what was on the ground. Similarly, observations of development sites added some new dimensions in my thinking and understanding of the rhetoric surrounding participatory development initiatives. I raise some of these participatory dilemmas in Chapters 6 and 8. The visits to project sites and the informal and formal interviews carried out at these sites gave some depth in addressing the subsidiary objective concerning the effects of CSOT and Caritas organizational structures have had on the adoption of either a top-down or bottom-up model.

An important consideration when carrying out observations is to have two or more observers in order to limit individual biases (Yin, 2009) or misinterpretations (Bell, 2005). Similarly, observational biases or misinterpretations can be minimized by finding out more from community members what a development project means for the beneficiaries as well as others who are indirectly involved in it (Darlington and Scott, 2002). In Chapters 6 and 8, I discuss the ways in which I engaged community members in both formal and informal interviews (as mentioned earlier) to have a deeper understanding of what various projects meant for those involved. By also listening to the views of those involved in the development interventions, I



was able to minimize individual biases that may have affected my direct observations. Similarly, I was able to privilege some participatory perspectives after capturing the actual practice on the ground.

### **1.6.5 Documentary evidence**

Documentary evidence is important in that it helps the researcher to add on to information collected from other methods as well as to help check on the reliability of information obtained from interviews and focus groups (Duffy, 2005). Similarly, documentary evidence is ‘useful when access to the subjects of research is difficult or impossible, as in the case where those who carried out the projects no longer belong to the organizations being investigated’ (Duffy, 2005:122). In the case of my study, there were those who served the NGO under Catholic Development Commission (CADEC) before it was later renamed Caritas and the majority of them had left employment or joined other NGOs; and so I was unable to receive any documents from these people. Likewise, some CSOT Board members (representatives of interest groups who had been witness to the implementation of most development interventions) had been relieved of their duties when their terms of office expired. This made documentary evidence quite handy.

Bell (2005:124) suggests that, when carrying out fieldwork, ‘it is important to inquire what archives or collections of records exist in an organization.’ However, many organizations as pointed out in the above paragraph are unwilling to share their records with researchers and even more reluctant to share minutes of Board meetings. Helliker (2006) has observed that, anyone carrying out a study on NGOs knows how secretive these organizations are. NGOs in Zimbabwe are very sensitive to releasing information pertaining to their policies and practices (Helliker, 2006:11). Government departments are also the same, at times even worse than NGOs.

I was quite lucky to access various records of Board meetings held by the Zvimba Trustees. This was through the generosity of a key informant (an ex-member of the CSOT Board) who more than willingly gave me significant assistance specifically for academic purposes and also because he wanted to expose some allegations of corruption within the CSOT and to reveal its elitist structure. At times, as mentioned elsewhere, interviews have a weakness in that the interviewee deliberately misinforms the researcher by telling lies (Walford, 2001) in order to settle scores by being malicious to some individuals (Cohen, 2007). To guide against any biases relating to the views of the ‘bitter’ former CSOT Board member who gave me access to various records (or the ‘disgruntled’ ZANU PF youths discussed above and in Chapter 6), I

also used other sources of data collection such as focus group discussions, my own observations of project sites, interviews with CSOT officials, individual interviews, informal discussions and documentary evidence to verify the truth in what was being said.

Yin (2009) suggests that it is through the use of multiple sources of data collection that the researcher can be in a better position to confirm his/her evidence. The ZANU PF youths linked us to this former CSOT Board member, who used to represent an interest group within the ZvCSOT Board. It was this former Board official among other respondents who narrated astonishing revelations about the Trust as well as gave us various minutes of the ZvCSOT Board meetings. The minutes of Board meetings (documentary evidence) corroborated most of the things we discussed during in-depth interviews.

In order to understand and contextualize the Zvimba CSOT and Caritas' objectives, philosophies, ideologies, professed methodologies, and policies, it was necessary for me to conduct an in-depth analysis of the organizations' primary documentation, both at the local, national and even global level (especially with Caritas work). This documentation among other things included minutes of meetings pertaining to development projects (in the case of ZvCSOT), official policies, newsletters, brochures, booklets, and a multitude of literature related to Caritas and Zvimba CSOT.

With respect to a deeper understanding of the study, I also collected material from various sources to corroborate, augment and complement information from the other data sources mentioned above. These included *inter alia* information from the internet websites of Caritas and the Ministry of Indigenization, journal articles, newspapers, books, monographs and magazines. I also relied on Government documents such as laws and policy documents and these among many others included the Private Voluntary Organizations Act (PVO Act), Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act (IEEA), Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Community Share Ownership Trust Policy and Procedures Manual. This data mainly helped in consolidating claims made by officials from Caritas and the Trust that their development interventions were people-centred. Journal articles and books gave some broad insights covering general views found in mainstream literature on how both NGOs and Trusts engage rural communities in development interventions as well as the relationships between NGOs and donors and those between the Trusts and central government.

A disadvantage of documentary sources is that ‘they may be highly biased and selective, as they were not intended to be regarded as research data but were written for a different purpose, audience and context’ (Cohen *et al*, 2007:201). When I looked at the information on both Caritas and the Ministry of Indigenization websites I saw that it was written for a specific audience, agenda and purpose, making the validity and reliability of the information somewhat questionable. Thus, I also relied on other sources of evidence (focus groups, in-depth interviews, observations, key-informants) in order to validate some of the documentary evidence.

### **1.7 Data presentation and analysis**

A University of Zimbabwe linguistics lecturer assisted me with transcription due to his better understanding of the local Shona dialect. I thought it easier for the Zezuru linguistic ‘expert’ to first transcribe what had been said and then later translate the transcripts to English.

In this research I applied qualitative data analysis consolidated by a few grounded theory techniques where I identified ‘concepts, codes, categories and relationships’ (Bell, 2005:20) in the data. I also chose the grounded theory techniques because they can be ‘used on any data or combination of data’ (Patton, 2002:127). Second, the techniques provide researchers with analytical tools for handling huge volumes of raw data (Corbin and Strauss, 2007). Similarly, they help provide thoroughness, objectivity and consistency to the data analysis. Volumes of raw data are analysed and reviewed in order to develop meaning from them (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In my case, after having transcribed some of the interviews (the English ones) with my research assistant as well as having others transcribed and translated (the Shona ones) by the University of Zimbabwe lecturer, I now had the task of bringing meaning to the huge volumes of raw data. I observed that individual and group interviews had generated a lot of data which I could not of course all use in my final thesis. What I now had to do was to reduce the data to make it more manageable. The main objective was to step by step ‘transform a seemingly chaotic mess of raw data into a recognizable conceptual scheme’ (Marvasti, 2004:90).

I began by thoroughly looking through each transcript in order for me to be conversant with the views, perceptions and opinions of my varied respondents. As I read through each transcript I was guided by my research question and the themes which I was looking for. Narrowing my topic in relation to specific themes and to the research objectives helped to reduce part of my data to more manageable levels. In analysing the data, I followed three types of

grounded theory techniques of coding data, namely, open, axial and selective coding. The three types of coding are best explained as follows:

*Open coding* involves exploring the data and identifying units of analysis to code for meanings ... *Axial coding seeks to* integrate codes around the axes of central categories ... *Selective coding* involves identifying a core code; the relationship between that core code and other codes (Ezzy, 2002:91-3).

During initial and axial coding my goal was to peruse the data for meaningful classifications or themes. As I read through the data, I noted down some concepts which came to mind, for example, top-down, bottom-up, participatory, rhetoric, inclusive participation, needs assessments, and people-centred. As meaning in the data began to take shape (during the initial, axial and selective coding processes) I then classified emerging concepts/themes into several categories. For example, under *bottom-up initiatives* I would look for tensions and similarities between official claims and the practices on the ground. Cohen *et al.* (2007) refer to this technique as ‘constant comparison’. The researcher compares the coded data across a range of situations and methods (in-depth interviews, key informants, observations and focus groups). This is similar to triangulation (discussed in a section above).

As I analysed the transcripts, I also made my own comments on the margins of the transcripts regarding the various perceptions, views and opinions of the respondents. These clarifications are regarded as ‘research memos’. They refer to analytical statements one makes when analysing, judging and interpreting the data (Charmaz, 2002). During the writing of some Chapters, I constantly referred to some of these analytical statements. It was easy to locate the statements I wanted, since I colour-coded them to indicate the major theme they represented. I did not limit colour-coding to memo statements. I similarly colour-coded various views, perceptions and opinions in relation to the themes they symbolized. Thus, different colours were used to denote each theme as well as its other smaller units (for example – top-down processes were coded dark blue as main theme, while elite capture and pre-planned projects were coded light blue as these terms relate to smaller sub-themes). It became easy to pick on different themes (and their smaller units) in the individual and focus group interviews and use them where necessary in my write up. It became easy after bunching colour-coded themes with similar or different ideas (from individual, key-informant, focus group interviews, documentary sources and observations) into a logical order, thus having a clearer focus of the research objectives and questions. After this rigorous yet interesting activity which lasted for many months (as I had to

enquire for more information from some respondents), I strongly felt that the information that I had gathered and analysed was adequate to address the objectives of my thesis.

### **1.8 Informed consent, anonymity and ethics**

Because of the nature of some quotes, the following measures have been taken to ensure confidentiality of the interviewees. In most cases, no names are given (other than pseudonyms) and in only a few instances are names mentioned (see Appendix 2 for interview schedule). Whenever I mention the real name of an individual in any Chapter, I first use the individual's title plus both the first and second names of that individual (for example, Father/Fr Walter Chenyika, District Administrator/DA Andrew Tizora, Mrs. Memory Mhonda). Thereafter I use the individual's title plus the surname in the same Chapter. For every new Chapter where the individual's name appears, I will go through the same process. When carrying out fieldwork, it is always imperative that the researcher ensures that every effort is made to seek the consent of the respondents as well as to maintain anonymity and confidentiality of all the research participants (see consent forms and participant information sheets in Appendix 6). I made it a point that if one uses real names, one must be sure that participants have given their consent for one to do so. Some participants permitted the researcher to use their names in reference to what they had contributed during the research study. In such cases, I used my discretion on whether to mention the real name or not. For those whose names are mentioned in this thesis, I did so first through their consent and also because these individuals' perceptions were quite representative of the organizations they worked for. Therefore, their opinions were of paramount importance for this research. Interviews with them were designed to shed light on key organizational and participatory development issues.

As regards the former CSOT Board member mentioned in a section above, he had consented to having his name mentioned in this thesis but, due to some ethical considerations, I preferred to rather use a pseudonym so as to protect his identity. Marvasti (2004) suggests that a researcher is supposed to rely on his/her own judgment and sense of morality to determine if the participant is fully aware of the implications of what he/she says. I thought to myself, 'How would those he accused think about him when the findings were now in public domain? Would I not create unnecessary animosity by publishing his name in my study?' I strongly believed that it was my responsibility to protect his name, for Bell (2005) points out that some participants might

reveal confidential information but we need not take advantage, as in my case, by revealing their names.

Eight officials (two MYIEE, one NIEEB, one M-NZCSOT, one ZvCSOT, and three Caritas) agreed to be identified with the views they expressed in this study. However, the rest remain anonymous through the use of pseudonyms. Despite the fact that a number of local community members had agreed to have their real names used in this thesis, I simply decided to only give reference to the real names of those whose ideas represented the views of the various organizations under study, while for the perceptions of the villagers/beneficiaries I used pseudonyms. Participants' dignity and safety need to be protected (Marvasti, 2004) for, when these participants agree to be interviewed, they are doing us a great favour (Bell, 2005). The reason I decided to use the officials' names, but not community members' names, was that the officials are people in positions of power but local community members' lack of power meant that I felt I had to be more careful about using their names. Cohen *et al.* (2007:64) stress that 'the greater the sensitivity of the information, the more safeguards are called for to protect the privacy of the participants.' When carrying out interviews, I always assured the participants that the publication of my thesis would never bring any harm to them and, as such, I felt obligated to protect their identities at all costs.

### **1.9 Limitations of the study**

Most, if not all researches carried out, are in one way or the other, affected by certain obstacles and this thesis is not an exception. Below, I highlight some of the limitations.

First of all, the study focuses only on one out of sixty-one CSOTs found in sixty Rural District Councils (RDCs) and one Urban Council in Zimbabwe. In addition, the study concentrates on one Catholic diocese and parish out of 8 Catholic dioceses and 238 Catholic parishes found in Zimbabwe. The study also relies on non-probability techniques of sampling and these cannot be used to make generalizations about the whole population. In this regard, the participatory development approaches used by CSOTs in other Districts and also Caritas in other Roman Catholic dioceses and parishes may actually present a completely different picture. Thus, conclusions drawn from the practices of and the views about the NGO and the Trust in this study may not necessarily apply to the other districts, Dioceses and parishes which in itself is a general weakness of a case study. In addition, the study limits its focus to Caritas. This NGO is only one of many NGOs which operate in Zvimba District. It may well turn out that, by only giving focus

to Caritas' participatory approaches in the District, this does not in any way reflect the participatory processes of other NGOs in the District. While I cannot be certain that this CSOT and NGO are representative of CSOTs and NGOs in general, it is unlikely that their practices are radically different from other CSOTs and NGOs in Zimbabwe and, therefore, this study can serve as a starting point for further studies on this topic.

Secondly, given Zimbabwe's political environment which is shrouded in fear, secrecy and patronage (Alexander and McGregor, 2013), some respondents due to their political biases might intentionally omit, over-exaggerate or downplay certain issues, thus accurate or relevant information may be hard to come by in this context. It is noteworthy that, due to the end of the Robert Mugabe era in Zimbabwe on November 21, 2017, the new Emmerson Mnangagwa ZANU PF Government promised the nation that it would now open up more democratic spaces, thus perhaps making government Ministries more open, accountable and transparent in coming years. Indeed, caution still needs to be taken as it remains too early to be certain if any meaningful changes will take place within various ZANU PF controlled government institutions.

The Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment (MYIEE) as well as other government ministries, are manned at most levels by civil servants who are very loyal to ZANU PF (Ndakaripa, 2015). The views by Alexander and McGregor (2013) are not baseless for, during a research study of Mhondoro-Ngezi CSOT carried out by Mawowa (2013a), he observed that most of the government officials he interviewed, were rigid and defensive in their responses rather than being critical of certain pertinent issues. While this is a problem that arises with social science research, I also had to rely on observations, documents collected (especially minutes of meetings held), desk research, focus groups, and in-depth interviews (especially of the project beneficiaries on the ground) which served to verify some of the information that was provided by government and NGO officials.

A third limitation, as noted earlier, is that PD is a very large and complex area of study. Owing to its multi-faceted nature, it will be difficult in some cases, to give detailed or comprehensive analysis to some questions raised in this study. While this study examines participatory development approaches, it is mainly concerned with the practices surrounding needs assessments, decision-making, ownership and grassroots consultations, rather than delving deeper into broader areas of PD which among many others include civil society, good governance and democracy. While I believe that many answers can be provided in my research

study, I remain convinced that this study may also go some way in addressing some broader pertinent questions in the field of PD.

The above limitations mean that this study's relevance lies in its ability to complement other studies which address questions I have not been able to answer fully in this thesis, especially those that concern the broad and complex area of PD. Sharp and Howard (1983:6) note that, research seeks to 'add to one's own body of knowledge and, hopefully, to that of others, by the discovery of non-trivial facts and insights.' This is what this study also seeks to do vis-à-vis issues pertaining to participatory development.

### **1.10 Organization of the thesis**

In this first chapter, an outline of the research problem was given and the context of the study was laid out. This chapter also looked at the aims and objectives of the thesis, the research questions, justifications for the study, and limitations of the study and the methodology of the study. The rest of the thesis is organized into nine Chapters. It is noteworthy that Chapters 5 and 6 are companion chapters, with Chapter 5 introducing CSOTs and discussing their claim to be participatory while Chapter 6 assesses those claims on the basis of my fieldwork. Likewise, Chapters 7 and 8 are companion chapters in that the former introduces the NGO Caritas and its claims to be participatory while Chapter 8 critically assesses its participatory practice.

Chapter 2 explores existing theorization of development with a particular focus on literature on participatory development.

Chapter 3 gives an overview of the role of the state in participatory development. It focuses on the need for states to transfer administrative, political and fiscal power to local governments in order to enhance the participation of community members in community-centred development interventions.

Chapter 4 reviews what NGOs are, how they are funded, and how they assist the poor rural communities through participatory development initiatives. The Chapter demonstrates how donor politics has an influence on the operations of NGOs in carrying out development work. Other than donors, the Chapter further illustrates the politics that surrounds NGO-state relations in Zimbabwe. The argument is that the Zimbabwean ZANU PF government has taken advantage of NGOs in some development interventions.

Chapter 5 focuses on CSOTs and their ability to bring development to rural areas through people-centred participatory development initiatives. The Chapter gives an overview of the



various claims made in official documents as well as by public officials about the participatory character of CSOTs.

Chapter 6 analyses the findings of the study in relation to the participatory methodologies of the ZvCSOT. The Chapter concludes that the CSOT offers few avenues for community participation in its development interventions.

Chapter 7 introduces Caritas and its operations in Zimbabwe. The Chapter gives an overview of the various claims made in Caritas official documents as well as by Caritas officials on the participatory nature of the NGO.

Chapter 8 analyses the participatory character of this mainstream NGO. The Chapter concludes that, though the NGO has well-established participatory structures, it still needs to sincerely engage rural communities in meaningful development interventions.

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by discussing the implications of themes that emerged from the study, addressing the research question and making some assessments emanating from the study. It also identifies some areas for further research study.

## **CHAPTER 2: PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 Introduction**

To develop theoretical insights that might enhance the understanding of development and participatory development (PD) approaches relating to decision-making processes, it is necessary to undertake a literature review. This chapter introduces the broader area of development and participatory development. I begin by discussing theories about immanent development processes within capitalism so as to allow an entry point into specific theories on participatory development. PD is traced back from the 1960s up to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. I further examine some PD approaches and their core elements as used by NGOs. Relatedly, I analyse issues on decentralization and how local government structures are perceived to improve PD in rural communities. A detailed discussion on decentralization is left for Chapter 3.

### **2.2 The concept of development**

The term development theory is an umbrella term encompassing a variety of different economic, political and social perspectives rather than a unified school of thought (Ingham, 1993; Willis, 2011:2; Peet and Hartwick, 2015:23). These divergent perspectives have emerged as a result of the heated debates which have characterised the course that development has followed since the concept first rose to prominence during the post-World War II era. The development debate has its major roots in the period just after the Second World War when Northern governments began to discuss how best they could bring development to the rest of the world.

The term ‘development’ can be categorized into two types that is ‘development as an immanent and unintentional process ... and development as an intentional activity’ (Cowen and Shenton cited in Mitlin *et al.*, 2007:1701). The former type of ‘development’, also referred to as ‘little d’ development, is concerned with the fundamental processes of development. This ‘involves the geographically uneven, profoundly contradictory set of processes underlying capitalist developments’ (Hart, 2001:650 cited in Mitlin *et al.*, 2007:1701). Thus, ‘little d’ or ‘immanent development’ focuses on ‘historical process of social change’ (Hickey and Mohan, 2003:4) that have taken place within capitalist development.

Immanent development, also referred to as ‘big D’ development, focuses on “‘willed” development policy and action’ (Hickey and Mohan, 2003:4) or interventions carried out to transform the broader processes of immanent development (Mitlin *et al.*, 2007). Hart (2001:650)

cited in Mitlin *et al.* (2007:1701) stresses that ‘big D’ development ‘refers to the project of intervention in the “third world” that emerged in a context of decolonization and the cold war’. Thus ‘big D’ or ‘imminent development’ focuses on targeted interventions as part of the international development industry/system, within which debates about participatory development exist.

### **2.2.1 From modernization theory to a basic needs approach**

The late 1960s saw the emergence of ‘modernization theory’ which was premised on the assumption that developing countries had to go through a full transformation and transition in order to become modern (Hussain and Tribe, 1981). Korten (1984:342) further emphasizes that modernization theory assumed that if developing peoples and nations were to share in the bounty which industrialization promised, they would have to emulate the technologies, institutions, and values of the industrialized countries. In this sense, as noted by Parpart (1995:221), development was based on the assumption that ‘some people and places are more developed than others’ and that those who were ‘developed’ possess ‘expert knowledge and expertise to help those who were not’.

One of the weaknesses of modernization theory was what Roe (1991:287) termed ‘blue print development’ which, according to Hyden (1983:65), was development ‘stenciled whole-cloth from premade plans and blueprints’ as most development interventions were carried out by outside development agents in collaboration with various government bureaucracies. Development approaches such as modernization theory placed much emphasis on economic growth and mega infrastructural development initiatives with a special focus on the state. In response to this focus, development practitioners in the early 1990s called for the end of centralized ‘top-down’ strategies of action in favour of participatory approaches as an essential component of development. I elaborate more on this issue in Chapter 3.

Dependency theory arose as a challenge to modernization theory. The key way in which dependency theorists differ from modernization theorists is that dependency theorists argue that differences in developmental levels are a consequence of relationships of exploitation, in that they argue that the ‘developed’ countries have achieved this status through the exploitation of the ‘developing’ countries. However, like modernization theorists, the early dependency theorists also placed emphasis on industrialization and state-led development (issues further discussed in

Chapter 3). As discussed below, this approach is in contrast to neoliberal policies which focused on reducing state involvement while giving a greater role for the market (Willis, 2011).

Despite there being many variants of dependency theory, the major concern uniting these theorists was a critique of the world capitalist system based on the exploitation of the ‘developing’ countries by the ‘developed’ ones (Frank, 1966, 1967, Dos Santos, 1970; Rodney, 1972; Nyerere, 1973; Amin, 1974, 1976; Furtado 1976, Willis, 2011; Peet and Hartwick, 2015). The argument was that development had helped incorporate most developing countries into a Northern-dominated system which greatly undermined indigenous cultures, created feelings of inferiority and helplessness, and opened up the South for exploitation of resources (Peet and Hartwick, 2015, 2009; Willis, 2011). Thus, dependency theory attributed poverty to the continuous pillage of resources from ‘developing countries’ for the benefit of the ‘developed countries’ (Matunhu, 2012). Furthermore, dependency theorists believe that ‘developing’ countries have been prevented from achieving development due to international debt, the forced opening of domestic markets to competition from foreign (and often industrialised) markets, and the extraction of mineral resources (Frank, 1967; Furtado, 1976; Amin, 1976). Dependency theorists believe that these factors, among others, have remained constraints to development efforts in most African countries.

By the 1970s and early 1980s, calls were made to recognize the ‘basic needs’ of the world’s poorest people. It was noted that the ‘modernization approach’, which was criticized as being ‘top-down’ (Rahnema, 1992; Long, 2001; Willis, 2005, 2011), had failed to reduce the extent of poverty among the world’s poor. Korten (1984:342) observed that, policy commitments to participation and equity, sought largely through an expansion of services targeted to the poor, rapidly became the hallmark of development assistance efforts in the 1970s. Rahnema (1992:117) confirms that Robert McNamara, then President of the World Bank, actually admitted in 1973 that growth was not equitably reaching the poor. This led scholars to try to rethink the idea of development in order to determine how to best improve the quality of life of those in the South. Under this approach, the focus of development policies was directed at the poorest people in society rather than at huge infrastructural development policies that had an indirect bearing on the poor masses (Willis, 2005, 2011).

In line with this approach, the basic needs approach not only gave attention to the essentials for physical survival, but also to access services, employment and decision-making in

order to provide a real basis for participation. It was assumed that satisfaction of basic human needs should be central to all development thoughts and efforts. However, Hunt (1989) argues that those who were in support of the basic needs approach were not calling for an end to the modernization project; rather, they were suggesting that greater attention be given to smaller scale activities and poorer sectors of society, without cutting down on the continued investment in large scale infrastructure. In addition, Friedmann (1992:59-66) stresses that the 'basic needs' approach could have embodied a genuine alternative to the modernization approach especially with its focal point on grassroots participation and wealth redistribution; however, the application of the approach was very technocratic and top-down, failing to include the masses in the whole development process. In other words, the basic needs approach was 'people-oriented', but not genuinely 'people-centred' through being based on local people's initiatives. NGOs were seen in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a vehicle to spearhead a new 'people-centred' development (an issue discussed in more detail in Chapter 4).

Having very briefly overviewed some of the shifts in development theory over the years, it is useful to look at some of the ways in which 'development' has been understood. The thinking behind the explanations helps us to clearly contextualize development as a concept. It is noteworthy that the following ways in which development has been perceived, cannot in anyway be classified as the most commonly accepted views, as there are as many perspectives of development as there are theorists of development. Development has therefore been defined in numerous ways with each classification reflecting some of the values held by those defining it. For example, modernization theorists' perception of development implies 'modernity which encompasses industrialization, urbanization and the increased use of technology within all sectors of the economy' (Willis, 2005: 2; 2011:2). It is assumed that, the only way the poor countries can escape from the clutches of underdevelopment is through following a Western model of development (Esteva, 1992). On the other hand, dependency theorists would rather have a situation where a community pools its efforts together to bring about development. This means less reliance or dependency on foreign aid, with the community members themselves enhancing their own quality of life through sustainable mobilization and management of resources in an equitable way. Ghai brings out such a view when he says:

Development is seen in such terms as greater understanding of social, economic and political processes, enhanced competence to analyse and solve problems of day-to-day living, expansion of manual skills and greater control over economic resources, restoration of human dignity and

self-respect, and interaction with other social groups on a basis of mutual respect and equality (Ghai, 1990:3).

From a dependency point of view, development should not be about the exploitation of community members but, as Ghai (1990) explains, should be about economic and political freedom, the need to expand various skills to enable community members to benefit from resources found within their country (indigenisation and economic empowerment/black economic empowerment policies), and the ability of various groups to interact freely without any exploitation of the other.

### **2.2.2 The neoliberal shift in development policy**

In the 1980s, the neoliberal counter-revolution brought about a dramatic shift in development theory, as the state came to be seen as a barrier rather than a driving force in the development process (Mohan and Stokke, 2000:247). For neo-liberal scholars, the route to greater economic growth and therefore greater levels of well-being for all was through reducing state intervention and letting the market set prices and wages (Willis, 2006:47, 2011). Development was to shift from ‘centralized state planning to market liberalism, with the withdrawal of the State’ (Tembo, 2003:2). However, in the 1990s, neo-liberal development thinking later shifted from a mere concentration on the state’s retreat from controlling the market to also include an emphasis on institutional reforms (decentralization of the state) and social development (opening up of spaces for NGOs and other private organizations in development processes) (Mohan and Stokke, 2000).

Donors, Northern governments and international development organizations (International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) encouraged developing countries to carry out decentralization reforms as opposed to ‘state-led and centrally controlled forms of development ... which [they argued] had undermined development’ (Crawford 2005: 6). Decentralization (as highlighted below and further elaborated in Chapter 3) was presented as a model for successfully executing participatory development approaches. It was argued that by decentralizing through giving autonomy to sub-national government units, grassroots participation in local development projects would be facilitated (Mansuri and Rao, 2013). This was perceived to empower the poor at the local level since local government through locally elected council officials was supposed to focus downwardly and be accountable to community members. It was also argued that the decentralization of functions from the centre to the local level would ‘make development more

cost-effective and sustainable' (Friis-Hansen and Kyed, 2009:20). It was generally assumed that rural development was supposed to improve when local government responded favourably to community members' development needs and preferences.

It was within the new framework of restructuring the state and reducing its role in order to create spaces for civil society organizations that Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) came to the fore (Saito, 2008; Barret *et al.*, 2007; Attack, 1999). According to Willis (2006:98), NGOs came to be seen as the panacea for 'development problems' in that they were supposedly closer to community members and were also thought to be more participatory than governments (an issue discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4).

This revised neo-liberal line of thinking advocated for central government to transfer power to sub-national government units and also for central government to create spaces for the operation of development NGOs and other private organizations. The aim was to create efficiency in the participation of community members in local government and NGO development interventions. Participation in rural development interventions was expected to be spearheaded by autonomous local sub-national government units. These were supposed to be efficient and answerable to community members' development needs. Similarly, NGOs and other private organizations were brought in to assist in rural development. These were lauded to be more participatory than central government in their development interventions (Todaro and Smith, 2012). These issues will be discussed in detail in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively.

Development programmes focusing on decentralization initiatives and NGO work vis-à-vis the participation of community members in development projects shared some common goals which *inter alia* included the enhancement of local communities' participation in decision making processes, a bottom-up approach that responded to the development needs and priorities of local communities, an emphasis on rural communities' empowerment, and an improvement in the lives of community members through development projects. The above four goals among many others encompassed participatory development initiatives which were to be used by both sub-national government units and NGOs. Neo-liberal advocates argued that both decentralization and the inclusion of NGOs would consolidate downward accountability (Friis-Hansen and Kyed, 2009). NGOs, like decentralized units of government, were thought to be able to reach out to the poorest of the poor and 'empower' them through various development interventions (Edwards and Hulme, 1996, 1998; Hearn, 1998; Ebrahim, 2003a; Todaro and

Smith, 2012). Similarly, both were seen to pave way for the rural communities to make choices concerning their own development (Todaro and Smith, 2012; Saito, 2008). They were also regarded as the answer to the perceived limitations of the state in facilitating rural development (Mansuri and Rao, 2013; Chambers, 2008).

Participation has now gone ‘mainstream’ and is used by most government and development agencies. Government at times relies on local government structures (decentralization) to involve community members in development interventions while development agencies mostly rely on NGOs to carry out development projects in rural communities. Participation is sometimes understood as the involvement of people in decision making processes (Cohen and Uphoff cited in Parfitt, 2004:538), other times as an increase in people’s control over resources (Pearse and Stiefel, 1980), or as people influencing and sharing control over priority setting (World Bank cited in Pellegrini, 2012:189) and, in yet other literature, as the empowerment of the deprived and excluded (Ghai, 1990:3). However, despite their differences, the above approaches to participation share a common emphasis on the direct involvement of people in development activities, an area to which I now turn.

### **2.3 The historical precedents to participatory development**

In the above section it was noted that neoliberal thinking made a major contribution in promoting the idea of PD. The favouring of decentralization and NGOs was part of the broader move towards more participation. While there are quite different and distinct approaches to development which, differ in ideological orientation, there was a general increased emphasis on participation.

Accordingly, the idea of ‘participatory development’ (PD) rose to popularity amongst development practitioners and planners in the 1970s and 1980s. The ascent of ‘participation’ to prominence in development discourse – both in terms of practice and policy – came about for two reasons. The first was that the benefits of centrally planned development strategies had failed to reach the poor and greater participation was seen as a possible way to address this (Todaro and Smith, 2012; Mansuri and Rao, 2013). A second reason for the increased attention to ‘participation’ was that alternatives to top-down planning, particularly as demonstrated by social activists and NGOs, had emerged by the late 1970s and early 1980s (Chambers, 2008; Diale, 2009; Gaynor, 2010; Mansuri and Rao, 2013). It was in the early 1970s that participatory approaches appeared through the work of Paulo Freire, who raised awareness of the importance



of community know-how and experience (Blanchet, 2001:638). Freire (1972) argued that central to development was whether community members, who were once regarded as mere objects, exploited and acted upon, could now actively know and act, thereby becoming subjects of their own social destiny (Goulet, 1989:165). These participatory approaches mainly focused on issues of social change based on an opposition to oppressive rule. They encompassed early notions of liberation theology that had emerged in the 1960s (Friis-Hansen and Kyed, 2009).

In the mid-1980s popular participation emerged with a view on how best rural communities could participate meaningfully in development processes. This was in reaction to top-down and blue-print development projects which were excluding rural communities from active participation in the development process (Friis-Hansen and Kyed, 2009, Mansuri and Rao, 2013). The 1980s saw the introduction of various participatory approaches – Rapid Rural Appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal among many others (discussed in detail in a section below) as a way of putting more emphasis on the importance of involving community members in the planning of development interventions as well as calling on development ‘experts’ to facilitate rather than control the development process (Chambers, 2008). However, a weakness of such development interventions was that there were limited changes in the power structures between the development ‘experts’, government agents, local elites and the ordinary community members (Hickey and Mohan, 2003). Much focus was on community participation in development projects without considering broader political issues of power (Friis-Hansen and Kyed, 2009).

In the 1990s, participatory development turned to focus on broader issues such as democratization, decentralization of sub-national government units in order to allow for participatory democratic developmental processes (discussed in a section below and in Chapter 3), civil society, NGOs and participatory development projects (discussed in detail in Chapter 4), and citizen participation in governance among many other issues. The major debate on participatory development now focused on social and political issues. According to Gaventa (2002), poor communities were supposed to be heard and both local government and NGOs were expected to be accountable and responsive to community members’ needs. This entailed good governance where participation and governance were expected to occur in tandem. The argument was that participation was to be perceived as ‘a right and obligation of citizenship’ (Friis-Hansen and Kyed, 2009:27).

More recently, the emphasis has come to be placed on the notion of PD or how to make development programmes and projects more ‘participatory’ and thus more likely to achieve their expected outcomes. It cannot therefore be denied that ‘central to the idea of people’s participation in development, however diverse and contested its definition and scope, is inclusiveness – the inclusion in decision making of those most affected by the intervention’ (Agarwal, 2001:1623). Participatory development in its current form is taken as a primary right of each community member (Hickey and Mohan, 2003). Many observers therefore are in agreement that ‘participation – a say in development policies by the people most affected by them – is in itself, a chief end of development’ (Todaro and Smith, 2012:549).

Gaynor (2010) and Mansuri and Rao (2013) note that participatory approaches in development projects are supposed to be associated with dynamics of power relations that result in the empowerment of vulnerable groups by participating in planning, and increasing their influential power on the policy makers. ‘Genuine’ participation is to be achieved when all the local people set development objectives for themselves. People-centred development therefore seeks to effect changes in the status quo within each community, and this can be done through ensuring that the poor participate in development and control the outcome of such development. In other words, PD should be seen as an active process in which development plans or schemes are constructed and pursued by local communities, guided by their own initiatives and using means and processes over which they have effective control.

## **2.4 Participatory project planning**

In PD literature (for instance, Crewe and Harrison, 1998; Kapoor, 2005; Gaventa and Cornwall, 2006; Adler, 2012; Knight, 2013; Mansuri and Rao, 2013; Banks *et al.*, 2015; Osei, 2017; Brass *et al.*, 2018) there has been a tendency by both government and NGOs to undermine the interests of local communities in favour of their own development needs and priorities. PD approaches can therefore produce effective results if they are organised, designed and planned in such a way that they genuinely engage local communities in every phase of the proposed development intervention/project. Thus, a major strategy to address the non-involvement of local communities in participatory development interventions is for both the government and NGOs to adhere to the dictates of ‘participatory project planning’ (Makuwira, 2018:428). The approach is supposed to be all-encompassing in terms of stakeholder participation (European Commission - EuropeAid, 2002). Project planning involves steps taken in order to accomplish some set goals (Grant-

Writing-Training-Manual, n.d). In participatory project planning, it is anticipated that ‘the community and its involvement are central to designing and implementing a successful project’ (Grant-Writing-Training-Manual, n.d). The approach is opposed to a situation where NGOs or government set ‘a predetermined agenda for the kind of services they offer’ (Makuwira, 2018:428). An all-inclusive participatory project plan is one ‘based on community goals or action strategies developed through community meetings and gatherings ... or other planning processes’ (Grant-Writing-Training-Manual, n.d). The participatory project planning phases are expected to create a favourable environment that paves way for individuals, groups and communities to be part and parcel of the development intervention right from the project’s conception to its evaluation (Tsigas *et al.*, 2016).

Perceptions from mainstream literature suggest that when NGOs/governments plan on development interventions (participatory project planning) it is not about merely involving community members in supplying their labour, but it means involving them in contributing ideas, making decisions, and taking responsibility of the development process (Osei, 2017). Government in general and NGOs in particular are expected to be ‘willing to open up to new realities of life and to understand the implications of their work for the people they seek to support’ (Makuwira, 2018:429). The argument is that government and NGOs should put ‘at the forefront of development agendas and practices the right of citizens and communities to determine their own development’ (Girei, 2016:207). The delicate balance between external involvement in development projects (NGOs/government) and the support to community members to participate in their own development is supposed to be managed well in order for project beneficiaries to have a sense of ownership which leads to the sustainability of the rural project (Osei, 2017; Girei, 2016).

Participatory development can be effective if the voices of both local communities and development architects (NGO/government officials) are ‘heard in rural development planning and projects’ (Osei, 2017:499). The participatory project planning stages can be theorized as follows: conceptualization of the development intervention (through needs assessments), the planning process, the implementation stage, and the monitoring and evaluation phases. Below, I briefly explain how community members can be involved in participatory development initiatives vis-à-vis the various stages of participatory project planning. The main focus of this

analysis will be limited to community participation in relation to how community members can be encouraged to participate in development interventions that affect their lives and, where possible, I will give brief case study examples to consolidate my arguments.

#### **2.4.1 Project conceptualization**

Project conceptualization ‘includes the preliminary evaluation of an idea’ to see whether it is feasible (Kerzner, 2009:68) and it can also be regarded as the ‘stage [where] a project is determined as being necessary’ for undertaking (Slevin and Pinto, 1987:170). Here, development alternatives are developed and evaluated (Khang and Moe, 2008) and these alternatives are expected to come directly from decisions made by grassroots communities themselves (Osei, 2017; Grant-Writing-Training-Manual, n.d). In order to avoid a situation where elite preferences take precedence over the development priorities of other less powerful community members, Aga *et al.* (2018) suggest that external agents (government and NGOs) should use suitable participatory approaches when engaging with community members.

A variety of participatory approaches can be applied when involving community members in the conceptualization, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation phases of the project. Lavagnon *et al.* (2010:69) put forward some participatory tools which they believe can best help capture the development needs and priorities of grassroots communities in the conceptualization phase. They emphasize that community involvement in project identification and design can include, but is not limited to ‘workshop-based methods’ where communities meet to deliberate on project design purposes; ‘community-based methods’ where techniques such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Participatory Action Research (PAR), and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) are used to capture people’s development choices; and ‘methods of stakeholder consultation’ where external agents listen to the views of stakeholders by conducting a ‘beneficiary assessment’ or needs assessment. Needs assessment implies a community-wide collection of development inputs or opinions which are then examined in order to ‘prioritize problems and basic needs of the community’ (Grant-Writing-Training-Manual, n.d).

A very important aspect of the conceptualization phase is when community members are required to prioritize the list of projects selected. Participatory techniques which can help to move such a process forward, among many others, include ranking and scoring, community surveys, collaborations/dialogue, mapping, pair-wise ranking systems, and transect walks

(Kumar, 2002; Kindon, 2007; Chambers, 2008; Bozalek, 2014; Grant-Writing-Training-Manual, n.d). I will engage further with the above techniques and strategies in a section below.

The conceptualization phase is a critical component of participatory processes in that it helps in the identification and assessment of relevant community needs that match the development priorities of grassroots communities (Khang and Moe, 2008). In some cases, external development agents have come up with uniform development projects for different localities and this has raised eyebrows on whether local communities ever participated in the project conceptualization phase. In a study of Ghanaian NGOs, it was observed that though rural communities have divergent ‘development needs and priorities’, NGOs (and government) tend to ‘categorize them as rural communities with the same social and economic needs’ (Osei, 2017:499). This observation echoes earlier findings of a study carried out by Tembo (2003) on NGO development work in selected rural communities in Malawi. To quote him in detail:

As one field officer put it, ‘We do not impose projects on people; we are community-driven.’ However, as I moved from one village to another, I was struck by how similar the assistance offered by different development NGOs was. In every village, people pointed to wells, school buildings, clinic shelters ... and so on. I paused to ask myself why there was such uniformity and wondered if all those villages shared common problems. From my interaction ... I learnt that this was not the case, people's livelihoods were of a diverse nature. This uniformity in actual projects was a result of the top-down nature of ‘participation’ ... (Tembo, 2003:91).

Tembo (2003) found that there was a rather stereotypical priority list of development projects (where each village has the same NGO development projects as other villages) which is at odds with the diverse preferences local people in different communities have. Tembo questions whether it is really the people’s choice that results in various villages coming up with homogenous development projects. In Tembo’s view, the best explanation for this homogeneity is that the only choice that people had was to choose development projects from a list of NGO pre-planned projects. It may also be argued that such development projects, though purported to have been prioritized by the local communities, tend to undermine the poor masses’ own development choices as they foster a kind of ‘homogenized’ development initiative. Communities think differently and, ideally, ‘development is not shaped by the helpers but by the ones being helped’ (Tsiga *et al.*, 2016:244).

Allowing local communities to self-identify their development priorities is the first step in promoting project sustainability and long-term empowerment. The project planning phase, to

which I now turn, takes place after grassroots communities have selected or conceptualized a development intervention of their choice.

#### **2.4.2 Project planning**

The planning stage is ‘the actual planning and design of a project’ (Grant-Writing-Training-Manual, n.d) and involves ‘a more formalized set of plans’ (Slevin and Pinto, 1987:170) which helps in achieving the project’s (community-driven) goals and objectives. These plans should have a significant influence on the project’s success and sustainability’ (Aga *et al.*, 2018:528). The planning process generally begins when development agents and community members begin to assess available resources that ‘will help determine the best strategy for implementing’ the development intervention chosen in the preliminary conceptualization phase (Grant-Writing-Training-Manual, n.d). Resources that exist within the community are identified in order to also cut unnecessary project costs.

The project design phase focuses on the resources which a community is committed and ready to disburse during the implementation of the project (Khang and Moe, 2008). Identification of such resources can be done through participatory techniques such as mapping and resource ranking or generally through PRA, PLA or PAR methodologies (Mansuri and Rao, 2013; Bozalek, 2014). The community members’ various capabilities are also considered since, during the implementation phase, these community competencies need to be made ‘available to support the project plan’ when it is launched (Khang and Moe, 2008:76). Estimates about the duration of the project are also included in the project plan (Kerzner, 2009).

After various pertinent issues which include ‘scheduling, budgeting, and the allocation of other specific tasks and resources’ (Slevin and Pinto, 1987:170) have been factored into the planning phase, local communities are once again consulted to either endorse or make some changes to the document before it is sent to donors or government for funding (Khang and Moe, 2008; Tsiga *et al.*, 2016). According to Osei (2017:499), such consultation is important because ‘externally planned and implemented rural development projects’ have totally failed as compared to ‘those that have had local input’. In some rural communities, NGOs and local government officials simply impose development interventions as dictated by donors and central government (Makuwira, 2018; Cheeseman *et al.*, 2016; Basiru and Adepoju, 2018). However, the:

adoption of a standardized approach works against an effective engagement with local communities, not only because lived experiences, challenges and aspirations hardly fit the mechanical reasoning that underpins development management tools and systems, but especially because the adoption of standardized management models seems to be detrimental to meaningful bottom-up participation and contribution (Girei, 2016:205).

It is important for external agents to understand that ‘development projects should not be imposed on local communities’ (Ntuli *et al.*, 2018:17), and grassroots communities are expected to lead ‘the decision making of rural development projects from their initial goal setting to final evaluation phases’ (Osei, 2017:498). The implementation phase, to which I now turn, is just as important as the conceptualization and planning phases, in that it also involves the direct participation of community members in the development intervention.

### **2.4.3 Project implementation**

According to Slevin and Pinto (1987:170), project implementation ‘involves the actual "work" of the project’. This involves the mobilization of resources, the carrying out of various activities consistent with the development plan and a combined effort to come up with the desired outputs (Khang and Moe, 2008). In rural communities, there is a ‘wealth of human capacities and community resources that could be tapped and used in rural development processes’ (Osei, 2017:499). The resources are organized by the community members themselves while others are sourced from external agents. Grassroots communities contribute directly with labour and some materials to the project. These contributions can be perceived in two ways, either as means or ends. Participation as a means or an end is examined in detail in the section below. In the former, communities participate in a development project in order to achieve the external agent’s predetermined goals (Mansuri and Rao, 2013; Kumar, 2006; Parfitt, 2004) while, in the latter, there is a consolidation of communities’ capabilities in and through a development intervention (Mansuri and Rao, 2013). Local communities’ retaining of control over how resources are used and how decisions are made helps create a sense of ownership and, as well, the sustainability of the project is guaranteed when the external agent leaves (Aga *et al.*, 2018). Development projects are supposed ‘to emerge from a process of participatory discussion’ with community members ‘so that they own the projects’ (Cracknell, 2000:98).

When government and NGOs fail to involve local communities in ‘needs assessment, project design and planning’ (Aga *et al.*, 2018:529-30) as well as ‘tapping into local needs ... and building on the strengths of existing institutions and resources’ (Grant-Writing-Training-

Manual, n.d), this leads to a ‘lack of ownership, credibility, trust and participation’ among the intended beneficiaries (Ntuli *et al.*, 2018:17). For instance, in a study of some Ugandan NGOs, one interviewee revealed that:

In this village an international organization constructed a gravity water scheme. The organization left that area like ten years ago. But when you ask people ‘Do you have water?’ they say ‘Yes ... that is XYZ’s water’, mentioning the organization, because it came from outside not from them. Yes, well they have water, they needed water, but the organization, the approach they used ... they just gave them water, they didn’t train them to own and when like a tap or a pipe breaks they just leave it, because it is not their water. They are actually the ones benefiting from it, but they look at it as external, not from them (Girei, 2017:204).

Development initiatives which involve local communities can motivate them to ‘develop a sense of ownership ... and as owners they strive to protect and sustain what they believe belongs to them’ (Osei, 2017:502). For instance, where local communities are largely involved in the development process, they can confidently say ‘this project is MINE!’ or ‘the project idea is OURS!’ (Aga *et al.*, 2018:530). The strong feelings of project ownership can be realized if beneficiaries are knowledgeable about ‘a project’s initiation, design and mode of implementation’, have invested their ‘energy, time, skill, ideas, values and effort’ in the project, and have ‘control and power’ over the project (Aga *et al.*, 2018:530). When communities are not involved in various phases of the project cycle, the outcome will resemble that described in Girei’s (2016) findings where grassroots communities felt detached from a project in their area.

#### **2.4.4 Project monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation are also crucial for the success of a participatory intervention. In this sub-section, I limit monitoring and evaluation to exercises that specifically focus on local community input. Project monitoring involves ‘the establishment of mechanisms aimed at continuously looking into the general performance’ (Chigwata and Ziswa, 2018:312) of a development project and, where necessary, allowing some ‘small adjustments’ in the various phases of the project ‘to ensure the project’s success’ (Grant-Writing-Training-Manual, n.d). Project evaluation shares some similarities with project monitoring. It is defined as ‘the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project or programme, its design, implementation and results (Austrian Development Agency, 2009:1).

Both project monitoring and evaluation aim to determine ‘the progress of the programme and the loopholes to be addressed’ (Tsiga *et al.*, 2016:245). Issues examined include the efficacy



of objectives set, impact of project on community members as well as its sustainability (Khang and Moe, 2008). Community members are expected to give their views on what they perceive as strengths and weaknesses of each development phase that their project has gone through. Community involvement in project monitoring and evaluation can include, but is not limited to, PRA, PAR and PAL strategies and techniques, that is, impact diagrams, participatory census and collaborations/dialogue (Kumar, 2002, Kindon *et al.*, 2007; Chambers, 2008). I will engage further with these techniques and strategies in Section 2.6 below.

As indicated in the above brief analysis of each participatory project planning sequence, the circumstances which are required to enable the success of each phase involves the participation of the beneficiaries in all phases of the project cycle and, above all, a commitment of NGOs or government to create favourable conditions for such participatory processes to take place.

## **2.5 Key issues related to participatory development**

As a way of further understanding the relevance of involving local communities in development programmes, some key issues related to PD will be analysed. These are: local knowledge and the participation of people in development projects, conscientization of the community in undertaking development projects, empowerment of local people in development projects, and participation in development projects as a means or an end.

### **2.5.1 Local knowledge and the participation of people in development projects**

Advocates of PD argue that it is often the case that during development interventions, knowledge possessed by the rural poor is overlooked or ignored (Chambers, 2008; Berman, 2017). Outsiders and researchers often determine the ground rules for projects based on assumptions that may or may not be applicable in the local context (Mosse and Lewis, 2005). This imposes others' values and views as accepted knowledge while possibly ignoring other epistemologies and ways of knowing that may exist within a given community. PD practitioners, such as Chambers (2008), argue that official experts and managers of development projects need to approach local people as the experts in the area where they live and work. While outside technical experts have a sound knowledge about specific issues, they often lack the holistic knowledge of interrelationships within a given place. PD advocates therefore value local knowledge which can be understood as relating to the entire system of concepts, beliefs and perceptions that people hold about the world

around them (Warburton and Martin, 1999; Gudyanga, 2007; Berman, 2017). These include the way people observe and measure their surroundings, how they solve problems and validate new information (Gudyanga, 2007).

As pointed out above (Chambers, 2008), it is important that people take a leading role in their own development initiatives, using local knowledge in safeguarding their own interests. In the preceding section it was noted that participatory techniques, like PAR, enhance the participation of local communities in facilitating their own development initiatives based on their own 'local values and capacities', so as to liberate them from government/NGO dominated development interventions. According to Fals Borda and Rahman (1991), academic knowledge (or the knowledge of NGO and government experts) combined with popular knowledge and wisdom (the knowledge of the community/locals) may as a result give a total scientific knowledge of a transformative nature which challenges the prevailing status quo. Chambers (1994b:1439) is of the view that the sharing of knowledge (between locals and 'development experts') should take three main forms, that is:

- Local people share knowledge among themselves, especially through analysis in groups.
- Local people share that knowledge with outsiders. (As a condition for facilitating this process, outsiders restrain themselves from putting forward their own ideas, at least at first, or imposing their own reality).
- Outsiders themselves share what they learn with each other and with local people.

This is in line with what Fals Borda (1985) terms the destruction of an unjust power structure. The decisions and knowledge that have an effect on people's lives should not be the preserve of a 'monopoly of expert knowledge producers, who exercise power over others through their expertise' (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2006, Berman, 2017). Rather, locals should be at the forefront of their own development mainly through the use of their own knowledge. Local knowledge empowers local communities based on local understandings which are developed in collaboration or partnership with 'outsiders' (NGOs/Government) and, in this process, there is a dialogue between the locals and the 'outsiders' in order to come up with project priority areas that best suit the locals. This entails an empowerment of underprivileged constituencies through the utilization of participatory approaches which mainly focus on what Ger (1997) terms an 'understanding of local opportunities and constraints'. Dianne Rocheleau (1991:111-112) succinctly points out that:

For some professional scientists, ‘participatory research’ implies that ‘we’ allow ‘them’ (farmers) to participate in ‘our’ research. For community organizers or rural communities, it may mean that ‘they’ allow outsiders (us) to take part in local land use experiments and their interpretation. What is implied, but seldom realized, is that we need to join together people and institutions with very distinct traditions of acquiring and testing knowledge, in order to develop agroforestry land use practices of interest to both.

Though Rocheleau uses the example of agroforestry, her example is applicable to a range of other contexts. What is needed is to merge ‘expert’ and local knowledge in order to build development projects which are of interest to both the local communities and the ‘experts’. In our case, NGO or government development ‘experts’ can first engage with local communities on project priority areas and their feasibility. The practicability of the development initiative can best be analysed with the help of the development ‘experts’. A development intervention which is done through a thorough consultation with the local community is most likely to succeed.

### **2.5.2 Conscientization of the community in development projects**

The works of Paulo Freire stimulated a worldwide movement in the pedagogy of literacy (Rahman, 1993) and this includes the notion of the ‘conscientization of the masses’ in transforming their social reality. Conscientization is concerned with a mental reawakening of the once oppressed (in our case, poor rural communities), making them aware of their ability to transform their world or environment through conscious action. Through conscientization, local people will be able to realize that they share a common problem which they can solve through cooperation.

In most cases, poor and marginalized people are not organized into groups through which they can improve their lives. They may be unaware of how to organize to improve their situation, but through a process of conscientization they could come to realize that ‘effective participation requires their involvement not just as individuals but as a collectivity’ (Agarwal, 2001:1623). In all forms of development interventions, emphasis should be put on community participation through a collectivity. In such a context, people may organize themselves in a manner, as decided by them, that best suits their purposes.

Development can only thrive where the local community is aware of their capabilities and how best they can use those capabilities and resources to develop themselves. A lack of an awareness or experience within the community on how best to organize themselves in order to participate in their own development can be a great impediment to development initiatives.

Awareness can either be from within or it may be catalyzed by outsiders. The outsiders act as a channel (catalyst) to enhance local people's awareness on how best they can initiate or spearhead their own development. As outlined earlier on by Fals Borda (1985), expert and local knowledge should be fused. The NGO or government can help the 'project group' function and they may also advise community members on how they can achieve their development goals (Mansuri and Rao, 2013).

According to Rahman (1993:82), if the poor and oppressed become self-conscious, they will progressively transform their environment by their own praxis. In this process, others (NGOs/government) may play a catalytic and supportive role, but ought not to dominate. This implies that a conscientized people through the support of 'outsiders' can pave the way for their own development with no strings attached by 'outsiders'. Conscientization means the power to choose or determine what is considered as valid or useful knowledge. A conscientized community should take heed of Rahnema's (1992:125) warning that, 'highly ideologized "agents of change" or "vanguards" have tried to use conscientization or participatory methods, simply as a new and subtler form of manipulation'. For example, development interventions are sometimes used by politicians as a means of consolidating their rural vote (an issue which I will further discuss in Chapters 6 and 8). By upholding and promoting development interventions through local community activists, the state may in a way be reinforcing its 'patronizing framework and network' (Samah and Aref, 2009:65).

Rahman (1993) further notes that, a 'vanguard' party can assume that it shares the consciousness of the oppressed masses and will mobilize them for social revolution and social reconstruction. However, in such endeavors, newer forms of domination over the masses have emerged and, to this end, the vanguard parties have not shown much sensitivity. Similarly, Shepherd (1998:181) accuses NGOs of trying to take 'the concept of participation as their own, [while being] as idealistic and demagogic about it as the previous generation of rural development workers'. Rahnema and Rahman's views on vanguard parties and Shepherd's perception on NGOs will be further interrogated in Chapters 6 and 8.

### **2.5.3 Empowerment of local people in development projects**

Narayan (2002:13-14) notes that various terms are associated with empowerment. These include self-strength, control, self-power, self-reliance, own choice, life of dignity in accordance with one's values, capacity to fight for one's rights, independence, own decision making, being free,

awakening, and capability. Oakley (1991) is of the view that empowerment can be about developing the skills of disadvantaged communities as to enable them to negotiate with either government, NGOs or development experts on how to develop their localities. It can also be about poor communities deciding, on their own, the type of development intervention that best suit their area. It can be stated that empowerment encompasses both perspectives. It can either involve a catalyst (NGO/government) working with local communities in improving their lives or it is concerned with the local communities acting on their own to develop themselves. The major issue regarding outside assistance is to address the question of control and decision-making in such a way that local communities will also be able to decide on their own development initiatives through the assistance of a catalyst.

When potential beneficiaries are able to make key decisions, participation becomes self-initiated action which is known as the ‘exercise of voice and choice’, or ‘empowerment’ (Mansuri and Rao, 2013:15). Effective participation in decision-making processes is fundamental to community empowerment in that local communities are integrated into the system to take control of the development interventions. Such integration does not only empower the participants, but also enhances the legitimization of development initiatives (Fabricius, 2004:28). The local community will accept the development proposal as their own by taking ownership of the development intervention.

Scholars such as Cooke and Kothari (2001), Platteau and Gaspart (2003), Platteau and Abraham (2002), Mosse (2005) and many others have argued that, despite the noble intention of empowerment, many development interventions are controlled by those who own the resources or by a group of elites within the community. Rahnema questions the logic behind ‘induced’ empowerment. His argument is that:

When A considers it essential for B to be empowered, A assumes not only that B has no power – or does not have the right kind of power – but also that A has a secret formula to which B has to be initiated (Rahnema, 1992: 123).

This implies that a catalyst decides how the poor rural communities should be empowered, which in normal circumstances is supposed to be done by the marginalized communities themselves. In this sense, rural empowerment becomes an ‘outsider’ dominated process.

#### **2.5.4 Participation in development projects as a means or an end**

Two different approaches have evolved in relation to participation in general. It is noteworthy that the two approaches have much in common with what has been discussed under the other dimensions. However, I include them here since they help in consolidating as well as providing deeper meaning into what was discussed above. These approaches are sometimes distinguished by referring to whether they regard participation as a means or an end. Cleaver (1999:598) points out that these divergent schools of thought, distinguish between efficiency arguments (participation as a tool for achieving better project outcomes) and equity and empowerment arguments (participation as a process which enhances the capacity of individuals to improve their own lives and facilitates social change to the advantage of disadvantaged or marginalized groups). Oakley and Marsden (1984) narrow their analysis of participation down to these two broad and sharply contrasting interpretations of participation. They highlight that ‘where “participation” is interpreted basically as a means it is essentially describing a state or an input into a development programme; where it is interpreted as an end in itself, it refers to a process the outcome of which is meaningful participation’ (Oakley and Marsden, 1984:27).

The above scholars give an example of community development programmes which were aimed at ‘preparing’ the rural population to collaborate with government development plans. This entailed the establishment of formal organizations mainly consisting of co-operatives, farmers’ associations and so on which were to provide the structure through which the rural people could have some contact with, and voice in, development programmes. However, few communities achieved meaningful participation through the above programmes. In such processes, outsiders ‘mobilize’ the people to take part in activities which are determined from the outside. Government bureaucracy in the process of implementation invites the rural population to endorse and to collaborate with the decisions taken. Officials are not concerned with creating effective power. In the absence of local control, ‘participation’ is little more than a means of preparing local communities to collaborate with government or NGO development plans. Mansuri and Rao (2013:5) have also noted that:

During the course of a project, cash or other material payoffs induce people to participate and build networks—but these mechanisms tend to dissolve when the incentives are withdrawn. Only when projects explicitly link community-based organizations with markets, or provide skills training, do they tend to improve group cohesiveness and collective action beyond the life of the project.

In this passive form of ‘participation’ highlighted by Oakley and Marsden (1984) and Mansuri and Rao (2013), the majority of the rural communities thus remain excluded from involvement in both government and NGO development interventions. The first two authors, therefore, note that there is very little evidence in the literature to support any claim that government-sponsored participation projects (which tend to regard participation as a means to an end) have created any spaces for effective power for the majority of rural communities, an issue discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Oakley and Marsden (1984) note that participation as an end, is concerned with the empowerment and liberation of the poor rural communities in terms of development processes. Participation is regarded as ‘empowering’ the poorer sections of the rural population when they are able to take independent, collective action in order to improve their social status. When viewed as an end, participation seeks to give or transfer power to the powerless. Both authors acknowledge that such participation initiatives ‘from below’ are faced with the dilemma of attempting to flourish within the context of an already well-established anti-participatory power structure.

The many perspectives expressed under local knowledge, conscientization, empowerment, and ‘means’ and ‘ends’ all emphasise that the local people/communities should be made to lead and control their development as the major role actors in the development processes.

## **2.6 Ways in which NGOs practice participatory development – PAR, PLA and PRA**

As PD has shifted from the margins to the mainstream (Cornwall, 2000:5), various philosophical and theoretical perspectives have resulted in a proliferation of approaches to the practice of PD (Keough, 1998:188). Some of the most prominent resulting approaches to be discussed below are Participatory Action Research (PAR), Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). The approaches in development are too numerous to mention. A few other examples are Participatory Appraisal of Natural Resources (PANR), Participatory Analysis and Learning Methods (PALM), Participatory Appraisal (PA), Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and so on. The ones I have cited above have some relevance to some arguments raised in my study, especially in Chapters 6, 8 and 9. It is worth mentioning that in this section I give a lengthy discussion of PRA, PAR and PLA as mainly used by NGOs. Though reference is also given to government and development agents, the major focus here is on NGO practice.

### 2.6.1 Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Participatory Action Research (PAR) seeks to set in motion processes of social change by the local communities themselves, as they become aware of their own reality (conscientization). The basic premise of this approach is that community members are quite capable of analysing their own realities and in the process can bring about changes in their situation (Kindon *et al.*, 2007). In PAR thinking, participation need not degenerate into a bureaucratic, top-down and dependency-creating process (Rahnema, 1992:121; Mansuri and Rao, 2013). PAR endeavours to create a more autonomous and favourable environment for local communities to come up with decisions on which development projects best suit their situation or address some of their problems. Rural communities have not had much of a say on how their areas should be developed. It has always been NGO or government experts who prescribe what type of development should be taken by these communities. Fals Borda (1985:94) suggests that PAR could radicalize the rural masses in such a way that they have a say in social, economic and political issues that concern their daily lives.

Though NGOs might meet the major costs of a development project, the local people are also seen to have a say in their own development. PAR therefore attempts to fuse NGO development initiatives with those of community members thus giving them a voice in their own development without undermining the pivotal role outsiders (NGOs and government) play in the development process. Rahman (1993:80) emphasizes that:

Dependence of the people on the initial catalysts is supposed to cease, through the generation and development of internal leadership, cadres and skills. This does not mean actual physical withdrawal of the catalysts from people's processes, but the people should within a reasonable time be able to carry on with their collective activities on their own, while a catalyst may continue his or her association with such processes and seek new roles in their progressive development.

NGOs still play a role in local community development provided their input in the decision-making process or in the setting of development priority areas remains subordinate to the local community's collective interests and decisions. The development of internal leadership to oversee the development intervention is only possible when the local community is fully conscientized. PAR can therefore be considered to represent a 'counterhegemonic approach to knowledge production' (Kindon *et al.*, 2007:9).



### **2.6.2 Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)**

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is an approach for learning about and engaging with communities and is intended among many other things to facilitate a process of collective analysis and learning between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’. PLA can be used in carrying out baseline surveys and other needs assessments. It is able to go beyond mere consultation and promote the active participation of communities in the issues and interventions that shape their lives. It calls for a new bond between the catalyst and the local community being investigated, in which the community members now become the major ‘actors’. In PLA, it is necessary that the local communities participate in research and analysis of their own reality. The essentials of PLA can therefore be summarized as follows:

Participatory: It is based on a participatory principle which eliminates, through effective dialogue, the distinctions between the researcher/investigator and the poor/beneficiaries ... Learning: A basic premise is that the perceptions of the poor ... are different from the perceptions of outsiders ... It is the perceptions of the poor that should form the basic point of reference for any analysis ... Action: A convergence of perceptions between the concerned outsider and the poor is possible only through a continual dialogical process which is essentially action-based (Burkey, 1993: 62).

Through dialogue, the NGO ‘catalyst’ and community members can investigate or examine a certain issue (emanating from the use of some of the methods and techniques discussed below) and then act on it; and, if that does not produce the desired results, then they together consider other options to the problem. After having reached a consensus on the best solution to the recurrent problem, they once again act on it. The awareness of local communities of their circumstances and the deep causes of their predicament will force them to act. In such a context, it is therefore important that the change agent keeps in mind that they are merely ‘facilitators’ and nothing else. PLA entails that the catalyst assists in making the local community act on their situation so that the ‘insiders’ themselves become the drivers of their own development. In addition, Burkey (1993:74) argues that, ‘the facilitator should not implement projects, but merely assist groups of people in carrying out their own projects.’

### **2.6.3 Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)**

Robert Chambers has been acknowledged as one of the leading proponents of PD owing to his extensive research on PRA. According to Williams (2004:557), PRA employs ‘techniques used to mobilize local knowledge in the conduct of development programmes’ as well as ‘mobilizing indigenous capacities for self-management of development projects.’ This PD approach has

‘continued to be used despite its disappearance from the headlines of development debates’ (Cornwall and Pratt, 2011:271), and it has enabled development agencies and government officers to rethink and seek to transform their practices (Cornwall and Pratt, 2003:1). Shepherd (1998:200) citing Chambers (1993) states that PRA started as bundles of techniques derived from agro-ecosystem analysis, applied anthropology, field research on farming systems, rapid rural appraisal, and as an approach derived from participatory action research.

Chambers describes PRA ‘as a growing family of approaches and methods to enable local (rural or urban) people to express, enhance, share and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act’ (Chambers, 1994a: 1253). He highlights that PRA’s major aim is not to extract local knowledge for analysis elsewhere, but to mobilize indigenous capacities for the self-management of development projects. This therefore means that PRA’s foremost concern is to ‘empower local communities’ (Chambers, 1994b:1444-5).

According to PRA, community members themselves are the ones who should participate in the processing of the information needed for their development planning. They should decide, use and own the information. As they participate (using some of the PRA techniques mentioned below), they make crucial decisions which will be used by them, or by ‘outsiders’ to develop their locality.

#### **2.6.4 What do PRA, PAR and PLA practitioners mainly focus on?**

A growing conscientization among NGO practitioners, government development officials and researchers has led to the use of a range of participatory approaches (PAR, PLA and PRA among others), as a way to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions of community members vis-à-vis various social, economic and political issues. The major argument in favour of the use of such participatory approaches is that community members are knowledgeable and conscious of their surroundings and that there is a need to take this repository of indigenous knowledge into account rather than over relying on NGO experts for such knowledge. These approaches have been adopted by many organizations in order to try to access this knowledge and develop such a repository.

The aims of the above three similar but separate approaches are as follows. First, to empower the local communities by creating awareness on how best they could develop themselves (conscientization-PAR). Second, the goal is to make the facilitator (NGO) subordinate to the local people’s development initiatives (PLA). Finally, the objective is to

mobilize local knowledge in conducting development interventions (PRA). PLA concentrates in identifying the needs of community members by involving them in planning, monitoring or evaluating projects and programmes by themselves (Bozalek, 2014:56). On the other hand, PAR focuses on dialogue, storytelling and collective action (Kindon, *et al.*, 2007) to enable community members to come up with information as well as share knowledge with the development experts. This is done on the terms of community members by using local symbols and language. PRA focuses on various methods or approaches (maps, calendars, diagrams and so on) to enable community members to ‘share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act’ (Absalom *et al.*, 1995:1). The important goal of the participatory approaches is actually trying to encourage local people to take ownership, with others (e.g. NGO workers, government officials and researchers) playing the role of catalyst or supporter. All these approaches encourage community-based analysis of social problems.

Techniques or methods used by either PAR, PLA or PRA practitioners in providing spaces for community members to articulate their problems, preferences and priorities include social mapping, participatory modelling, mobility maps, seasonal diagrams, trend analyses, services and opportunities maps, participatory census methods, time lines, dream maps, impact diagrams, well-being ranking methods, pie diagrams, pair-wise ranking methods, livelihood analysis and so on (Chambers, 2008; Kindon *et al.*, 2007; Bozalek, 2014). These participatory methods (applied in one way or the other by either PRA, PLA or PAR practitioners) have received some support especially from non-literate and disenfranchised community members because these methods enable people to depict their situations through maps and diagrams which they have analysed themselves, thus paving the way for ‘suitable’ development interventions to change their lives.

To get an understanding of how these methods and techniques work, it is helpful to explore a few examples. It is also worth noting that some PAR, PLA and PRA practitioners have favoured one or more specific techniques. In most cases, the choice of method or technique depends on particular contextual issues or on the situation on the ground.

#### **2.6.4.1 Wealth-ranking**

When trying to assess the economic status of villagers, the PAR wealth ranking technique can be used. Here, the NGO can ask the participants to come up with their own indicators of wealth in the community and these would then be used to rank household wealth (White and Pettit, 2004;

Chambers, 2008). The approach helps NGO (or government) development practitioners to identify community members who really need assistance especially if the intervention concerns helping the most vulnerable members within a given community. This technique also applies in PLA and PRA.

#### ***2.6.4.2 Ranking and scoring***

In this approach, NGO officials can ask community members to identify development interventions of their choice. After this exercise, the participants are asked to rank these projects according to their usefulness or importance to the whole community. The project with the highest score then becomes the first project that the NGO (or government) officials can then fund within a given community (Kumar, 2002; Chambers, 2008).

#### ***2.6.4.3 Collaborations/Dialogue***

This PAR technique is often used for needs assessments (Baum *et al.*, 2006). The NGO development practitioners engage the community in deliberations whereby community members identify problems as well as prioritize them. Joint planning between community members and the outsiders then takes place. The project is then implemented and later evaluated through the assistance of the community. PAR techniques or methods provide the ways in which community members can participate as a collective in learning and then later act on what they would have learnt (Bozalek, 2014). This applies to all three approaches but most particularly to PAR.

#### ***2.6.4.4 Mapping***

In mapping, the local community may decide on where a borehole, school, clinic or other necessity should be located (Kumar, 2002, Kindon *et al.*, 2007; Chambers, 2008). Mapping is imperative in community work since it helps start discussions as well as assisting communities to prioritize some prevailing conditions which may need to be changed (Bozalek, 2014). These approaches, instead of being mere research techniques, can be considered as a channel of empowerment itself. One form of mapping involves the mapping of services and opportunities. This helps in presenting the availability of various services and opportunities in the locality. These depictions help development experts to know exactly which area in the village is not well serviced regarding schools, clinics, boreholes and so on (Kumar, 2002; Chambers, 2008). This best suits PRA and PLA. Through mapping, communities depict the situation regarding roads, schools, drinking water facilities, community gardens, clinics, and so on. What is important

about such maps is that they depict what community members believe to be relevant and important to them (Chambers, 2008; Bozalek, 2014). These maps are made by the local people themselves and not by the outside experts. In a way, these maps help development experts to have an appreciation of the types of projects which can best serve the interests of the local communities (Kumar, 2002).

#### ***2.6.4.5 Participatory census***

This technique follows in the steps of mapping, though it is used more for taking a closer look at the individual households. The details from a participatory census include demographic details, productive assets and so on. This approach has helped to identify households with specific problems, analyse the problems and issues in order to design projects to ease the situation, and also to identify households which need immediate intervention and which fall within the target group. Participatory census is also a valuable tool in monitoring and evaluation as it can be used to generate baseline information. It applies to all three approaches although it is particularly associated with PLA and PAR (Kumar, 2002; Chambers, 2008).

#### ***2.6.4.6 Impact diagrams***

Impact diagrams are flow diagrams commonly used to identify and depict the impact of an activity, intervention or event. These diagrams capture both the planned changes as well as the other types of changes as seen by community members themselves. These impacts can be positive or negative, planned or unplanned. The impact diagram helps portray the effects that the NGO/government would otherwise never have been able to identify. It has proved to be an effective tool for evaluation as the impact of various interventions is easily captured by community members through the use of an impact diagram. Here, the NGO official can select a topic for the impact diagram and this can be about the intervention that the NGO carried out. This applies in particular to both PLA and PAR (Kumar, 2002, Kindon *et al.*, 2007; Chambers, 2008).

#### ***2.6.4.7 Pair-wise ranking systems***

Among many other things, pair-wise ranking helps in arriving at people's priorities and preferences. It also leads to developing insights into people's decision-making processes and the criteria used by them to arrive at their preferences. This is done by comparing two items at a time, and this process continues until each item has been compared with the other. The frequency

at which each item is compared with the other is enumerated, thus giving an idea of the preferences of the community concerned. This method is valuable for NGO/government development experts who are interested in finding out about a community's development preferences and priorities as well as to understand how local communities arrive at specific decisions. Amongst others, questions that can be asked, depending on the type of intervention to be implemented, are 'Between ... and ... which is your priority?' or 'Between ... and ... which one do you like or prefer' (Kumar, 2002:250). This applies to all three approaches depending on the circumstances on the ground.

#### ***2.6.4.8 Transect walks***

In this PLA technique, community members walk around the community with NGO/government officials showing them things which they deem important in the community. The community members take the lead in identifying various issues from which the NGO official can learn about the community's surroundings, and also matters which community members value. In PRA, these can be used in the planning of development interventions (Kumar, 2002; Kindon, 2007; Chambers, 2008; Bozalek, 2014).

In this section I have given a detailed discussion of the different forms of participatory development. While not all of these participatory methods and techniques are relevant to my study, this discussion helps provide a clearer understanding of the nature of participatory development. This detailed illustration and examples of PD approaches and their core elements gives a deeper understanding on whether the organizations under study are genuinely putting participatory approaches into practice. Therefore, a discussion of different forms of PD helps as a yardstick or benchmark on what is expected of development organizations when we talk of participatory development approaches. They help to have a clearer picture on whether the NGO and Community Share Ownership Trust (CSOT), discussed in detail in Chapters 6 and 8, are genuinely engaging local communities in PD initiatives.

### **2.7 Ways the state practices PD – decentralization**

The previous section discusses some of the ways in which NGOs have implemented participatory development. While some of the methods and techniques discussed there may also be used by government entities, decentralization has been the key way in which states have introduced participatory development. This section discusses decentralization and its relationship

to participatory development. Decentralization is commonly defined as ‘the transfer of authority from a central government to a sub-national entity’ (Boko, 2002:1; Amin, 2018:4). The aims of decentralization among many other things are to ‘strengthen local institutions so that they perform to the aspirations of the local communities’ (Masvaure, 2016:13). Traore (cited in Boko, 2002:1) stresses that ‘decentralization ... confers onto local communities the power ... to manage their affairs in order to promote their own development.’ Thus, decentralization consolidates participatory development initiatives by responding to the needs and aspirations of rural communities as well as in creating democratic spaces for self-reliance, self-determination and self-governance (Chigwata, 2010; Saito, 2008, 2003). Decentralization can happen in three major ways: administratively, fiscally and politically.

### **2.7.1 Administrative decentralization**

Under administrative decentralization, the central government assigns some of its obligations which include planning, financing and management to specific lower tier units (Boko, 2002; Awortwi, 2011:350-51). This type of decentralization has four major categories which are deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatization (Boko, 2002; Chigwata, 2010, Masvaure, 2016, Picard, 2015:14; Amin, 2018:4). The four forms of administrative decentralization are perceived as procedures for improving the relationships between central government, sub-national government units, private organizations and community members (Saito, 2008).

#### **2.7.1.1 Deconcentration**

Deconcentration focuses on allocating specific decision-making rights to lower levels of central government (Chigwata, 2010; Boko, 2002; Amin, 2018:4). The functions of central government are executed on its behalf by government officials at the lower level (Hague and Harrop, 2004; Wunsch, 2014:3-5). Masvaure (2016:14) refers to these officials as ‘appointees from the central state’ who are ‘accountable to the central state.’ The authority to make decisions still remains with central government and Manor (1999) cited in Chigwata (2010:17) argues that under deconcentration, central government merely:

...disperses agents of higher levels of government into lower level arenas. The agents remain accountable only to persons higher up in the system. The central government is not giving up any authority but simply relocating its officers at different levels or points in the national territory.

Local government officials or sub-national government units have a very limited capacity to respond to the preferences of community members. There is no genuine handover of power to the sub-national government levels since the central government representatives operating at sub-national levels are only answerable to the central government (Picard, 2015:14). These government agents merely execute what they are assigned to do by central government without consulting with elected local authorities and community members (Chigwata, 2010; Boko, 2002). Mansuri and Rao (2013) observe that, in a deconcentrated system, community members are rarely given the chance to decide on their development preferences since the local officials merely rubber stamp decisions that come from central government. The two scholars note that, under deconcentration, accountability is upward towards the central authorities rather than downward towards the community members.

#### ***2.7.1.2 Delegation***

Delegation entails the handing over of government responsibilities for making decisions to units or institutions that are not fully controlled by central government (Boko, 2002; Amin, 2018:4). The units or bodies may include parastatals, government ventures, development corporations, and transport and housing boards (Chigwata, 2010; Picard, 2015:14). These semi-autonomous government bodies can make their own decisions and similarly they can charge user fees which local government authorities or sub-national government units cannot do without first consulting the centre (Boko, 2002). However, Chigwata (2010) and Masvaure (2016) note that, despite all the advantages bestowed on these public bodies, they in the end remain answerable to the central government. Thus, the centre still remains the provider of goods and services to these semi-autonomous government bodies, meaning that these public enterprises and bodies still support ‘centralization and decision-making at the higher levels’ (Ahmad and Abu Talib, 2011:60).

#### ***2.7.1.3 Devolution***

Under devolution, central government grants the freedom to make decisions as well as some legislative powers to lower levels of government (Hague and Harrop, 2004; Amin, 2018). Saito (2008) and Picard (2015) say it concerns how power and responsibilities are shared between different tiers of government. Hague and Harrop (2004), Saito (2008), Picard (2015) and Amin (2018) describe three ways in which power is devolved. First, central government may transfer power to sub-national government units thus giving them leeway to decide on financial, administrative and political matters within their areas of jurisdiction. This means local



governments work as autonomous bodies free from central government interference (Masvaure, 2016; Ahmad and Abu Talib, 2011; Chigwata, 2010; Makara, 2018:26; Maschietto, 2016:105). Second, the transfer of power to local government may be done through legislative and constitutional powers. Owing to legal powers, boundaries are created (provinces, regions, municipalities, constituencies, districts) and local authorities are expected to carry out various public functions in their semi-autonomous territories. Similarly, as a result of the legislative and constitutional powers community members elect their own local government representatives who are perceived to be in a better position to serve the local communities' development interests (Chigwata, 2010; Masvaure, 2016; Saito, 2008). I elaborate on this issue in Chapter 3. Thirdly, in a devolved system, the local government authorities have enough breathing space to control their own resources (Masvaure, 2016) and to boost their own income by charging user fees for services provided. Local government authorities are directly accountable to the community members rather than to central government authorities (Friis-Hansen and Kyed, 2009). This is seen to create room for local development as rural communities and sub-national government units engage in dialogue over which development course the region, province, district or constituency should take (Barrett *et al.*, 2007; Saito, 2008). However, despite the above positives, Chigwata (2010) argues that central government still maintains some supervisory powers over the devolved sub-national government units.

#### **2.7.1.4 Privatization**

The fourth category of administrative decentralization is privatization (Chigwata, 2010; Masvaure, 2016) or economic/market decentralization (Boko, 2002). This form of decentralization shifts the central government's obligations of service delivery and the provision of goods to the private sector (Makumbe, 1999; Chigwata, 2010; Picard, 2015:15). Privatization normally takes place within a neo-liberal framework. Boko (2002:5) is of the view that:

When a government undertakes these types of reforms, it allows functions that had previously been the primary responsibility of the State to be carried out by private corporations, community groups, cooperatives and non-governmental organizations.

When non-state actors take over public functions, the central government will cease to have control over them since private organizations are perceived to 'be beyond the control' of central government (Masvaure, 2016:16). However, Chigwata (2010) argues that, even if these bodies are not part of the state bureaucracy, the central government still has power over their activities

(an area extensively covered in Chapter 4 under NGO-State relations). Decentralization as a result of privatization is quite relevant to participatory development initiatives as it also involves the participation of NGOs in rural development interventions (an area partially discussed in Chapter 3 and later developed extensively in Chapter 4). In the majority of cases, most countries use two or more forms of decentralization (deconcentration, delegation, devolution or privatization) and quite often a hybrid of these styles are applied (Chigwata, 2010).

### **2.7.2 Political Decentralization**

A second type of decentralization relates to the political dimension and scholars such as Boko (2002), Jütting *et al.* (2004) and Chigwata (2010) refer to it as political or democratic decentralization. This type of decentralization involves a transfer of political authority/power from central government to various sub-national government units (Masvaure, 2016; Picard, 2015:14) and it normally takes place after the holding of democratic local government elections (Heller, 2001; Friis-Hansen and Kyed, 2009; Amin, 2018:4; Awortwi, 2011:351-52). Elections help to broaden local representation in sub-national government structures (Saito, 2008). Similarly, the transfer of power to local government units leads to independent decision-making (Boko, 2002; Awortwi, 2011) which paves way for local communities to demand the fair distribution of resources (Smoke, 2001). Political decentralization is best realized when local communities elect competent people in their respective communities for public office (councillors, mayors). The community members' representatives elected in sub-national government offices (council or municipalities) are expected to consult the electorate on their development preferences (Barrett *et al.*, 2007). In such circumstances, the elected representatives through consultations with community members enhance the participation of these communities in decisions concerning issues that affect their lives (Saito, 2008, Awortwi, 2011). The elected local government representatives are therefore perceived by community members to be 'more consistent with their wishes than those made by higher level' offices (Smoke, 2003:9).

Political decentralization can only be successful if it is carried out within a participatory community-based framework (Boko, 2002). The elected officials are supposed to be those whom community members selected (genuine representatives of the local communities) rather than those corruptly elected through dubious means or vote rigging. Similarly, political decentralization can bring positive results if the centre is willing to grant adequate power to local governments (Awortwi, 2011; Masvaure, 2016; Amin, 2018). This power then cascades to rural

communities through democratic consultative meetings (Saito, 2003). Smoke (2001) warns that in some cases, when this power is transferred to local officials, they end up serving their own interests as well as those of influential local elites (issues I will examine in Chapter 3 and explore further in the discussion of the findings of this study in Chapter 6). Finally, political decentralization can only be effective when local governments enjoy financial freedom (Boko, 2002; Smoke, 2001, Masvaure, 2016) which is an area I now turn to.

### **2.7.3 Fiscal Decentralization**

The third type of decentralization concerns monetary/financial/economic matters and it is termed fiscal decentralization. Fiscal decentralization focuses on the transfer of monetary authority from central government to sub-national government units (Masvaure, 2016:14). This is perceived to reduce the control of central government over local resources (Amin, 2018; Picard, 2015:14). The fiscal powers include, among a plethora of other issues, the ability of local government to collect revenue (by charging for water, electricity, and refuse removal) and to make binding decisions on disbursement of funds (Masvaure, 2016; Amin, 2018, Awortwi, 2011). Similarly, the fiscal powers require that central government clearly spells out how local governments are supposed to self-finance, charge user fees, expand their income by way of property, sales and indirect taxes, and also whether sub-national government units have the latitude to borrow as well as organize funds from local or foreign sources (Boko, 2002).

The central government, in order to show its commitment to fiscal decentralization, more often than not transfers grants to help fund local government development projects (Saito, 2003). In other instances, local authorities receive funding from international sources and these monies play an important role in closing the fiscal gaps regularly faced by sub-national government units (Smoke, 2001). Jütting *et al.* (2004) sum it up by indicating that fiscal resources are supposed to be predictable and stable and they can best be sustained either through transfers from central government or local governments collecting revenue or through donor funding.

Fiscal decentralization becomes the driving force behind community-based participatory development processes. If local governments get adequate funds, then they will be able to walk the talk in terms of the development needs articulated by community members during democratic consultative engagements discussed earlier on. However, owing to high levels of poverty in rural communities and limited taxable properties, it becomes an uphill task for local authorities to collect significant taxes (Saito, 2003). Similarly, Amin (2018) and Conyers (2003) note that the

success of fiscal decentralization depends heavily on the availability of resources and funds to enable sub-national government units to carry out their obligations as well as to meet community members' needs. Saito (2003) and Amin (2018) raise doubts on the commitment of central government to abdicate its control of the tax base to autonomous local government units. They conclude that, in most cases, the central government is not willing to handover tax collection powers to local governments. Under such circumstances, what central government mainly does is to increase conditional grants to local authorities which, to say the least, contradicts the spirit of decentralization since the sub-national government units end up being reduced to implementers of centrally imposed activities (Saito, 2003, 2008). A problem that arises is that, when community members participate in needs identification meetings, they expect to see concrete results in their respective communities and, if this does not happen owing to a deficiency of resources, they may become 'disillusioned and cynical about local government' (Smoke, 2003:10); which in the end will undermine their participation in future consultative meetings. Without adequate funding to local governments, both political and administrative decentralization will produce insignificant participatory development results.

The forms of decentralization discussed above are quite relevant to the case study of the Trust in that the study covers administrative, political and financial issues regarding the operations of the Trust. Central government in Zimbabwe transferred political, financial and administrative power to local elites found within various local government structures in order for them to assist in the management of the Trust. This was specifically done with the intention that the local structures would consult communities about development projects.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

At the outset, this chapter introduced the broader area of development and participatory development. It discussed theories about development processes within capitalism in order to allow an entry point into more specific theories on participatory development. From the literature reviewed, the idea of participation was traced back to the 1960s and 1970s when participation mainly concerned itself with issues of social change in opposition to dictatorship and oppression. Later in the 1980s, the idea of popular participation came to the fore. Here, participatory approaches such as Participatory Action Research, Participatory Learning and Action, and Participatory Rural Appraisal were seen to be attempts to give local people a voice in their own development. However, this type of participation was critiqued for failing to address underlying

issues of politics and power in development interventions. The 1990s were marked by a change in how participation was to be conceptualized. Here, neo-liberal advocates and development agencies called for the inclusion of more actors in the facilitation of participatory development approaches. These approaches, among a plethora of many other demands, included decentralization reforms within central government and the opening up of development spaces for NGOs and other private organizations. From 2000 onwards (the 21<sup>st</sup> Century), participatory development approaches in all aspects of social, economic and political activities were now regarded as a fundamental right of every citizen.

In the PD literature, emphasis was made by various authors on the need and role of both government (especially sub-national government units) and NGOs in community development processes. However, while NGOs and government officials were thought to be important, advocates of participatory development did not believe that they should control development interventions in local communities. Observations were that some rural development projects were best achieved when they were managed either by sub-national government units or NGOs. These were development interventions with a bias towards the needs, priorities and preferences of specific communities and were not expected to be categorized as standardized national development interventions. For example, these interventions included income generating projects, irrigation schemes, nutritional garden projects, and construction of clinics, classroom blocks, weirs and dip tanks. These could best be carried out by applying various participatory techniques discussed in this Chapter. In Chapter 3, I examine decentralization reforms in detail especially how they link to PD; and Chapter 4 similarly looks at how NGOs encourage PD in their development interventions.

## **CHAPTER 3: DECENTRALIZATION AND THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN DEVELOPMENT**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In the preceding chapter, I reviewed literature on development and participatory development (PD) with a view to demonstrating their interconnectedness. I provided a general overview of PD in both NGO projects and state development interventions (*vis-a-vis* decentralization reforms). Building on the previous one, this chapter focuses on how decentralization has affected the role of the state in development.

As neo-liberal policies for development escalated in the late 1980s and 1990s, many African countries found themselves being pressured to decentralize their systems of government as well as to open up spaces for development NGOs. The 1990s saw Northern governments, the donor community and international development agencies being preoccupied with the role of both the private sector (NGOs, churches, private organizations) and public sector (central government and sub-national government units) in promoting rural development in Africa through participatory development initiatives. Regarding the public sector, there were widespread calls to improve on the functions of central and local government in meaningfully reaching out to the rural masses in terms of service delivery and development projects. The preferred way to achieve such a goal was through decentralization reforms, which form the focus of this chapter. The chapter focuses on decentralization reforms in developing countries in general and the African continent in particular.

### **3.2 The decentralized state and development initiatives**

Decentralization is not a new development in Africa. It can be traced back to the pre-colonial era when municipal structures emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Senegal, Egypt and Tunisia (Chazan *et al.*, 1999). However, Africa's first noticeable decentralization phase can be traced to the colonial era. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sub-national government units were created as a way of ensuring the 'colonizers' control over the territory' (Letaief *et al.*, 2009:31) and to entrench control of African populations (Saito, 2003). Colonial rule in its entirety 'was fundamentally authoritarian ... government was imposed but not participatory, instructive rather than consultative' (Chazan *et al.*, 1999:29). Under colonial rule, local government administration differed from one African country to another. This was as a result of the administrative model of decentralization used by

various European colonizers. For example, the French used a system of ‘communes’, the British ‘local government’ and the Portuguese ‘municipos’ (Letaief *et al.*, 2009:31).

Decentralization initiatives under colonial governments prioritised administrative decentralization. Here, decentralization was specifically a way of making colonial rule more efficient through an effective colonial civil service which was tasked with the responsibility of carrying out political and administrative functions (Chazan *et al.*, 1999). In addition, colonial decentralization allowed those in colonized states to be governed under similar arrangements as those found in the metropolis in Europe (Letaief *et al.*, 2009). This meant colonial governments as well as the African populace took direct orders on administrative issues from European capitals or colonial administrators (Steytler, 2016:275). The former was specifically the norm in French speaking Africa while the latter was practiced in British colonies where colonial administrators (agents of the British government) were granted excessive powers in the African territories (Chazan *et al.*, 1999; Letaief *et al.*, 2009). Decentralization processes under colonial rule were thus structured to facilitate domination rather than to create legitimacy.

When the majority of African states gained their independence in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, they inherited colonial structures of government (Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Chabal, 2009; Chazan *et al.*, 1999, Steytler, 2016:275). It is imperative to note that in this second phase of decentralization, African states had at various stages of their independence carried out decentralization initiatives on their own volition (Manor, 2011). However, the weakness of such decentralization efforts was that they helped to legitimate and sustain the political power of the African leaders (Letaief *et al.*, 2009, Wunsch, 2001; Crook, 2003). As noted by Ayee (2008), independent African governments regarded decentralization as a way of retaining central power and legality. In addition, Mahumuza (2008:427) argues that ‘many African leaders embraced decentralization reforms not because they genuinely wanted to transform state/society power relations but because they desired political self-preservation’. This was a time when ‘one-party political systems predominated’ (Letaief *et al.*, 2009:25; Tordoff, 2002:7-8, Saito, 2003: 29; Chazan *et al.*, 1999, 46-50). Independent African states became highly centralized like their colonial predecessors (Wunsch and Olowu, 1990, Saito, 2003:29; Mahumuza, 2008:427) and such structures of government ‘signaled the beginning of the politicization of the administrative apparatus’ (Chazan *et al.*, 1999:45).

African states gained their independence with a strong conviction that economic development could best be achieved through the dominance of the state in political, economic and social spheres (Mahumuza, 2008; Masvaure, 2016). This meant that the African state got involved in almost all aspects of economic life as it controlled the economy and was likewise tasked with the sole responsibility of carrying out development interventions so as to improve the lives of the populace at large (Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Basiru and Adepoju, 2018:6-7). The idea of state hegemony over the economy was a development strategy used by the Soviet Union. Most developing countries then adopted this idea of a centralized state (Steytler, 2016). Socialist ideology in the Soviet Union, China and other communist countries required the state to control the means of production (Masvaure, 2016).

The continuation of centralized state power meant that the government was the principal actor in the drama of economic development and was also ‘the largest domestic repository of resources for economic growth and social welfare’ (Bratton, 1989:407). The role of the state in developing countries was that of shouldering the burden of growing the economy, providing welfare to its citizens and carrying out robust urban and rural development projects (World Bank, 1997). The state was welfarist in orientation (Saito, 2008). Heywood (2011:119) describes a welfare state as one that ‘takes prime responsibility for the social welfare of its citizens, discharged through a range of social security, health, education and other services’. Thus, the state was perceived to be the main provider of development to the populace. However, this welfarist ‘benevolence’ did not last long as some developing countries gradually got entangled in varied economic challenges (borne out of corruption, patronage, mis-management, elite-capture, poor debt servicing, lack of accountability among many other issues) which later led to calls for reforms.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, the development debate took a new twist with much focus on the role of the state, market and civil society in the development process. For neo-liberal scholars, the route to greater economic growth and therefore greater levels of well-being for all was reducing state intervention and letting the market set prices and wages (Willis, 2011). Development was to shift from ‘centralized state planning to market liberalism, with the withdrawal of the state’ (Tembo, 2003:2; Erk, 2015). The disillusionment with the state was as a result of the perceived inability of African governments ‘to handle well the complexities of locality-specific issues’, the total failure of African centralized governments to finance services



to community members, and the idea that participatory development initiatives in African urban and rural areas could be enhanced through local democratic processes (Mugunieri and Omiti, 2007:65; Wunsch, 2014).

The socialist ideology in the Soviet Union, China and other communist countries had perceived sub-national government units as mere extensions of central government rather than being completely autonomous divisions of government (Masvaure, 2016). However, neo-liberal restructuring proposed autonomous sub-national governments. It was in the late 1980s that politicians in developing countries in general and Africa in particular acknowledged the weaknesses of ‘the one-party state model of development’, thus agreeing to carry out ‘political reform and market-friendly policies’ (Chabal, 2009:10). The 1990s then saw a third wave of decentralization in Africa and in other developing countries. These decentralization efforts were a reflection of neo-liberal views (Saito, 2008).

During this period, ‘the pendulum had swung from the state-dominated development model of the 1960s and 1970s to the minimalist state of the 1980s’ (World Bank, 1997:24). It was within this new framework of restructuring and withdrawing of the state, in order to create spaces for civil society organizations, that calls were similarly made (by international donors and Northern governments) for states in developing countries in general and Africa in particular to facilitate participatory development interventions as well as to foster decentralization reforms (Todaro and Smith, 2012; Erk, 2014; Wunsch, 2014). The new realisation was that problems of inequality and poverty due to lack of sustainable development initiatives, did not mean that only the state was supposed to resolve these challenges (World Bank, 1997, 1999). Thus, the state had to delegate some obligations to sub-national government units as well as to open up spaces for NGO development interventions (which is an issue for further discussion in Chapter 4).

What can be discerned from the above developments is that the late 1980s and 1990s brought in new perspectives on the role of the state in development. The neo-liberal policy coupled with demands from international development institutions and the Northern donor community required states in developing countries to democratize (in order to give community members a political voice), decentralize (in order to give sub-national government units the autonomy to develop their areas) and similarly to encourage grassroots participation (in order to allow community members to decide and participate in the development of their localities) among many other issues (Manor, 2011; Saito, 2008; Jütting *et al.*, 2004; World Bank, 1997,

1999). Similarly, Manor (2011:1) observes that decentralization was ‘undertaken to deepen democratic systems and, within some less open systems (authoritarian states), as a substitute for democracy at higher levels’. These reforms were perceived to help states in their development processes. This could be done through a reinvigoration of sub-national government units by giving them autonomy to carry out development work in their localities. Secondly, through democratic processes linked to decentralization reforms, there was need to strengthen the voices of community members by ‘bringing the state closer to the people’ (World Bank, 1997:70; Makara, 2018; Maschietto, 2016:106).

In the 1990s, the new thinking on the role of the state in development focused on democratic principles, decentralization processes and participatory development initiatives. As will be discussed in detail in the sections below, elected local government officials were supposed to represent and engage community members in development initiatives (to promote democratization), the lower levels of government were expected to bring development to community members (decentralization), and community members were supposed to take part in decisions that concerned their development needs and priorities (participatory development). These three initiatives among many others were perceived as a restructuring of the state’s role, such that the state now acted more like a facilitator rather than a driver of development.

### **3.3 Views in support of decentralization**

As already discussed in Chapter 2, the neo-liberal agenda of the late 1980s and 1990s brought with it strong calls for the decentralization of government institutions in Africa and in other developing countries. This neo-liberal programme was politically spearheaded by the American President Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (Heywood, 2011; Saito, 2008, 2003; Manji and O’Coill, 2002). Central to the neo-liberal perspective was the opening up and deregulation of markets, the decentralization of central authority and the privatization of essential services (Arvanitakis and Hornsby, 2017).

The neo-liberal initiative as concerning decentralization programmes in Africa and elsewhere was meant to create what Saito (2008) termed ‘small and efficient states’. Similarly, Ndegwa (2002) argues that African governments were pressured by Northern governments to shed their functions and commitments through decentralization reforms so as to come up with a ‘leaner, more efficient and enabling state’. What this meant was that, through decentralization initiatives, the hegemony of central government in economic, political and social spheres would

be down-sized by surrendering or transferring some administrative, fiscal and political powers to smaller states made up of sub-national government units or local governments (De Visser, 2005). The emphasis was on the role of smaller government units in catering for the immediate development needs of local communities. These sub-national government units were perceived to provide more efficient services than central government (Caldeira *et al.*, 2014:1049; Chigwata and Ziswa, 2018:297).

In the 1990s, pressure was placed on developing countries by Northern governments, especially the United States and United Kingdom, to decentralize their heavily-centralized systems of government. The development agenda propagated by neo-liberals, among many other issues, focused on reducing the hegemony of central government in development matters which included the provision of services to community members. Decentralization became the preferred option in bringing services and development closer to the local communities. Thus, service delivery and development processes were perceived to be efficiently and effectively done either through decentralized local government structures or through decentralized processes that would lead to the creation of spaces for NGOs to assist in community development initiatives (an issue further discussed in detail in Chapter 4). The African centralized governments were seen to have reduced social space for organizations that were determined to carry out development activities in rural communities. The argument was that decentralized states could create more space for sub-national government units, voluntary associations, private organizations, and churches to engage in development activities (Saito, 2003; Barrett *et al.*, 2007).

Smoke (2003:9-10) notes that the common goals of decentralization have been widely understood as follows: 'improved efficiency, improved governance, improved equity, and improved development and poverty reduction'. The claims made by advocates of decentralization on its potential merits are relevant for participatory development. The major components of most participatory development programmes include: the ability of sub-national governments to identify and act upon the needs of community members in a short space of time (leading to improved efficiency); the constant interactions between community members and their elected leaders in enhancing decisions that are favourable to the preferences of local communities (leading to improved governance); the knowledge that local governments have of local circumstances, making them distribute government resources in a fairer way (leading to improved equity); and the increased participation of community members in development

interventions, thus helping to alleviate poverty (leading to improved development and poverty reduction).

Advocates of decentralization programmes in Africa stress that central governments are supposed to play a subordinate role by focusing more on their particular responsibilities such as huge infrastructural development projects (national road networks and construction of hydro-power stations just to mention a few) that could not be effectively carried out by sub-national units of government or local governments (Saito, 2008; Barrett *et al.*, 2007). Decentralized states were expected to reduce poverty by making public services more responsive to the needs of people (Saito, 2008) either through sub-national government units' development initiatives or voluntary organizations' development interventions (Barrett *et al.*, 2007). Development agencies and donors wanted to reduce the involvement of central government in rural development interventions as they believed that decentralization would reduce corruption and increase administrative efficiency.

Development agencies were of the view that success in assisting poor communities required direct donor funding to local government institutions or sub-national government units. The idea was that 'local governments are in close proximity to the people and therefore they are in a more suitable position than the central government to provide the public services people desire' (Saito, 2008:2). Local or sub-national government structures would in a complementary role cover for central government's inability to provide public services to community members. This was because of central government's supposedly corrupt activities and poor administrative procedures.

A pertinent issue leading to calls for decentralization reforms in Africa, as noted earlier, was that central governments had abused donor funds intended for community development. In response to this abuse, it was hoped that through decentralization processes some of the central governments' responsibilities could be shifted to NGOs, community based organizations (CBOs) and private organizations (Barrett *et al.*, 2007). Consequently, as Saito (2008:7) notes:

... the governing processes today involve more actors than before including private companies as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Thus the governing processes are no longer monopolized by the government, but the relatively new entry of other entities into this process signifies that they also have become co-governors with certain roles to play and responsibilities to fulfil.

Thus, decentralization measures became imperative as central government on its own was perceived to be unable to solve the myriad political, economic and social problems that now

characterized the contemporary nation-state. The involvement of non-state actors in areas where the central government used to have overwhelming monopoly is seen by Saito (2008) as an answer to resolving challenges that developing countries in general and Africa in particular are facing. The above organizations were lauded as contemporary vehicles for pro-poor bottom-up development and therefore could be funded directly by Western donors (Barrett *et al.*, 2007). This issue will be explored further in the discussion of NGOs in Chapter 4.

Barrett *et al.* (2007) and Manor (2011) liken decentralization to representative democracy mainly because, in a decentralized system of government, those who manage local institutions are voted into public office by local communities. This does not imply that in a centralised state there are no sub-national electoral processes alongside sub-national state administrative structures. However, what happens in a highly centralized system is that there is a likelihood that central government will not be able to address in a democratic way the divergent concerns and aspirations of varied communities, provinces, regions, territories or districts as would happen in a decentralized system (Barrett *et al.*, 2007; Chigwata, 2015:443). Advocates of decentralization believe that lower tiers of government are more familiar with the needs of local communities, such that they can more easily identify and take action about community-specific needs than can central government (Manor, 2011; Zhou, 2009; Saito, 2008; Barrett *et al.*, 2007; Chigwata and Ziswa, 2018:302-303). Saito (2003, 2008) notes that decentralization measures are intended to provide local services that better match the divergent realities in different geographical areas. Such measures are further seen by Ahmad and Abu Talib (2011), Saito (2003) and Chigwata and Ziswa (2018:302-303) as enhancing participatory development initiatives as sub-national governments respond to the political, economic and social needs of community members.

Advocates of decentralization believe that local governments, because of their closeness to community members, ought to be able to easily distribute resources more equitably and effectively (Ahmad and Abu Talib, 2011; Manor, 2011; Chigwata, 2010; Caldeira *et al.*, 2014:1049; Chigwata and Ziswa, 2018:297). This makes the local government representatives answerable and responsive to the needs of community members who elect them into office, as Smoke (2003) and Chigwata (2015) emphasize that community members have a right to engage local authorities on issues that concern their well-being. Here, there is a need to make it clear that, within the local government structures, there are those who are elected into office (councillors, mayors, council chief executive officers) and local government officials or local

government employees. The political representatives (elected local government officials) are expected to formulate policy and prioritize development projects as identified by community members, while local government employees or officials are supposed to cater for technical aspects and managerial duties of local government (Masvaure, 2016). Advocates of decentralization are of the view that elected local government representatives will be able to come up with local decisions that reflect the development needs and priorities of community members (Faguet, 2014; Masvaure, 2016; Amin, 2018). In addition, advocates of decentralization are of the view that in Africa, decentralization reforms are expected to pave way for democracy and similarly help in legitimating local government structures.

### **3.4 Views on how decentralization can be undermined**

Critics of political decentralization argue that when power is devolved to local government, ‘powerful actors - including governments promoting decentralization - resist local empowerment at every step’ (Poteete and Ribot, 2011:439). Therefore, Mahumuza (2008) is of the view that there is sometimes an exaggeration of the benefits of decentralization by ignoring the real politics behind decentralization initiatives. Political decentralization is seen by critics as a means by which African ruling parties have managed to obtain rural support and submission (Crook, 2003; Wunsch, 2014; Green, 2011; Saito, 2008, Hyden, 2013). For example, Ethiopia follows a decentralization process which has become almost a common practice in some African countries. The challenge is that Ethiopian district councils (*woredas*) are not autonomous as constitutionally stated but rather serve the interests and development objectives of the ruling party. In a discussion of Ethiopia’s decentralization process, Mezgebe (2015:475) argues that:

The centralized structure of dominant parties necessarily overrides the constitutional features of decentralization; hence, they usually skid across the jurisdiction of lower government units, forcing local authorities to prioritize party decisions and programmes over local public interests and priorities, and hindering them from making decisions on affairs of their community on their own initiative and from their internal stimuli.

Party-loyalists in the *woredas* follow the party line by coming up with development interventions that please the party elites and this often undermines the genuine development needs and priorities of community members. Thus, accountability is upward towards party bosses rather than downwards towards the local communities (Mezgebe, 2015). Mahumuza (2008) sees decentralization in Africa as a means by which ruling political parties advance their own political

motives. Poteete and Ribot (2011:439) further argue that political ‘decentralization promises to empower local actors, but threatens others [at central level] with a loss of power.’

In an earlier study, Wunsch (2001) noted that central government’s preferred development priorities were usually influenced by its policies and guidelines, the suitability of the intervention, particular preferences over others and political interests - especially political party ideology. The argument is that there are several political factors which have a huge bearing beyond decentralization itself (Erk, 2015). Mezgebe (2015:475), Green (2011, 2015:496), Riedl and Dickovick (2014:328-9:339), Dickovick and Riedl (2010) and Wunsch’s (2014:17) studies of decentralization show how political factors especially party politics, impacts on decentralization and participatory development initiatives. The view is that ‘when a single dominant national party sits above decentralized institutions - no matter how expertly and elaborately designed - intra-party politics behind and above decentralized institutions takes precedence’ (Erk, 2015: 413). These perceptions are a similar reflection of what has been happening in other African countries such as South Africa, Angola, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mozambique, Uganda, and Ghana among many others (Tordoff, 2002; Crook, 2003; Barrett *et al.*, 2007; Saito, 2008; Muhumuza, 2008; Letaief *et al.*, 2009; Chabal, 2009; Dickovick and Riedl (2010); Riedl and Dickovick 2014; Wunsch, 2014; Green, 2011, 2015; Maschietto, 2016:110; Kessy, 2018).

Administrative, political and financial decentralization typically involves a transfer of power from the elites at the centre to the elites at the local level (local government). This can encourage elite capture by sub-national government authorities and may facilitate the development of patron-client relationships (Wunsch, 2014; Kessy, 2018:69-70). In a study of decentralized provinces in the DRC, Englebert and Mungongo (2016:20-22) noted that, in the majority of cases, provinces allocated huge percentages ‘of their resources to salaries and functioning costs, with most of it going to governors, their cabinets, and provincial deputies.’ Decentralization initiatives in the DRC have created what they termed ‘self-serving administrations’ (Englebert and Mungongo, 2016:20). This reflects elite capture at the provincial level comprising of corrupt provincial administrators. Decentralization may mean that corrupt individuals are given power and then end up mismanaging scarce resources (Barrett *et al.*, 2007, Koelble and Siddle, 2014; Mezgebe, 2015).

At times, reforms undertaken through administrative decentralization initiatives are lauded for transferring power to local government authorities. However, it must not be forgotten that, administratively, the sub-national government officials can fail to be accountable to community members they are supposed to serve (Smoke, 2000; Englebert and Mungongo, 2016:20-22). Crook (2003:79) concludes that, ‘although there are examples of decentralized government in Africa enhancing participation, there is very little evidence that it has resulted in policies that are more responsive to the “poor” - or indeed, to citizens generally’. Crook’s findings corroborate later findings of scholars such as Poteete and Ribot (2011), Bratton (2012), Erk (2014, 2015) and Chigwata and Ziswa (2018) among many others. Studies carried out by Poteete and Ribot (2011:439) show that ‘although successes have been documented, instances of local democratic empowerment through decentralization are few and far between’. This view is shared by Chigwata and Ziswa (2018:298) and Bratton (2012:516) who assert that decentralization reforms in Africa have been ‘ineffective, characterised by poor political accountability of local authorities, poor service delivery as well as unresponsiveness to local needs’. They ‘have failed to deliver on ... development and growth’ (Erk, 2014: 536, 2015:411). In terms of administrative, financial and political decentralization, local government units have experienced ‘elite capture, high levels of corruption, continued poor administrative performance and exclusion of citizens’ (Wunsch, 2014:3). In many cases, local government elites have hijacked development processes with little or no consideration for community members’ needs and priorities (Kessy, 2018; Picard, 2015; Maschietto, 2016:104).

In terms of administrative and political decentralization, critics argue that despite the fact that the sub-national government units have easy access to community members’ views and preferences, community members themselves ‘do not enjoy similar easy access to how (local) governments are responding to their demands’ (Agomor and Obayashi, 2008:60). Studies by Koelble and Siddle (2014), Koelble and LiPuma (2010) and Atkinson (2007), among many others, indicate that local government structures have not been very participatory in terms of carrying out consultative meetings with community members. In the end, this has led to lack of confidence and interest in local government or to violent protests against some sub-national government units (Koelble and Siddle, 2014; Tapscott, 2008). This lack of community interest in local government institutions is quite common in studies of other African countries such as Uganda, Ghana, Malawi, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, and



Mozambique among many others (Letaief *et al.*, 2009:25-49; Ayeee, 2008; Green, 2014; Kessy, 2018:67).

While decentralization supposedly improves effectiveness, Agomor and Obayash (2008) argue that in practice central government may prove to be more effective than local government in addressing the demands of local communities, provided that those local demands are forwarded to central government. Central government is well-resourced and it can carry out massive development interventions which will not only benefit a single district but various districts. Manor (2011:3) notes that local governments are ‘more interested in many small projects (basic schools, minor irrigation works, small health dispensaries, etc.) than in a few grand undertakings which actors at higher levels prefer (universities, large dams, hospitals, etc)’. According to Smoke (2003:14), ‘certain services that local people want may best be provided at greater scale by a higher-level government, and some may affect other jurisdictions and should not be left to the control of a single local government’. Admittedly, in most African countries, central governments have been at the helm of bringing development to community members through massive infrastructural development interventions as well as cheaper and affordable services (Smoke, 2003). While it is commendable that central government undertakes massive infrastructural development programmes in various communities, the problem comes in when central government seeks control over even the smaller projects which are supposed to be the preserve of local government authorities.

In reality, there is no real transfer of powers and financial resources to local governments since decentralization reforms can only be absorbed at a very slow pace by central governments (Letaief *et al.*, 2009). While central governments appear to be in support of decentralization initiatives, they are opposed to ‘the growth of powerful local institutions that might challenge their monopoly’ especially over local politics, power and resources (Awortwi, 2011:348). Scholars such as Wunsch (2014), Dickovick and Riedl, (2014), Cheeseman, Lynch and Willis (2016), and Basiru and Adepoju (2018), share the same views as Awortwi (2011). It seems that African ruling parties have a domineering tendency over local politics as well as the management of local resources. Green (2015:496) argues that central governments in Africa have shown an unwillingness to give genuine autonomy to local government, preferring rather to ‘recentralize power in the capital’. His assertion is that African central governments have managed to have a strong grip on local government in three ways: firstly, through deconcentrated government

officers manning offices at the district level; secondly, through government ministries which deal with local authorities; and finally, through the top-down structures of the political parties in power (Green, 2015; Kessy, 2018). Similarly, according to Poteete and Ribot (2011:439), ‘central actors counteract the loss of powers by blocking the transfer of meaningful powers to local authorities or by only “transferring” powers to local actors they can control’. This means that ‘rather than devolving power, central state managers prefer to deconcentrate power to loyal field agents at the grassroots level’ (Picard, 2015:4).

Critics of decentralization perceive sub-national government units as in most cases having become implementers of central government programmes designed as ‘people-centred’ development interventions (Green, 2015). It may be argued that decentralization initiatives are merely symbolic as central government largely controls the process in a very subtle way. Decentralization becomes a smokescreen where central government is perceived to be giving power to lower tiers yet in reality the centre still maintains a grip on the activities carried out by local government authorities. In her studies on decentralization reforms in Africa, Lewis (2014:571) found out that the transfer of political, administrative and financial power to localities had not been ‘achieved in practice’. She noted that decentralization in Africa was characterized by a tendency within the African leadership to create more new sub-units/districts/provinces within the existing sub-national units/districts/provinces. These newly formed districts were seen to lack in resources and qualified personnel. As a result, this created a dependency on central government for planning and the provision of public goods and services thus ‘leading to administrative centralization’ (Lewis, 2014:574). Similarly, community development projects have tended to involve a mere bureaucratic co-optation of local government by the centre, as evidenced in the studies of Wunsch (2001, 2014), Crook (2003), Green (2015) and Mezgebe (2015) among many others. Here, government development blueprints are foisted on local authorities to implement. In other words, there has been a recentralization of power where central government recaptures local government and its resources (Wunsch 2001, 2014; Green, 2015). While local government may carry out development projects, central government controls and directs development initiatives (Kessy, 2018; Masvaure, 2016). In a number of cases, the decentralization of lower government tiers in Africa has been characterized by central government capture. There is unwillingness by those at the centre to give overall fiscal,

managerial and political control to local authorities, largely because the parties in power want to specifically retain or maintain their political influence countrywide.

From the above discussion, it has been noted that both central and local government have taken advantage of decentralization initiatives to advance their own development priorities and preferences. In the case of the former, it has done so through recentralization of power (where local government implements the centre's development programmes designed as 'people-centred' projects) while the latter has done so through elite capture (where local elites determine the type of development interventions for a specific area/community). These practices (state and elite capture) also reflect what happens at the central and local government levels in Zimbabwe as will be further discussed in some sub-sections below.

### **3.5 Attempts by the Zimbabwean state to drive development initiatives – 1981-1984**

Efforts by the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) to engage rural communities in participatory development initiatives can be traced back to the early 1980s. These interventions were geared towards a bottom-up approach to rural development. The GoZ's major goal was to see to it that the once marginalized rural masses would also be given a voice by directly participating in political, social and economic issues. The participatory initiatives were strengthened by decentralization pronouncements which encouraged the rural communities to take part in government development programmes. However, to understand how these policies and structures came into being, there is a need to briefly examine what existed from the 1890s up to the early 1980s immediately after the war of liberation (Second Liberation Struggle – *Chimurenga*), and what existed two decades later. Similarly, there is a need to briefly analyse the (on-the-ground) contestations and struggles which have taken place over time between the different local government structures. The different authority structures discussed in subsections 3.5.1 and 3.5.2 did not come on the scene simultaneously, but were as a result of temporal sequences which I now discuss briefly.

In the late nineteenth century, the British South Africa Company (BSAC) colonized Zimbabwe on the basis of a royal charter granted by the imperial power, Britain (Mandondo, 2000:5). After the BSAC conquest, the African (Ndebele and Shona) traditional structures of governance were dismantled and replaced by modern local administrative structures which were created by the BSAC (Chigwata, 2015). Early systems of local government were a reflection of the 'English tradition and the administrative system established in the Cape Colony where the

BSAC had influence' (Chatiza *et al.*, 2013:5). This marked the beginning of formal Eurocentric systems of local administration, with the setting up of the Salisbury Sanitation Board in 1892 (specifically for refuse removal and management) and, in 1894, other centres such as Bulawayo, Umtali (Mutare) and Gwelo (Gweru) followed suit (Marumahoko and Fessha, 2011).

In 1898, the Company created Native Reserves (later known as Tribal Trust Lands) for usage by rural Africans – these were under the Native Affairs Department which was administered by the Secretary of Native Affairs (SNA) (Makahamadze *et al.*, 2009:37; Chigwata, 2015; Mandondo, 2000). There was a Native Commissioner (NC) at national level, under which were District Native Commissioners (DNCs) who were district based. The DNCs were given overriding powers by the Company to appoint chiefs, merge tribes living in specific geographical areas, allocate land, issue cattle permits and arbitrate on African matters among many other responsibilities (Makahamadze *et al.*, 2009; Chatiza *et al.*, 2013:5). In most cases, district NCs took up all district administrative duties, thus greatly undermining the powers that chiefs had enjoyed before colonialism (Makahamadze *et al.*, 2009:37; Chatiza *et al.*, 2013:5). This reflected a centralized system with a well-defined control structure overseen by DNCs (Chatiza, 2010; Madhekeni and Zhou, 2012; Chatiza *et al.*, 2013).

Through indirect rule, the SNCs controlled and monitored traditional leaders in the governing of Native Reserves (Mandondo, 2000). Indirect rule was meant to extend the power of central government. For instance, various pieces of legislation were enacted by the colonial governments (the BSAC from 1890-1923 and European settlers from 1923-1979) as a way of incorporating chiefs within government structures. These included 'the 1898 Southern Rhodesia Order in Council, the 1910 High Commissioner's proclamation, restructuring of chieftainship in 1914 and 1951, the African Affairs Act of 1957, the Tribal Trust Land Act of 1967 and the African Law and Regional Courts Act of 1969' (Chakunda and Chikerema, 2014:70). The major aim of these statutes (some under BSAC and others under European settler rule) was to integrate chiefs within the colonial administrative structures and hierarchy with the objective of maintaining or prolonging colonial authority in the Reserves (Chakunda and Chikerema, 2014; Chigwata, 2015).

In 1923, the white settlers were given a choice to either become part of South Africa or to remain a British colony with self-government. They chose the latter under the name Southern Rhodesia (Gasper, 1990:4; Chigwata, 2015:447). This new set up gave the white settlers

significant unfettered ‘power to govern without regular recourse to the British Government’ (Wekwete, 2016:8; Mandondo, 2000). The 1923 Southern Rhodesian Constitution called for the formation of Native Councils in African Reserves. However, the provision was watered down, with white settlers preferring the formation of Boards which served as a precursor to the establishment of councils. These were administered by chiefs and headmen under the control of DNCs (Chatiza *et al.*, 2013; Mandondo, 2000). In 1957, African Councils were established due to the underperformance of Native Councils. The newly formed African Councils had very little devolution of political power. The NCs retained all the power in the district as they ‘combined the posts of chairman and president’ (Chatiza *et al.*, 2013:5; Makahamadze *et al.*, 2009). In this regard, Wekwete (2016:8) argues that ‘state evolution was driven by principles of domination of one racial group over another as reflected in all legislation, sharing of power and responsibilities, and in the dualistic economy that emerged’.

Local administration under colonial rule was characterized by a racially segregatory principle of ‘separate development’ of races (Chigwata, 2010). This meant that fundamental local government services and development interventions were available to the white populace while the same services were denied to the majority Africans living in Reserves (Kurebwa, 2015). For instance, Rural Councils (which governed European commercial farming areas) ‘had through land and property taxation and matching government grants emerged as viable units with significant assets and equipment’ (Chatiza *et al.*, 2013:4). Rural Councils were participatory in nature as well as liberal and democratic (Wekwete, 2016; Nsingo and Kuye, 2005; Chatiza, 2010). In contrast, African Councils, which had authority over Africans living in Reserves, were heavily controlled by central government and were impoverished and underfunded. Consequently, such areas had inadequate infrastructure such as clinics, schools, roads, water, sanitation and hygiene (Jonga, 2014:75). The African Councils were not participatory as they were supervised from the top by Native Commissioners and other delegated officers deployed by central government (Mandondo, 2000). As such, African Councils resembled a high-level centralization of power founded on policies of white supremacy and the imposition of inferior centrally defined programmes (Madhekeni and Zhou 2012). By 1979, there were 220 African Councils in operation (Chatiza, 2010). All in all, these African Councils were ‘linked to traditional authority for the Africans emphasising control and subordination’ (Wekwete, 2016:9).

The Zimbabwean government's major goal at independence in 1980 was to carry out decentralization reforms which were aimed at addressing colonial imbalances so as to bring development to the African masses (Masvaure, 2016). The Zimbabwean government amended the African Councils Act of 1957 by way of the District Councils Act of 1980, leading to the creation of District Councils for the administration of Tribal Trust Lands (called communal areas after independence) (Chigwata, 2015; Jonga, 2014; Chatiza *et al.*, 2013). The Act was further amended in 1981 and 1982. This legislative document *inter alia* emphasized the creation of fifty-five District Councils out of the previous 220 fragmented African Councils which had been established under colonial rule (Chatiza, 2010). The District Administrator (DA), a central government employee, was given power to head the District Councils (Kurebwa, 2015). However, the post of DA was very similar to that of the Native Commissioner during colonial rule. The DA was appointed by the Ministry of Local Government and he/she owed loyalty to the centre (Chatiza *et al.*, 2013:5; Kurebwa, 2015).

At independence in 1980, the new Zimbabwean government relied on ZANU PF and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) party committees (formed during the war of liberation) to distribute aid, to help in the rebuilding of rural communities and to serve as communication channels between the centre and rural communities (Alexander, 1994, 2004). Despite the efficiency of both ZANU PF and ZAPU party committees in fostering rural development, the government dislodged them in preference for councils. The ZANU PF elites opted for the creation of councils because the rural party committees were not quite as representative of rural communities as councils were (Alexander, 1994). In addition,

...ZANU PF leadership distrusted them even in ZANU PF areas, because their concerns and priorities differed from those of the centre, and in ZAPU areas, suspicion ran deeper (McGregor, 2002: 17; Alexander, 1994:327).

During these years, ZANU PF wanted to have a strong grip on rural party structures as well as silencing them through co-option into newly established village development committees (Alexander, 2018). Chaumba *et al.* (2003:587) are of the view that:

In the early 1980s, party cells, following the pattern established during the liberation war, were set up in the villages. With the Prime Ministerial decree of 1984, a new decentralized system was installed in parallel to the party cell structure, with village, ward and district committees, which were to form the basis for development planning and administration.

Thus, the Prime Minister's Directive (PMD) of 1984 outlined the new local government chain of command comprising of Provincial, District, Ward and Village levels (Kurebwa, 2015). The

PMD was a policy statement which also enabled the ruling ZANU PF party ‘to keep constant and clear contact with community members where its power or support base was anchored’ (Jonga, 2014:80). I further discuss these issues in the following section.

### 3.5.1 Participatory development initiatives: the Prime Minister’s directive

Chakaipa (2010) notes that the Prime Minister’s Directive of 1984 introduced Village and Ward Development Committees which were concerned with bottom-up planning and development. In other words, the Directive provided for an establishment of structures in rural communities that would enable grassroots participation as well as help coordinate both state and non-state actors’ participation in rural development initiatives (Chatiza, 2010).

There are 60 rural district councils (RDCs) in Zimbabwe (Chatiza *et al.*, 2013) which are each run by council officials under the stewardship of a chief executive officer (CEO) as well as some councillors who are ward based (Matyszak, 2011). RDCs fall under the Ministry of Local Government Public Works and National Housing. Development issues in every district are deliberated through three major channels, namely Village Development Committees (VIDCOs), Ward Development Committees (WADCOs) and the Rural District Council Development Committees (RDDCs) as shown in the table below.

**Table 1: Structure of district development committees**

Level	Development Body	Chair	Responsibility
District	RDDC	District Administrator,* Chief(s), RDC officers, Government departments, security sector, NGOs etc.	District Development
Ward	WADCO	Councillor* and Headmen, Village Head(s)	Ward Development
Village	VIDCO	Village Head*/ <i>Sabhuku</i>	Village Development

\*One who chairs the development body

As noted above, due to the Prime Minister's Directive of 1984, development committees were introduced at village, ward and district levels. As mentioned elsewhere, this was done in order to bring about community representation as well as participation of these communities in the decision-making processes regarding development planning and project implementation (Makumbe, 1998; Chatiza, 2010; Kurebwa, 2015, Chigwata, 2016). The Traditional Leaders Act (TLA) [Chapter 29:17] of 1998 states that each village should have a village assembly (VA) which is known as a *dare* or *inkudla*. A village head or *sabhuku* chairs the assembly. In addition, the assembly is made up of the inhabitants of the village concerned and any attendee to its meetings is supposed to be over the age of eighteen years. Two functions of the *dare* or VA are to 'elect and supervise the village development committee (VIDCO)' as well as to 'review and approve any village development plan before its submission to the ward development committee (WADCO) for incorporation into the ward development plan' (TLA, Part V). The VIDCO is therefore accountable to the VA. As a result, the functions of VIDCOs are as follows: identifying and articulating the needs of community members; forwarding the grassroots' development priorities to the WADCO; co-operating with other government departments in the operation of development plans; and mobilising community members for development interventions that require a sizable workforce (Zimbabwe Institute, 2005).

The TLA also lays out the role of the ward assembly (WA). For each ward in a district, there is a WA which comprises of all headmen, village heads and a councillor for that ward, who also happens to be the chairperson of the assembly. Among other functions, the WA is responsible for supervising what village assemblies do in areas under its authority as well as to assess and give a go ahead to development plans which are submitted by village assemblies. It then forwards its approved plans to the RDC in order for them to be integrated into the rural district development plan (TLA, Part V). Ward Assemblies are made up of six VIDCOs (Zimbabwe Institute, 2005). WADCOs are expected to review and integrate village development plans in accordance with the directions of the WA. VAs, WAs, VIDCOs and WADCOs are allowed to invite an expert in a specific field to provide them with any important information that they may require. If at all possible, WADCOs are expected to be central planning authorities in the ward where development plans would be overseen and coordinated (Zimbabwe Institute, 2005; Chigwata, 2016). However, as discussed earlier, there has been manipulation of these structures as will be further highlighted below.



The Rural District Councils Act Section 60 (1) firmly states that the membership of the Rural District Development Committee (RDDC) shall be as follows:

(a) The District Administrator, who chairs the Committee; (b) The chairmen of every other committee established by the Council; (c) The CEO of the Council and such other officers as the Council may determine; (d) District heads of national security services such as the ZRP, ZNA and CIO; (e) The district head of each ministry and department of a ministry within the district that the Minister may designate by notice in writing to the DA; and (f) Such further persons representing other organisations and interests as the Minister, on the recommendation of the DA, may permit (Section 60(1) RDC Act).

From the above RDC Act, it can be observed that membership of the district development body mainly comprises of government officials, technocrats and members of the security sector. There are hardly any representatives from the community development structures (VIDCOs and WADCOs) in the district planning committee. Those represented are only the chairpersons of the committees established by the RDC (CCMT, 2014). The RDC is well represented by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), its Chairman as well as any other officer(s) that Council can delegate. Though not explicitly stated in the above Act, the chief is also an ex-officio member of the RDDC (Makumbe, 2010, Zimbabwe Institute, 2005). The RDDC is chaired by the DA. It prepares and implements the yearly development plans of the district, which are a compendium of all the submissions from all the committees and assemblies (VIDCOs, WADCOs, WAs, VAs); and this makes it a very important committee in terms of rural development initiatives (CCMT, 2014).

However, Matyszak (2011), Chakaipa (2010) and Kurebwa (2015) assert that the presence of securocrats in the RDDC is quite intimidating and this also shows the importance given to this development body in terms of propagating and safeguarding ZANU PF interests throughout rural Zimbabwe. Under such circumstances, Chakaipa (2010) argues that community members are excluded from important platforms where they are supposed to also decide on crucial decisions that concern their development visions and aspirations. The central concern is that most discussions of RDCs (Makumbe, 2010; Chatiza *et al.*, 2013; Kurebwa, 2015; Matyszak, 2011, Zimbabwe Institute, 2005) show that VIDCOs and WADCOs have often been recipients of information and directives from RDC officials, District Administrators, local and central government as well as politicians. As a result, VIDCOs and WADCOs have in most situations failed to be the avenues for bottom-up participatory approaches.

The underlying weakness has been that RDCs and DAs do not take the development inputs of these lower structures seriously. Consequently, the major form of participation between RDCs, DAs, VIDCOs and WADCOs is when council seeks for information, consent and cooperation from community members specifically in the implementation of development interventions (Feltoe, 2012; Kurebwa, 2015). In most cases, these lower level development structures (VIDCOs and WADCOs) rarely operate as envisaged and, as a result, are unable to contribute meaningfully to the District's development planning processes (Chatiza *et al.*, 2013). What can be discerned from the above literature is that RDCs' development approaches have in most cases been overshadowed by top-down central government blueprints and RDDC development planning hegemony. This has been so, despite the 1984 Prime Minister's Directive which called on rural councils to come up with bottom-up, participatory development planning.

Similarly, VIDCOs and WADCOs have not been effective platforms for popular participation largely because of issues regarding their politicization (Makumbe, 2010). Such concerns have also affected the institution of traditional leadership, as will be further highlighted below. Scholarly work on this topic (Matyszak, 2011; Feltoe, 2012; Jonga, 2014; Govo *et al.*, 2015; CCMT, 2014) suggests that VIDCOs and WADCOs, which were expected at their formation to be effective avenues for popular participation, have also become partisan organs of the ruling ZANU PF party in its bid to consolidate power in rural communities. Quite often, these lower level structures have functioned as a means by which ZANU PF communicates to community members on party ideology as well as mobilizes local communities for political party rallies (Machinya, 2014:76-77). Feltoe (2012:184) equally argues that WADCOS are 'primarily the receiver of information and directives from above that is, from central government and from ZANU PF party officials, rather than acting as a channel of bottom-up initiatives'.

The liberation struggle paved the groundwork for the creation of party tiers, that is, village, ward, district and provincial committees (Cliffe *et al.*, 1980:50) which now work parallel to Zimbabwe's local government structures (Chatiza, 2010). Mandondo (2000:10) argues that WADCOs and VIDCOs have been heavily infiltrated by ZANU PF to the extent that they soon became simply 'politically sponsored institutions ... or mere grassroots extensions of the ruling party'. For Makumbe (1997:97), 'the whole local government structure in Zimbabwe is a carbon copy of the ZANU-PF structure'. These claims may be supported by evidence from Chakaipa and Chakunda (2016:31), who suggest that WADCOs and VIDCOs were 'moulded on party

lines and reorganised planning and development in rural Zimbabwe'. A common perception regarding sub-national government units in Zimbabwe, which has persisted in contemporary times, is that local government structures including WADCOs, VIDCOs and district councils serve the political and economic interests of ZANU PF because of the way they have been organized mainly along party lines, as argued by Matyszak (2011), Feltoe (2012:184), Kurebwa (2015:105-6), Chakaipa and Chakunda (2016:31), Chigwata (2015:450-451, 2016: 89-90) and many others

Like the Traditional Leaders Act discussed earlier as well as below, there is also much controversy about the GoZ decision in 1988 to come up with the Rural District Councils Act, which was to pave way for the amalgamation of rural councils and district councils to form Rural District Councils (RDCs). Rural councils and district councils were abolished and replaced by Rural District Councils (RDC). In other words, there was now one local authority for each district - the RDC. Thus, the RDC merged the District and Rural Councils into one administrative unit (Jonga, 2014; Chatiza, 2010; Kurebwa, 2015; Masvaure, 2016). However, amalgamation only changed local government, as it did not affect the status quo as regards the racial division of land (Govo *et al.*, 2015). Depending on the district, there could be four basic types of rural wards within an RDC: commercial wards for the large-scale white farming areas, commercial wards for the small-scale black farming areas or purchase areas, communal wards, and resettlement wards (Roe, 1995; Govo *et al.*, 2015).

The Rural District Councils Act (1988) was intended to bring meaningful development interventions to communal areas. However, the perceptions about the motivations for the Act are quite varied. Some argue that former President Robert Mugabe wanted to consolidate ZANU PF power in rural areas (Roe, 1995). Others suggest that the GoZ decided to rationalize local government by creating a local government system that was expected *inter alia* to overcome controversial issues of 'separate development' (Chatiza, 2010:8) and to bring into line local government structures that were supposed to support central government's 'strategies and visions for development' (Jonga, 2014:75). Interestingly, the legislation calling for the merger of rural (white commercial areas) and district (black communal areas) councils was enacted in 1988 'but only became operational in 1993' (Matyszak, 2011). This was 'because of a conflict on how the resources and boundaries of the new system were to be aligned' (Alexander, 2004: 196).

In Africa, the governance of sub-national government units comprises of ‘an awkward mix of local authorities particularly in customary areas’ (Helliker, 2006:169). In Zimbabwe’s communal areas, local government structures include democratically elected local councillors, deconcentrated officials and appointed traditional leaders (chiefs, headmen and village heads), with authority in VIDCOs and WADCOs (Matyszak, 2011). The role of chiefs during the colonial era is contested. Chiefs walked a tight-rope between two divergent and opposing chains of command – including, during the 1970s, either collaboration with the colonial government or cooperation with guerrilla fighters. Commenting on their role, some scholars emphasize that they ‘collaborated with the Rhodesian regime’ (Chaumba *et al.*, 2003:587) and so were derogatively branded ‘sell-outs’ (Daneel, 1996:352) or ‘an anachronistic vestige of colonialism’ (Chakunda and Chikerema, 2014:71; Tarugarira, 2010; Chakaipa and Chakunda, 2016:31). Concerning their collaborative role, Lan stresses that:

... the chiefs had become minor civil servants with the powers of constables. As such they were subject to the wishes of their masters, the native commissioners, and no longer to those of their ancestors, the *mhondoro*, or of their people (Lan, 1985:138).

The above view is also shared by Chigwata (2015) who asserts that the colonial government appointed chiefs as paid government employees and they were accountable to the government for the administration of their communities. Equally, Jordan (1983) confirms that the Rhodesian government involved chiefs in politics as well as depending on them in controlling the growth of African resistance to colonial rule.

Others argue that many chiefs were opposed to colonial domination and supported guerrilla fighters (Helliker, 2006; Daneel, 1996; Alexander, 1994). Initially at independence in 1980, the judicial and tax collection duties which traditional leaders had enjoyed under colonial rule were stripped (Zimbabwe Institute, 2005, Makumbe, 2010) and ‘transferred to district councils and community courts, respectively’ (Chigwata, 2015:449). Helliker (2006) notes that this was despite the fact that a number of chiefs and other traditional leaders had played a significant role during the liberation struggle. Earlier studies by authors such as Daneel (1996:352-3) also confirm that some chiefs distinguished themselves as staunch supporters of the liberation struggle. Alexander (1994:327) asserts that ‘in areas where the war was closely contested chiefs had been forced to withdraw (by guerrilla fighters) from their often ambivalent cooperation with government officials or face violent attack’. Daneel (1996) notes that chief Negovano of Masvingo (among many other such cases in other provinces) was killed by the

guerrillas for supporting the Rhodesian government. Makahamadze *et al.* (2009) highlight the cases of village head Amandios Njerema of Shezukuru Ward and Chief Makiwa Nyashanu who defied the colonial government by supporting the guerrillas – the former was incarcerated while the latter was deposed.

Interestingly, traditional leadership only came to be acknowledged once again within the formal local government institutions after the enactment of the Traditional Leaders Act (TLA) of 1998 amended in 2002 (Zimbabwe Institute, 2005). According to the various authors who have written about the TLA, there are two reasons why the Act was said to have been enacted and also why in 2000 it was fully approved and further amended in 2002. The first reason is that ZANU PF's interest in the traditional leadership was part of a strategy aimed at dissuading rural communities from supporting opposition movements and later the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) (Makumbe, 2010; Matyszak, 2011; Chigwata, 2015:450; Chitando, 2005: 227). While the MDC did not exist then (in 1998), Ncube (2011:93) suggests that ZANU PF's political support was already being challenged in the early and late 1990s by some strong political opposition movements. Similarly, Matyszak (2011) argues that, though the TLA was enacted in 1998 before the formation of the MDC, indications are that it was in the early to mid-2000s that the ZANU PF party earnestly began to co-opt traditional leaders to support it in maintaining a strong political base in rural communities. Notably, the TLA was fully approved or endorsed in 2000 (Kurebwa, 2015:106). Chigwata (2015) points out that further changes were made to the TLA in 2002 in order to give traditional leaders more powers in areas under their jurisdiction. Thus, from 2000 onwards, some chiefs began to openly use their newly restored traditional powers (emanating from the amended Traditional Leaders Act 2000) to entrench ZANU PF support in rural communities, especially bearing in mind the political threat the newly formed MDC party was posing towards ZANU PF from 2000 onwards (Chitando, 2005; Makahamadze *et al.*, 2009; Makumbe, 2010; Ncube, 2011; Matyszak, 2011; Chigwata, 2015; Govo *et al.*, 2015).

However, contrary to the views of Makumbe (2010), Chigwata (2015), Chitando (2005) and many others, authors such as Chakunda and Chikerema (2014:72), Chakaipa and Chakunda (2016:32), Ncube (2011:90, 93-4), Alexander (2018:144) also attribute the restoration of the powers of traditional leaders (through the passing of the 1998 TLA) to the recommendations made by the 1994 Rukuni Commission, also referred to as the 1994 Land Tenure Commission. The Commission advised that traditional leaders were the true representatives of rural

communities because of their accessibility, their essential role in state politics and nation building, and their significant contribution towards the successful implementation of development interventions (Ncube, 2011; Chakunda and Chikerema, 2014; Chakaipa and Chakunda, 2016). In line with the proposals of the 1994 Rukuni Commission, the Traditional Leaders Act acknowledged that chiefs, headmen and village heads were closer to the local communities and were supposed to assist in spearheading meaningful development interventions (TLA, 1998). The further amendments made to the TLA in 2002 emphasized the importance of traditional leadership and gave chiefs, village heads and headmen varied powers (Chigwata, 2010, 2015:450). As such, Chaumba *et al.* (2003:599) assert that the TLA managed to bring ‘chiefs and headmen back - but only on ZANU PF's terms’; or, in other words, the TLA brought ‘chiefs into a relationship not with a bureaucratic state but with a newly partisan set of institutions’ (Alexander, 2018:146). What is highlighted by Chaumba et al. (2003) and Alexander (2018) is a clear reflection of how the ZANU PF government has through the TLA managed to strategically politicise the traditional leadership institutions. I raise these concerns specifically in Chapters 6 and 9.

### 3.5.2 Major actors in terms of development interventions at district level

At the district level, three major actors have had some influence in the development trajectories that take place at ward and village levels. These are the chief(s), RDC (especially the CEO and Chairman of the RDC), and the District Administrator. The chief is the traditional authority representing the GoZ within a district while the RDC serves the interests of local government, and the DA is answerable to the central government for any development initiatives that take place in a given district. This is shown in the table below.

**Table 2: Power structures at district level**

LEVEL	TRADITIONAL	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
DISTRICT	Chief	Rural Council	District Administrator

According to the Traditional Leaders Act, chiefs are the traditional heads of the communities under their jurisdiction and they wield significant authority in their specific communities (Matyszak, 2010; Makumbe, 2010). Chigwata (2010) claims that traditional leaders wield home-grown legitimacy that is deep-rooted and this allows them to play a far more influential role in the lives of rural communities than do government officials and politicians. The role of the chiefs includes the allocation of rural land, the trying of civil and criminal cases, the promotion of cultural values, the overseeing of the collection of taxes and levies and many other governance duties. In addition, chiefs nominate headmen, have close links with the DA and participate in RDDC meetings (CCMT, 2014; Makumbe, 2010). These political engagements with central government as well as the powers bestowed upon them under the TLA are seen by Pswarayi (2015) as having allowed some traditional leaders to abuse government resources to their advantage, as well as to advance ZANU PF interests while undermining the development needs of the rural communities.

The Chief Executive Officer of an RDC is appointed by the same Council into office. However, the appointment does not end there, as it also has to be approved by the Minister of Local Government (Matyszak, 2011; CCMT, 2014). The CEO acts as the administrator or secretary of the RDC where he/she has a responsibility of keeping Council records, and all reports or notices pass through his office (Matyszak, 2011; Kurebwa, 2015). He/she exerts significant powers (CCMT, 2014) and wields much influence in terms of district development initiatives. The person who is appointed to this office, just like a DA, should have acquired tertiary education. The RDC CEO is also assisted by the RDC Chairman in the execution of some of his duties.

District Administrators are appointed by the Minister of Local Government and they chair RDDC meetings (Chigwata, 2016; Kurebwa, 2015; Matyszak, 2011; Chakaipa, 2010). They are high-ranking civil servants in comparison to other civil servants employed in other structures of local government in rural areas. They are also more educated and have attained a tertiary education. This therefore makes them 'highly professionalised cadre[s], particularly in comparison to rural councillors and traditional leaders' (CCMT, 2014:12). Matyszak (2011) and Kurebwa (2015) sum this up by pointing out that DAs are chief advisors to RDCs as well as chief implementers of government policies and programmes. In addition, they are also regarded as chief government regulators and monitors in rural districts. DAs can also carry out extra

responsibilities which include being civil protection officers thus according them broad executive powers. As well, the DA enjoys considerable influence over the RDC. Before a new RDC chair is elected after every general election, the DA is entitled to temporarily chair Council meetings. Besides acting in a provisional role as council chair, DAs have a right to attend Council meetings as ‘non-voting observers and advisors with considerable influence given their power outside of council’ (CCMT, 2014:12).

Concerns have been raised on the impartiality of the above actors regarding ZANU PF politics. Commentators such as Makumbe (2010), Matyszak (2011), Chatiza (2010) and Kurebwa (2015) have alleged that chiefs, RDC CEOs and DAs are in most cases sympathetic to ZANU PF (an issue discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6). An argument can be that the major actors support ZANU PF because of the conflation between party and government and the centrality of patron client relations in Zimbabwe. Apart from questions on the neutrality of the above officials to party politics, there are also varied contestations and struggles which have taken place between the local government representatives and the traditional leadership structures. The majority of disputes focus on who should allocate land and have control over resources (Alexander, 2018; Mkodzongi, 2016; Govo *et al.*, 2015; Ncube, 2011; Zimbabwe Institute, 2005); who has the overall right to preside over rural communities as well as oversee the distribution of resources (Ncube, 2011; CCMT, 2014; Chigwata, 2016; Mkodzongi, 2016); and also who should be at the forefront in spearheading rural development initiatives (Zimbabwe Institute, 2005; CCMT, 2014; Chigwata, 2016).

Traditional leaders and councillors have not always had an amiable relationship and this has been witnessed in the way both accuse each other of abusing power in the supervision as well as provision of limited resources in rural communities (Chigwata, 2016; Zimbabwe Institute, 2005). However, some argue that chiefs are respected more than councillors in their areas of jurisdiction (Mukodzongi, 2016; Chigwata, 2014). This is evidenced by the fact that even though chiefs’ land allocation powers were stripped from them in the 1980s and 1990s, they continued to allocate land with the support of rural communities (Mandondo, 2000; Ncube, 2011; Govo *et al.*, 2015; Mkodzongi, 2016). The RDC Act (1988) and Communal Lands Act (1982) had excluded them from such activities (Alexander, 2006; Ncube, 2011). These pieces of legislation had ‘effectively subordinated traditional leaders under RDCs’ (Moyo *et al.*, 2009:146; Ncube, 2011:91). However, Govo *et al.* (2015:45) cite the case of Gutu District, where the



traditional leadership continued to allocate ‘land to the people, a function that legally belong[ed] to the district councils’. The tension which exists between the traditional leadership and RDCs ‘has resulted in a myriad of conflicts that have stunted development in rural Zimbabwe’ (CCMT, 2014:30). The cause of conflict has been as a result of the creation of ‘parallel authority structures’ (CCMT, 2014:30) in rural Zimbabwe where both chiefs and councillors claim legitimacy to communities in areas under their control (Zimbabwe Institute, 2005) and this has resulted in a situation where ‘such conflicts ... undermine development activities by creating divisions among the rural populace’ (Chigwata, 2016:86).

Regarding issues of authority in rural communities, Ndoro (2010) has observed that traditional leaders are more interested in being the major authority in terms of governing communal areas. This has created tension as ‘councillors are overshadowed by chiefs in rural local government’ (Chigwata, 2014:223). For instance, chiefs enjoy supervisory powers over village heads and headmen, and have the final authority over them (Zimbabwe Institute, 2005). This setup has at times created some conflict over who village heads should consult first regarding development outcomes discussed in VIDCO meetings. For example, in one rural community, it is reported that the chief boycotted ward development committee (WADCO) meetings and further directed village heads to report village development committee proceedings directly to him and not to the ward councillor who chairs WADCO meetings (CCMT, 2014). In some instances, friction may arise between a ward councillor and a chief over the operations of an NGO in an area. For example, in a certain district, conflict arose ‘between traditional leaders, councillors and an aid NGO’ (CCMT, 2014:29). The councillors complained that they had been bypassed in the implementation of the NGO’s development interventions and, worse still, chiefs in the district had approved of the projects without the councillors’ knowledge (CCMT, 2014). Ndoro (2010) rightly argues that ‘to traditional leaders, councillors are a challenge to their hegemony, prestige and authority’ (Ndoro, 2010: 323).

The TLA of 2000 reasserted the power of ‘traditional leaders and reduced those of elected ones [councillors]’ (Zimbabwe Institute, 2005:27; Govo *et al.*, 2015). This Act, as stated earlier, gave traditional leaders the power and responsibility to look into issues of land and natural resources management among a plethora of other issues (TLA, 2000). Observations in Chapters 5 and 6 are that chiefs now have more power than the democratically elected leaders (councillors) in terms of control over resources. Through the management of Community Share

Ownership Trusts (CSOTs), chiefs (as chairpersons) have been bestowed with overwhelming power by central government to manage and allocate resources to community members from funds accruing from the Trusts. Ward Councillors have been completely side-lined from the process. This argument is elaborated in Chapters 6 and 9. However, as will be discussed in the section below, in terms of benefits accruing from conservancy projects in rural communities (Community Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources [CAMPFIRE]), RDCs and councillors are perceived to wield significant power and control over the proceeds realized from CAMPFIRE activities (Mutanga *et al.*, 2017; Chigonda, 2018; Dzvimbo *et al.*, 2018). While at their inception, CAMPFIRE projects involved the RDC, park authorities and traditional institutions in their design, the latter mainly remained ‘confined to other natural resources other than wildlife’ (Ntuli *et al.*, 2018:7). Chigonda (2018:8) cites cases where traditional leaders have ‘taken over control of a supposedly community project’ largely because of differences with RDCs and councillors. In a study by Ntuli *et al.* (2018:15), the majority of respondents preferred as their first best option that the administration of CAMPFIRE be conducted by WMC [wildlife management committee] rather than the RDC and, as their second best option, that the governance of CAMPFIRE be overseen by traditional leaders. The reason for such a choice is discussed in detail in the section I now turn to.

### **3.6 The community areas management programme for indigenous resources (CAMPFIRE) and participatory development**

The Community Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE), which started in 1989 and continues today, is an early attempt by the GoZ to promote participatory development and, among many other issues, it can also be considered to have had an influence in the creation of Community Share Ownership Trusts (CSOTs) (Chipika and Malaba, 2011). It evolved largely around the concept of local ownership and local management of natural resources (Dzvimbo *et al.*, 2018; Chigonda, 2018; Dube, 2019) just like CSOTs, which also evolved largely around the concept of local ownership and local management of funds accruing from the exploitation of natural resources (Kurebwa *et al.*, 2014; Tshuma, 2015; Warikandwa and Osode, 2017).

CAMPFIRE was formed by the GoZ in order to bolster community-based natural resource management as well as to involve the participation of community members in the management of flora and fauna within their environments (Dube, 2019; Gandiwa *et al.*, 2013).

Like CSOTs, CAMPFIRE has attempted to ensure that communities gain from the exploitation of their natural resources. CAMPFIRE's focus is on flora and fauna whereas the CSOTs, which emerged later, focus on mineral resources. Under CAMPFIRE, the local communities are entitled to benefit immensely from proceeds arising from game/fauna within their rural environments (Chigonda, 2018). Mutandwa and Gadzirayi (2007:339) add that:

CAMPFIRE is essentially about entitlement and empowerment. It provides communities with access to a sustainable resource base that they can use for their own benefit. It aims to develop the institutions necessary to manage the resource on a sustainable basis within rural communities (Mutandwa and Gadzirayi, 2007:339).

As claimed by Mutandwa and Gadzirayi (2007), through CAMPFIRE, rural communities are in a better position to benefit from proceeds that accumulate from good conservation of the fauna in their geographical area. CAMPFIRE was set up as an official arrangement to see to it that the rural communities endowed with flora and fauna would maximise on these for sustainable benefits (Mutandwa and Gadzirayi, 2007; Chigonda, 2018).

CAMPFIRE is aimed at correcting resource ownership in rural communities by according community members an equitable allocation of wildlife by assigning monetary benefits to these resources (Martin, 1986; Dube, 2019). CAMPFIRE seeks to give community members formal management of fauna found in their local environments, to help increase the value of wildlife in local communities and to allow monetary benefits to accrue to the rural communities through proper conservation of fauna in their geographical areas (Mutandwa and Gadzirayi, 2007:339). According to Hasler (1999:5), the project guidelines of CAMPFIRE state that RDCs will be allowed to 'withdraw a management fee (maximum 35%) and a levy (15%) before forwarding funds to wards and villages where *it will be distributed as either* household dividends and/or funding for community projects. As a result of this arrangement, some rural communities were and still are able to improve their livelihoods. The benefits have included access to clean water through the drilling of boreholes, fencing of community gardens, construction of schools, the procurement of agricultural inputs and construction of dip tanks (Tchakatumba *et al.*, 2019; Chigonda, 2018; Chakaipa, 2010; Balint and Mashinya, 2008).

The proceeds from CAMPFIRE come from 'concession leasing of hunting, safari and tourism areas in communal lands, as well as from trophy and bed night fees' (Hasler, 1999:5; Dube, 2019:336; Chigonda, 2018: 8). Apart from a community's fauna, CAMPFIRE also diversified to include the participation of the rural communities' control of flora concentrating on

activities such as ‘eco-tourism, beekeeping, timber and crafts [made] by local communities’ (Chakaipa, 2010:58). CAMPFIRE remains active today (Dzvimbo *et al.*, 2018; Tchakatumba *et al.*, 2019) especially within communal wards and villages situated in and adjacent to protected wildlife areas such as Hwange National Park, Gonarezhou National Park, Matusadona National Park and other conservancy areas (Dube, 2019; Mutanga *et al.*, 2017; Gandiwa *et al.*, 2013).

Notwithstanding the above successes of CAMPFIRE, the programme has been the subject of criticism and has been facing myriad challenges in relation to land issues, elite capture and non-participation of community members in decision-making processes. As early as the 1990s, scholars such as Child and Pederson (1991), Murombedzi (1991, 1992), Hill (1996), and Patel (1998) among many others raised questions about who exactly fell in the category of a beneficiary, and they criticised CAMPFIRE for its failure to devolve authority to community members concerning management issues, the inability of CAMPFIRE to sustain itself without donor funding, and the forced eviction of communities to pave way for CAMPFIRE projects. Alexander and McGregor (2000) give an example of the Gwampa Valley CAMPFIRE initiative in Nkayi and Lupane districts of Matabeleland North where community members resisted the CAMPFIRE project for fear of eviction and because they saw it as a threat to their livelihoods. In the end, the Gwampa Valley community members perceived CAMPFIRE as ‘a word associated not with development, but with dispossession’ (Alexander and McGregor, 2000:625).

Before 2000, CAMPFIRE represented a successful model for consolidating both the conservation of fauna and socio-economic development in rural areas (Balint and Mashinya, 2008; Chigonda, 2018). However, the successes of CAMPFIRE began to take a nose dive when ZANU PF politicians initiated the 2000 Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) (Chigonda, 2018; Gandiwa *et al.*, 2013). Chigonda (2018:9) highlights that:

... 655 game farms and conservancies were acquired (wholly or partially) for resettlement during the fast-track land reform period. For example, Bubiana Conservancy, measuring 84,803 ha ceded more than 17,000 ha for the AI farming model, while Buby River Conservancy ceded 5,600 ha also for AI resettlement. The Save Valley Conservancy in Chiredzi, one of the largest private conservancies in the world, also lost some of its area to resettlement.

These actions angered the international donor community especially Western countries such as the USA, UK, Australia and Canada, which had helped to fund the programme and which now withdrew their funding (Gandiwa *et al.*, 2013; Mutanga *et al.*, 2017; Chigonda, 2018; Dzvimbo *et al.*, 2018). Worse still, the beginning of Zimbabwe’s political and economic crisis in 2008 aggravated the sustainability of the programme (Balint and Mashinya, 2008). The success of

CAMPFIRE has mainly been as a result of revenue generated ‘from foreign safari operators through sport hunting of buffalo, elephants, lions and other wild animals’ (Mutandwa and Gadzirayi, 2007:339). The straining of relations between Zimbabwe and Western countries over political issues specifically emanating from the FTLRP saw the number of tourists declining (Ntuli and Muchapondwa, 2018; Chigonda, 2018). Another blow to CAMPFIRE was the withdrawal of several airlines, for example, the British, Australian and Swiss Airways (Global Eye, 2002). These events greatly affected the participation of community members in CAMPFIRE projects, since the funding of the programme by international donors came to an abrupt stop and there was a marked decrease of tourists who had been some of the major spenders in boosting CAMPFIRE activities (Chigonda, 2018; Tchakatumba *et al.*, 2019).

Claims that CAMPFIRE is a community-based and participatory wildlife management programme have been disputed from as early as the 1990s up to contemporary times by scholars such as Murombedzi (1999), Hasler, (1998), Mutandwa and Gadzirayi (2007), Balint and Mashinya (2008), Mutanga *et al.* (2017), Chigonda (2018), Tchakatumba *et al.* (2019) and Dube (2019) among many others. They underscore the fact that community members have been completely excluded from participating in the management of wildlife since the RDCs have remained in overall control of the programme. Murombedzi (1999:289) argues that:

CAMPFIRE has not devolved rights in wildlife to local communities to the extent where these communities can use these rights to gain an increased stake in the wildlife utilization enterprise at its multiple levels of value. While communities get a share of revenues they have little control over wildlife management, no equity in wildlife utilization, and few opportunities to provide goods or services to the wildlife industry.

According to Mutanga *et al.* (2017: 16), ‘Community members from Matusadona and Gonarezhou had limited participation in collaborative management of CAMPFIRE’. Giving a general overview of CAMPFIRE programmes in Zimbabwe, Chigonda (2018) observed that:

Despite its achievements, CAMPFIRE has also been criticised on a number of areas. The main criticism of CAMPFIRE has been its failure to devolve appropriate authority to subdistrict levels (Chigonda, 2018:7).

With reference to the CAMPFIRE programme in Hwange district, Matabeleland North (Hwange National Park), Dube (2019) gathered the views of community members about the contribution of CAMPFIRE to local economic development. He indicates that:

...the villagers argued that they were often excluded in the intricate dealings of CAMPFIRE and almost treated like children who did not know what was good for them. As a result, they often

had decisions made for them without them participating in the CAMPFIRE programme (Dube, 2019:341).

The above scholars' arguments suggest that participation in the management of wildlife has largely remained under the control of RDCs with very little contribution coming from community members in terms of the bargaining of contracts with safari operators. This shows that local communities have been excluded from participating in the major deliberations between the RDCs and other stakeholders. CAMPFIRE was structured in such a way that, at the VIDCO level, each village within a ward would select six members who would sit on a ward sub-committee chaired by a councillor (Chigonda, 2018). At the RDC level, the councillor would then represent his ward in the district sub-committee which included the RDC chairman and his vice (Mutandwa and Gadzirayi, 2007). Councillors themselves are part and parcel of RDCs and a pertinent question is on whether they can be trusted to effectively represent their communities in cases where the interests of community members clash with those of the RDC.

It is clear from the above paragraph that central government entrusted too much control of wildlife management to RDCs. This has undermined the communities' ability to contribute meaningfully by participating towards wildlife management in their area (Dzvimbo *et al.*, 2018; Chigonda, 2018; Ntuli and Muchapondwa, 2018; Ntuli *et al.*, 2018). This shows that central government did not allow for the local communities in villages and wards to administer their own programmes but subtly left this control to RDCs, WADCOs and VIDCOs which all fell under its control (Hasler, 1999). A survey carried out in CAMPFIRE communities around the Gonarezhou National Park by Ntuli *et al.* (2018) showed great willingness among community members to manage CAMPFIRE programmes on their own without any interference from the RDC. The major reason was that community members were opposed to development projects imposed on them by the RDC and preferred projects informed by their own development needs and priorities. This suggests that having influence in, and ownership of, development programmes may be more important in influencing local communities' perceptions about CAMPFIRE programmes than are direct infrastructural benefits coming from imposed development interventions.

Similarly, a review of some literature on CAMPFIRE shows that some RDC officials abused the monetary returns of the programme. Hasler (1999), Mutanga *et al.* (2017), Chigonda (2018) and Dzvimbo *et al.* (2018) observed that community members had many misgivings on

the way that RDCs were administering revenue from CAMPFIRE. The local communities alleged that RDC officials embezzled funds in connivance with some corrupt councillors. A study by Balint and Mashinya (2008) likewise reveals that CAMPFIRE revenue was often abused by RDC officials. In their findings from Nyaminyami Rural District which borders Matusadona National Park, there was also evidence that money intended to benefit individual households from CAMPFIRE income was siphoned off before reaching the intended beneficiaries. Observations were that some RDCs kept the lion's share of proceeds from CAMPFIRE. The local councillors also appropriated the remainder of the money for their own use. In the end, no new community development projects were ever funded by the RDCs in Nyaminyami Rural District (Balint and Mashinya, 2008). The language of participatory development approaches may exist within RDCs but the application of such approaches is very limited in scope as seen in the above CAMPFIRE cases.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

The argument of this chapter has been essentially that decentralization reforms have the potential to transform society through meaningful development interventions. It was noted that the history of decentralization in most African countries and Zimbabwe in particular has been that colonial governments used it as a means to control and coerce Africans, and that post-colonial African governments have similarly used decentralization initiatives to maintain the power of both the ruling party and that of central government. Observations were that the autonomy of local government institutions was critical in opening up spaces for participatory development so as to improve the lives of the rural communities. However, the evidence from Zimbabwe shows that the centre is not yet willing to transfer fiscal, administrative and political authority to the sub-national government units. It is also imperative to categorically state that this development whereupon the centre is not willing to transfer fiscal, administrative and political authority to local authorities is not necessarily a Zimbabwean challenge but is conspicuous the world over.

Drawing upon what has been discussed in this chapter, it is quite possible to argue that decentralization reforms can bring about both negative and positive results. The positives, among many other advantages, have been efficient service delivery, people-centred development interventions, accountability and transparency in terms of participatory development initiatives, and democratic representation through elected officials. A limitation of many of the forms of decentralization discussed in this chapter is the fact that supposed attempts to decentralize have

often left significant power in the hands of those in central government. One reason for this is that there are political patronage networks between subnational government units (appointed government officials, and elected councillors belonging to certain political parties) and the centre. Furthermore, development interventions have been heavily politicized with the majority of parties in power undermining the genuine development needs and preferences of community members by imposing development projects that are in line with their development objectives.

Decentralization in Africa has come to mean the sustenance and dominance of the political party in power through politically-oriented development interventions. Corruption, elite capture, political party loyalism, hegemony of the centre on local government institutions, deconcentration of local government structures among many other things have militated against sound decentralization in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. The following Chapter (chapter 4) examines in detail the work of NGOs in participatory development processes.



## **CHAPTER 4: THE ROLE OF NGOS IN DEVELOPMENT AND AN OVERVIEW OF NGO-STATE RELATIONS IN ZIMBABWE**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter focused on the decentralization of sub-national government units in relation to participatory development initiatives. This chapter now focuses on NGOs in relation to participatory development programmes. Both the decentralization and the emergence of NGOs have been perceived in mainstream development literature as opening up spaces for community-centred participation in development interventions. As observed in Chapter 3, participation in rural development projects was expected to be spearheaded by devolved local government structures as well as by NGOs.

This chapter starts with a brief historical background of NGOs in Africa as they are not new to the continent, but can be traced back to missionary work and local associations. NGOs are seen as not operating in a vacuum, but are accountable to three major constituencies, that is, donors who sponsor their activities, the states in whose territory they operate and the community members whom they assist. These three major stakeholders will be analysed in this chapter. The chapter also provides an overview of the role of NGOs in participatory development in Zimbabwe. After this general synopsis of NGOs in Zimbabwe, I then look at how Zimbabwean Development NGOs (both sectarian and secular) have related to the state. This provides us with a sense of the context in which Zimbabwean NGOs work. However, I leave the detailed discussion of participatory practices within Zimbabwean faith-based NGOs to Chapters 7 and 8.

### **4.2 NGOs: Problems of definition**

The term ‘Non-Governmental Organization’ (NGO) is seen as shorthand for many official and unofficial organizations and associations. Literature on NGOs shows that the term ‘NGO’ itself has in most cases been subjected to various interpretations and definitions. Fisher (1997) has noted that the NGO sector is so diverse that analysts have distinguished them according to various criteria. Various acronyms have thus been used in an attempt to differentiate them according to operation, service provided, and ownership. A few of these acronyms include: CBOs (community-based organizations), GROs (grass-roots organizations), POs (people's organizations), MSOs (membership support organizations), GSOs or GRSOs (grass-roots support organizations), SNGOs (NGOs based in Southern or developing countries), INGOs

(international NGOs), VOs (voluntary organizations) and PVOs (private voluntary organizations) (Fisher, 1997:448).

It must be noted that the various acronyms show how complex the NGO sector is as well as how scholars struggle to agree on a definition of what these entities really are. As Fisher (1997:447) puts it, 'there is little agreement about what NGOs are and even less about what they are supposed to be called'. The concept NGO encompasses a range of organizations (Pearce, 1993) which explains why, like many other concepts in the social sciences, it is difficult to come up with a homogenous definition of the term. Helliker (2006:6) sums it up when he points out that 'The term "NGO" is an inherently negative, residual and nebulous term that seems to distract rather than contribute to meaningful theoretical discussions'.

Owing to the above difficulties encountered in trying to define NGOs, scholars like Morris (2000) have attempted to bring some sanity in this definitional debate by coming up with some characteristics which can best help in identifying whether an organization can be related to as an NGO. Morris (2000), citing Salamon and Anheier (1992, 1997), identifies five key characteristics that NGOs must share. These can be simplified as organization, private ownership, not for profit, self-autonomy and being voluntary.

The first characteristic, organization, refers to a set-up characterized by a permanent staff, offices and a constant financial base. This entails a sense of permanence unlike what is found within spontaneous movements (Martens, 2002). For an organization to qualify as an NGO, it should have 'some form of membership, elected leaders, several full-time staff members, some sort of a hierarchy, a budget and an office' (Makumbe *et al.*, 2000: xii). The second characteristic, which is private ownership, means that government representatives are not part of NGO structures. NGOs are made up of individuals or groups of private persons who are not civil servants. A third characteristic of NGOs is that they are not-for-profit organizations. Not-for-profit refers to the idea that NGOs are not driven by a desire to make money like what happens in the business world. In other words, NGOs are not commercial entities that engage in profit making but have a sole purpose of serving the public, especially vulnerable groups. NGOs do not therefore 'exist primarily to generate profits for their owners' (Salamon and Anheier, 1992:127). The fourth characteristic, self-autonomy, means that NGOs are independent organizations that are not run by government (Lewis and Kanji, 2009). While some NGOs receive funding from governments, an organization is only an NGO if it remains autonomous

and separate from government. An NGO is expected to manage its own affairs without any interference from either the government (state) or the business sector (market). The final characteristic listed by Morris (2000) is that an NGO must be voluntary. The voluntary aspect of NGOs refers to the important contributions that volunteers make in the management and operations of some NGOs. Lewis and Kanji (2009) suggest that NGO Boards are usually managed by a voluntary board of governors. However, it must be noted that the operations of most NGOs in Africa are carried out by paid employees. In other words, NGOs are also professionalized organizations consisting of paid staff with specific skills. These employees usually have expert knowledge in disciplines such as law, politics, development studies, sociology, economics, and accounting. According to Marten (2002), NGOs remain non-profit oriented despite having highly skilled personnel.

There are different kinds of NGOs. Scholars such as Clarke and Ware (2015) categorize them into those which are secular (non-religious oriented) and those which are sectarian (religious oriented). Both secular and religious NGOs can be involved in advocacy, relief, welfare (service delivery), development (participation, empowerment, self-reliance, and sustainability), and humanitarian work. Religious and non-religious oriented NGOs all share the same characteristics as described by Morris.

For the purposes of this study, I define 'NGO' broadly as any non-profit, non-governmental organization that engages in development work which includes service provision and the execution of projects. These can be local, national and international rural development NGOs. They can be faith-based or secular organizations which receive grants from donors and have paid staff that are in most cases assisted by community-based volunteers. Similarly, international NGOs which help fund local and national sectarian or secular NGOs form part of this study. More importantly, grassroots organizations which survive on membership fees as a primary source of income are not included in this study. Advocacy NGOs are a part of the local, national and international NGO sector. I frequently leave these NGOs out, since my main focus is on those NGOs which are into development initiatives as they execute projects and provide goods and services to rural communities. However, I discuss some issues related to the advocacy activities of NGOs when examining criticisms levelled against NGOs as well as NGO-state relations in Zimbabwe. This study's main focus is on development NGOs and how they practice participatory approaches which are an area I will largely focus on in sections below.

### **4.3 The rise of NGOs in Africa**

NGOs are not a new phenomenon on the African continent, but can be traced back to the early missionaries as well as the early clubs and associations formed by Africans. An overview of development NGOs in Africa is necessary in that it helps to bring out a deeper understanding of historical, political and ideological issues that have helped shape the current growth of NGOs on the continent.

#### **4.3.1 Growth of NGOs in colonial and early post-colonial Africa**

The arrival of missionaries on the African continent is seen as the genesis of contemporary NGO development work in Africa (Manji and O’Coill, 2002; Bornstein, 2005; Matthews and Nqaba, 2017; Manji, 2017). The missionaries carried out charitable acts as they ‘... provided economic development services which ... included agricultural assistance, education, and self-help programmes’ (Bornstein, 2002:5). As Shao (2001:20) notes, the ‘provision of medical care ... in many African countries was started by the Church through the agency of Christian mission societies’. The colonial governments had little scope to pursue such goals and so social services to Africans had remained insignificant (Manji and O’Coill, 2002). Manji and O’Coill (2002) and Manji (2017) argue that these charitable missionary acts were a form of ‘false generosity’. Manji and O’Coill (2002:569) stress that when providing social services to Africans, the missionaries focused on preaching the gospel (evangelism) through discouraging behaviour they thought was uncivilized while ‘promoting their own vision of civilization’ which was modelled on moral values that bolstered colonial rule. Similarly, Manji (2017:21) further highlights that:

In the colonial period, missionaries played a central role in the provision of social welfare as charity as well as in sweetening the bitter pill of colonialism. They were an integral part of colonial rule, providing services to native populations that the state would not, and serving to dominate the mental universe of the colonized.

Likewise, for Bornstein, (2005:11) the provision of such services was an attempt by the Christian missionaries and the colonial governments ‘to create a docile, productive rural labour force for colonial capitalism’. Nhemachena and Bankie (2017) emphasize that these acts were done in a very subtle way through charitable deeds and a misrepresentation of the teachings of the Bible.

While missionaries did provide support for the colonial project, the 1960s witnessed churches openly condemning issues of racial superiority within colonial territories which had led to gross inequalities and poverty among the disempowered African populations (Manji and

O’Coill, 2002). Bornstein (2005) notes that in the colonies, mission churches moved away from supporting colonial governments by refocusing their relationships to African liberation movements as well as the African communities. This time around, African nationalist struggles against colonial rule made the former missionary societies (now mainline churches on the continent) ‘reconstruct themselves as indigenous development NGOs’ (Manji and O’Coill, 2002:572). An interesting observation by Matthews and Nqaba (2017) is that the method used by the early missionaries and other charitable organizations in assisting African populations did not expose the vices of colonialism which were the major cause of such privation, but rather implied that Africans were to blame for their deplorable circumstances.

Another group (which had no direct involvement in the colonies), comprising of international humanitarian NGOs such as Oxfam, Save the Children and Plan International, likewise came to assist African countries in the 1950s and 1960s (Manji and O’Coill, 2002). The above international humanitarian NGOs were charitable groups established in Europe to provide humanitarian relief to European civilian populations affected by the devastations of the Second World War. When privation and poverty were no longer a threat in Europe due to America’s Marshall Plan (money given to European countries by the US Government for their reconstruction after the devastations of the Second World War), these NGOs moved to Africa and elsewhere to carry out similar humanitarian and relief work (Manji and O’Coill, 2002).

#### **4.3.2 Local associations in colonial Africa**

During the colonial era, there was another group of voluntary organizations which was mainly made up of associations or clubs. These clubs helped African women and men to survive the various challenges of both urban and rural life. The colonial governments funded the clubs as a way of undermining support for African liberation movements in both urban and rural areas (Manji and O’Coill, 2002). These early NGOs included the Young Men’s Christian Associations (YMCA), Young Women’s Christian Associations (YWCA), Christian Councils, Association of Women’s Clubs, and numerous savings clubs (Moyo and Makumbe, 2000:3; Manji and O’Coill, 2002:570). The women’s clubs concerned themselves with hygiene, nutrition, etiquette, sewing and childcare (Moyo *et al.*, 2000). The major thrust of these NGOs was to impart skills among rural women (Rich, 1997).

### 4.3.3 The surge of development NGOs in post-colonial Africa

The surge in NGO activities in Africa began in the 1980s and intensified during the 1990s (Gary, 1996; Lewis and Kanji, 2009; Banks and Hulme, 2012). Development thinking in the larger part of the twentieth century did not focus much on NGOs though they were quite active on the ground in a number of countries. For example, until the late 1970s, there was a small number of NGOs operating in the South and these were mainly faith based organizations which were receiving limited funding specifically for short-term relief programmes (Banks and Hulme, 2012). Though calls were being made in the early 1950s to involve local communities in development processes (as argued in Chapter 2), development agencies and governments still remained preoccupied with professional formulation of development policies and programmes (Hellinger, 1987). Lewis and Kanji (2009:16) refer to this epoch as a period of ‘bureaucratic and ineffective government-to-government, project-based aid’. Local communities remained subservient to development experts and governments for solutions to their problems (Hellinger, 1987).

Slowly in the late 1970s debates began to take centre stage among development practitioners on the utility of both the modernization and dependency theories to address development challenges in least developed countries (Booth, 1994). During these debates, NGOs were then proposed to be a ‘promising development alternative’ (Banks and Hulme, 2012:6) or as ‘useful new organizational actors that might open up new theory and practice’ (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:39). NGOs themselves also made various contributions to these debates especially on broad issues concerning development (Lewis and Kanji, 2009). Similarly, the 1980s also saw various scholarly articles ‘with the publication of a *World Development* special issue on NGOs as development alternatives’ (Banks and Brockington, 2019:4) which was edited by Drabek, thus setting the tone for ‘NGOs as potential sources of “development alternatives”’ (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:40).

The surge of development NGOs started seriously in the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s and was seen as a ‘magic bullet’ (Edwards and Hulme, 1995; Vivian, 1994; Banks and Hulme, 2012) by liberal scholars. Others saw them as the only way to ‘serve communities not adequately served’ (Alnoor, 2003:192) by the state and market. The rising debts of African countries in the 1970s resulted in African countries being forced to adopt structural adjustment programmes which limited the role of the state and thereby opened up space for NGOs.

According to Bornstein (2005), the increase in the number of NGOs in Africa in the 1980s was driven by Cold-War ideological struggles. Both the US and Soviet Union capitalized on the economic poverty and political weakness of the South to advance their ideological competition and rivalries on a global scale. The two superpowers used foreign aid as one of their principal economic instruments to impress and win over countries in Africa and elsewhere to their ideological side (Matthews and Nqaba, 2017; Saito, 2008; Firth, 2005).

One of the first scholars to give credence to the proliferation of NGOs and their contribution to development was Lester Salamon (1994) who, to quote him in detail, highlighted that:

A striking upsurge is under way around the globe in organized voluntary activity and the creation of private, nonprofit or nongovernmental organizations ... to deliver human services, promote grass-roots economic development, ... and pursue a thousand other objectives formerly unattended or left to the state (Salamon, 1994:109).

Salamon equates the rise of NGOs in the 1990s to an ‘associational revolution’ that was geared to deliver social services which the state had failed to attend to or address. In other words, he saw the emergence of NGOs as filling gaps in social services not provided by the market and the government. The end of the Cold War and the associated rise of neo-liberalism led to the ‘rolling back’ of the state, opening up space for NGOs. Thus, the growth of NGOs was mainly attributed to disillusionment about the role of states in promoting development especially in Africa (White and Eicher, 1999).

Of particular interest in the literature was the way NGOs were embraced as ‘doing good, unencumbered by the politics of government or the greed of the market’ (Zivetz cited in Fisher, 1997:442). In other words, NGOs were seen as being ‘apolitical’ or ‘not interested in politics’, thus making them ‘impartial’ and ‘unbiased’ when engaging poor rural communities in development interventions. In addition, NGOs were also romanticized as being more cost-effective than governments and better able to reach the poor (Alnoor, 2003). In the 1990s, northern governments gave NGOs the weight of the world on their shoulders as they were being tasked to uplift the poor masses in Africa and elsewhere from poverty, through ‘participatory’ development interventions. Though the task seemed a herculean one, most Western NGO advocates in the 1980s and early 1990s had faith in the voluntary organizations’ ability to deliver.

A common perception in the 1990s among many development thinkers was that NGOs would help in the democratization processes in developing countries (Banks *et al.*, 2015; Wellens and Jegers, 2017). It was anticipated that sub-national government units (discussed in Chapter 3), private organizations and NGOs were to fill the gaps left by the state after its withdrawal from the market as well as its retreat from providing basic services to citizens. The democratization by NGOs also implied that they had to engage in advocacy work in the local communities they served. However, as discussed earlier in Chapter 2, advocacy NGOs are not the major focus of this thesis. This study concerns itself with service provision NGOs and their downward accountability towards the intended beneficiaries. Downward accountability in this study is perceived to be embedded within a participatory development framework where the pertinent objective is a focus on releasing ‘power to those lower down the aid chain’ (Bawole and Langnel, 2016:923).

A brief review of advocacy NGOs helps provide some background for the criticisms levelled against NGOs in a section below. From around 2000, strong calls were made by donors for NGOs to engage communities in advocacy initiatives (Arhin, 2016). In this line of thinking, NGOs were perceived to be ‘part of an emerging “civil society”’ (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:17) where they could ‘inspire, facilitate or contribute to improved thinking and action to promote social transformation’ in local communities (Lewis, 2009:2). The language of human rights was used to further interpret the concept of development vis-à-vis NGO work (Donaghue, 2010:39). During this period, ‘the language of democracy, human rights, participation and “strengthening civil society”’ gained more impetus than in the 1990s and this further helped consolidate the view that NGOs were capable of engaging local communities (through their advocacy work) in ‘countervailing power against local and national governments’ (Banks *et al.*, 2015:708).

Nine years later (from around 2009 onwards), earlier concerns about NGOs grew stronger among development practitioners and scholars who argued that they were not a ‘straightforward “magic bullet”’ that would help to ‘reorient development efforts and make them more successful’ (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:17). A study by Banks and Hulme (2012) found that NGOs were more successful at service delivery than they were at advocacy and empowerment. A few years later, Banks *et al.* (2015) consolidated their 2012 findings when they emphasized that ‘most NGO efforts remain palliative [through service delivery initiatives] rather than transformative [through advocacy/activism work]’ (Banks *et al.*, 2015:708). USAID’s country



report on African NGOs also indicated that in almost every country people showed greater appreciation and support for service-providing NGOs than for advocacy NGOs. Regarding advocacy NGOs, the study observed that people ‘lacked understanding of the ... sector as a whole’ (USAID, 2018:4). In 2015, a review of current literature on NGO funding confirms that the bulk of donor funds are directed towards service provision rather than advocacy work (Banks *et al.*, 2015; Fowler, 2016; Arhin, 2016; USAID, 2018; Makuwira, 2018). African governments are seen to have more cordial relationships with service-providing than advocacy NGOs (USAID, 2016, 2018; Moore and Moyo, 2018). The service provision role of NGOs has its own strengths and weaknesses. I discuss these issues in detail in the first and second sections below, but before I turn to the next section I give a brief overview of the realities on the ground in Africa concerning the funding of NGOs. The overview helps to illustrate the type of environment African NGOs currently operate in.

More than two decades ago, Fowler (1992:9) speculated that ‘financial self-reliance for Southern NGOs will be no nearer in the year 2000 than it is today’. At present, Fowler (2016) maintains that many NGOs have still not heeded calls to think outside the box in terms of coming up with strategies that can sustain them when donor assistance finally dries up. He says, ‘strategies for “life beyond aid”’ have not been ‘pursued with vigour’ (Fowler 2016:570). USAID’s country studies on African NGOs’ sustainability indexes also continue to echo the same viewpoint (USAID, 2010, 2016, 2018). It is acknowledged that the majority of African governments do not provide any funding to NGOs (Arhin, 2016; USAID, 2010; Wright, 2012). Government funding to NGOs ‘is rare to non-existent in a majority of countries’ (USAID, 2018:4). As discussed in detail in the section below, the majority of African NGOs depend on donor funds (Arhin, 2016; Bawole and Langnel, 2016; Helliker, 2017). The only exception in the literature in terms of financing NGOs has been South Africa where not much comes from international donors. In this southern African country, the ‘government, National Lottery Board, and individual donors’ largely fund NGOs which provide social services (USAID, 2018:206). Donor funding has its own advantages and limitations. I discuss these issues below.

#### **4.4 Arguments in favour of NGO-led development in Africa**

In Africa and elsewhere, states facing economic problems have failed or found it hard to spearhead development interventions in both urban and rural areas. Such economic problems include situations where states fail to provide basic services to citizens and are unable to create

enabling conditions for people to improve their livelihoods or where communities are excluded from benefitting from state resources. Under these circumstances, calls have been made to find alternative ways through NGOs to bring development to these disadvantaged communities.

NGOs became important actors in the development discourse and practice in Africa and elsewhere owing to a number of reasons which I discuss below. First, due to the heavy presence of NGOs in most ‘developing’ countries, millions of dollars were contributed towards development assistance (Clarke, 1998; Lewis and Kanji, 2009). In 1989 alone, donors contributed US\$6.4 billion to assist ‘developing’ countries, thus showing their overall commitment to development work (Clark, 1991). NGOs became a ‘favoured child’ (Hulme and Edwards, 1997) of donor agencies and therefore received millions of dollars to fund development projects in Africa and elsewhere. The huge sums of money received by NGOs made them credible development ambassadors geared to bring development to less developed countries (Banks and Hulme, 2012:3). NGOs in Africa have been predominantly dependent on foreign donors for funding (MacLean *et al.*, 2015; USAID *et al.*, 2010, 2018; World Bank, 2018). This has tended to be a major weakness of African NGOs as I will further argue in a section below. African countries such as Mozambique, the DRC, Burkina Faso, Burundi, South Sudan, Liberia, and Niger among many others continue to be assisted by donor-funded NGOs owing to their limited capacity to provide basic services to both urban and rural communities (USAID, 2018).

NGOs have been criticised for this dependence on donor funds (Wright, 2012; Lang, 2013; Banks *et al.*, 2015). However, donor funding is significant in facilitating NGO sustainability. The dramatic rise of NGOs in the last three decades has been attributed by various scholars (Hudock, 2000; Townsend *et al.*, 2002; Hearn, 2007; Banks and Hulme, 2012) to increased funding available for their activities. This view is corroborated by Brass *et al.* (2018:136) when they observe that ‘nearly 90% of currently financed projects’ by the World Bank have encompassed an NGO as ‘compared to just 21% in 1990’, and that more than 20% of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) bilateral aid flows through NGOs. Simply put, if there is no funding, there will be few NGOs. NGOs need funds to carry out various development interventions in urban areas or rural communities and will therefore only arise and flourish if such funding is available.

A second reason for the increased prominence of NGOs in recent decades is that many NGOs were said to be able to reach the poor no matter how remote they were (Banks *et al.*,

2015; Banks and Hulme, 2012). For example, in-depth assessments of NGO work on the African continent show that development NGOs have made a significant impact upon the lives of the poor (Jacobs *et al.*, 2017; Ngwira and Mayhew, 2019). In this context, some scholars have examined the significance of NGO development interventions by studying an individual community while others do so by examining three or more countries. For instance, Ngwira and Mayhew (2019:1) point out that ‘in Malawi, NGOs play a critical role in contributing to social development’. Studies by MacLean and Brass (2015:58) established that NGOs in Kenya and Uganda developed new energy solutions (at the local community level) through ‘small-scale and localized production of electricity’. Similarly, drawing from the findings of NGO surveys carried out specifically in African countries (USAID, 2010, 2016, 2018), it was noted that NGOs had achieved considerable success in local community development projects. The individual country reports showed that NGOs had managed to provide some cost-effective development programmes in the majority of African countries which included health, education, livelihoods, food security, water and sanitation, and agriculture (USAID *et al.*, 2010, 2016, 2018).

Thirdly, the increased importance of NGOs in recent decades also relates to the perception that they offer ‘a higher chance of local-level implementation and grassroots participation’ (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:16) and have the ‘desire and capacity to pursue participatory and people centred forms of development’ (Banks and Hulme, 2012:3). It is claimed that NGOs designed their development programmes ‘in a bottom-up manner reflecting local contexts, needs, and realities’ (Banks *et al.*, 2015:710). A review and synthesis of existing NGO development literature found in 3336 English-language journal articles spanning over a period of 34 years (from 1980-2014) found, out among many other issues, that most scholars attributed the success of NGO development projects to the application of genuine participatory development mechanisms (Brass *et al.*, 2018). Some scholars indicated that “‘good” NGO practices are those that align with local norms, establish trust, or encourage involvement in development projects’ (Brass *et al.*, 2018:142). Specific literature on development NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa also points to the centrality of participatory development initiatives in NGO development projects. For instance, NGOs in Botswana, Burkina-Faso, Burundi and Guinea are said to use various participatory approaches in identifying community needs (USAID, 2018). The significance of participatory development approaches in community development projects is

also well-acknowledged in other African countries which, among many others, include Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana and Mozambique (USAID *et al.*, 2010, 2016, 2018).

Finally, an important dimension to all NGOs in the field of development is how they relate with the intended development recipients whom they seek to serve (O'Dwyer and Unerman, 2010:451). The NGO beneficiaries (in most cases the poor majorities in rural areas) are the very essence that helps to justify the existence of NGOs in the first place (Walsh, 2016:706-7; Wellens and Jegers, 2017:0197). Accordingly, development NGOs working in Africa (both local and foreign) have in various contexts been accountable towards the project beneficiaries. Accountability in this regard implies the 'extent to which the NGO is transparent to, and consults with, beneficiaries in project planning and management' (Bawole and Langnel, 2016:921). The following examples highlight some ways in which African NGOs have been downwardly accountable to grassroots communities whom they serve. This downward accountability is exemplified through a variety of community based participatory initiatives which have been used by some NGOs in several African countries. According to USAID (2018), NGOs are able to capture the priorities of grassroots communities through field surveys, activity reports, consultations, community scorecards, social audits, assessments or opinion polls, beneficiary surveys and community needs assessments among many other participatory approaches. In as much as NGOs want to be accountable towards project beneficiaries, there are equally many reasons why such initiatives can be limited. The section below looks at some of the underlying challenges to such noble intentions.

#### **4.5 Critiques of the role of NGOs in African development**

The claims that NGOs were the 'panacea for development problems' (Peet and Hartwick, 2015) in Africa and elsewhere were seen by opponents of NGOs to be somewhat overstated. Critics such as Petras (1999), Shivji (2007), Mitlin *et al.* (2007), Wright (2012) and Manji and O'Coill (2002:568) argued that African people's struggles for emancipation from economic, social and political oppression have been undermined by NGOs, as will be further highlighted in the ensuing paragraphs. The major arguments raised in this section concern issues related to NGOs' upward accountability towards donors (NGOs' subordination to donor interests); NGOs propagating liberal values, norms and beliefs (NGOs as foot soldiers of imperialism); NGOs softening rather than radicalizing communities (NGOs do not change social, political and economic imbalances in given communities); NGOs undermining people-centred development

initiatives (NGOs predetermine development projects); and NGOs prioritising development interventions that keep them in business (NGO survival). This largely weakens the PRA, PAR and PLA techniques discussed earlier in Chapter 2. Even among the supporters of NGOs, it can be noted that in the late 1990s and in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century there were those NGO advocates who began to revise their earlier position on NGOs as they also got ‘disillusioned with NGO performance in some key areas of development’ (Lewis and Opoku-Mensah, 2006:667).

The disillusionment led NGO backers to try to map out new ways to make them more efficient. Scholars like Lewis and Opoku-Mensah (2006:670-3) called for more research regarding NGO efficiency in development work. First, questions on NGO accountability surfaced (Eade, 2007; Biswas, 2009); second, doubts about their ability to eclipse the state in service provision and development initiatives came to the fore (Lewis and Opoku-Mensah, 2006:667; Bebbington, 1997:1756-7); and last, inquiries on whether they could ‘empower’ poor rural communities through participatory interventions took centre stage (Banks and Hulme, 2012, Kilby, 2006). This growing uncertainty towards NGOs as the ‘panacea to development’ led Edwards and Hulme (1998:4) to admit that there was no empirical evidence to support the assertion that NGO provision was, indeed, ‘cheaper than public provision’. The criticisms against NGOs persisted with scholars such as Petras and Veltmeyer (2002, 2007) from Latin America and Shivji (2007) from Africa labelling them as ‘agents of imperialism.’ Nhemachena and Bankie (2017) preferred to call them ‘foot soldiers of the new empire.’

Critics of NGOs argue that these voluntary organizations follow ideologies and agendas of Northern governments and those of international donors (Townsend *et al*, 2004; Helliker, 2017:77). According to Townsend *et al*. (2004), Helliker (2017) and Tandon (1996), the proliferation of NGOs in Africa was a means to promote Northern values and beliefs. NGOs were seen to be used by their Northern funders to disconnect local people from a liberating consciousness. Terms like ‘empowerment’ and ‘people-centred participation’ were used in order to camouflage the neo-liberal imperialistic agenda. Similarly, the word ‘development’ was used to hide, obscure, undercut ‘and displace more anti-systemic notions such as “transformation” and “revolution”’ (Helliker, 2006:100). Such circumstances prompted scholars like Manji and O’Coill (2002) to compare NGOs to missionaries where they stressed that the role of NGOs was to assist in the exploitation of Africa through their fervent cooperation with Northern governments and donors.

Likewise, Helliker (2006) notes that critics of NGOs perceive them as appendages of the development industry where they convey global messages and implement global agendas in order to help reproduce global capitalism. He further notes that rural communities are seen to be 'unwilling victims of global impositions foisted upon them by 'middle-class' NGOs' (Helliker, 2006:26). Rural communities are seen as participating in pre-planned NGO development projects which make them subservient to capitalist domination. Similarly, Manji (2017) insists that, since the beginning of the neo-liberal era in the 1980s, NGOs have been used by their Northern funders to obliterate community members' memories of radicalism. This is done through a redefinition of what community members are expected to be, with NGOs implying that they are or should be passive recipients of predetermined aid who are not able to determine their own development path. Matthews (2017) argues that NGOs tend to 'focus on technical solutions to poverty instead of the underlying issues'. This implies that NGOs put much emphasis on measurable project outputs while ignoring the very conditions and 'institutions that perpetuate poverty' (Banks and Hulme, 2012:13). In other words, NGOs seek to alleviate poverty through projects or development interventions rather than seeking to change social, political and economic imbalances which are in the first place, the real causes of poverty (Wright, 2012). Rather than directly confronting the real causes of poverty, the NGOs indirectly mask the causes of poverty through service provision or what Banks *et al.* (2015:710) term 'depoliticized and professionalized development'.

Shivji asserts that 'NGOs cannot possibly be fighting for the interests of the people if they are not in a position to expose and oppose imperial domination' (Shivji, 2004:690). The problem, as noted by Helliker (2017:75), is that these voluntary organizations were 'built more to stabilise existing situations than to change them fundamentally'. The pertinent argument is that African NGOs ought to learn from the critical writings of African intellectuals who have exposed neo-liberalism and, likewise, the NGO sector ought to be aware of the ways in which talk of a globalized village advances Western interests (Shivji, 2006). Shivji (2006, 2007) calls upon African NGOs to understand local communities' existing struggles before they 'evangelize' them by promoting Western democratic values. He argues that 'NGOs must engage in a critical discourse and political activism rather than assume a false neutrality and non-partisanship' (Shivji, 2006:16). African NGOs are supposed to look inwardly, at themselves, and extensively re-examine the political, economic, social and philosophical connotations behind the Western

development agenda which they are being made to sustain and propagate through donor funds. The major argument being raised by critics of development NGOs can be best summarized in a quote by Nyoni (1987). She argues that:

Most development agencies are centers of power which try to help others change. But they do not themselves change. They aim at creating awareness among people yet they are not themselves aware of their negative impact on those they claim to serve. They claim to help people change their situation through participation, democracy, and self-help and yet they themselves are non-participatory, non-democratic and dependent on outside help for their survival (Nyoni, 1987:53).

NGOs are themselves not in a position to accept their own weaknesses, which at times make them non-participatory, non-democratic and, above all, over dependent on foreign aid.

Abdul-Raheem (2007) provides further critique of NGOs saying that they act as intermediaries between the poor masses and Northern bourgeois actors who indirectly oppress them through unfavourable neo-liberal policies. He accuses NGOs of ‘occupying spaces for the poor’ when in fact they are no longer a part of the poor and nor do they share the marginalized masses’ vision of radical change. Similarly, Manji (2017) argues that NGOs cannot claim to speak on behalf of the oppressed and exploited, and neither can they be transparent and accountable representatives of the poor in the manner of trade unions or local associations. For example, in a recent study of Ghanaian NGOs by Bawole and Langnel (2016), it was observed that the engagements between NGOs and grassroots communities largely focused on the endorsement of predetermined and pre-planned development interventions. The two scholars argue that NGOs lack downward accountability because of the impossibility of NGOs and their beneficiaries ‘hav[ing] equal rights of authority’. Furthermore, beneficiaries’ voices were weak because they provided very little in terms of resources and they were unlikely to raise complaints for fear of losing future benefits. In addition, high levels of poverty mean that some beneficiaries were robbed of the very ‘right to demand accountability from NGOs’ (Bawole and Langnel, 2016:921). The above factors weaken the spirit of PAR, PRA and PLA, in that communities who are supposed to be at the driving seat of development initiatives are relegated to being mere objects rather than subjects of development processes.

NGOs in Africa are seen as being severely donor dependent and this raises very pertinent questions about the sustainability of their development work in the long-term, as well as their ability to drive development interventions that address the genuine needs and priorities of grassroots communities (Hearn, 2007; Bradley, 2008; Banks *et al.*, 2015). Makuwira (2018:424) observes that ‘while the discourse of community engagement has gained currency, there remains

a great deal of misunderstanding about whose agenda is being promoted when local NGOs implement projects [which] are externally funded'. Similarly, in her study of Ugandan NGOs, Girei (2016) came to the conclusion that:

The funding available to NGOs in Uganda and generally in sub-Saharan Africa, be it through tenders or unsolicited proposal mechanisms, is ... largely based on priorities and expected results as defined and assessed by donors and their experts (Girei, 2016:204).

The above arguments are a valid concern as the NGO discussed in this study also relies on donor funding. Many of the issues debated almost thirty years ago concerning some challenges in the relationships between NGOs and their funding partners (donors) have persisted to this day. Concerns identified in previous studies of NGOs - covering the late 1990s up to the early years of the twenty-first century - have been that NGOs have at times encountered challenges in trying to address the development needs and priorities of grassroots communities (through techniques such as PAR, PRA and PLA), considering that donors have also had their own priorities and interests (Powell and Seddon, 1997; Hearn, 1998, 2007).

O'Reilly (2010), Bebbington *et al.* (2008), Powell and Seddon (1997), Hearn (1998, 2007) and Kapoor (2005) among many other scholars, offer more precise arguments about the skewed relationships between NGOs and donors. According to O'Reilly (2010:183), the moment NGOs 'take on work and projects that are not their own, they play a role in furthering neo-liberal development agendas'. Bebbington *et al.* (2008) provide a concise summary of how NGO donor funding propagates a dominant neo-liberal agenda in 'developing countries'. They argue that:

The specific forms of intervention have also involved the increased channeling of (national and multilateral) state-controlled resources through NGOs - a channeling in which resources become bundled with particular rules and ideas regarding how they must be governed and contribute to the governing of others. This bundling has meant NGOs become increasingly faced with opportunities related to the dominant ideas and rules that travel with development finance - in particular in the current context, ideas related to neo-liberalism and security (Bebbington *et al.*, 2008:8).

The logic in the above argument is that most NGOs do not have much control over donated funds. The NGOs are assumed to be passengers seated at the back, while the donor controls the development process (Powell and Seddon, 1997). The donor's self-interest (political, economic, cultural, and social) determines how funds are to be disbursed. Congruent with Bebbington *et al.*'s (2008) position, Koch *et al.* (2007) also assert that the economic and political self-interest of Northern donors have an influence on the allocation of funds or aid to recipient countries. Local communities in many African countries hardly set priority areas in development projects, as most



of the projects are determined by the Northern funders. Hearn in her earlier work on Kenyan NGOs questioned the extent to which Kenyan NGOs, as mere receivers of funds/aid, could 'be equal partners with donors in setting agendas' (Hearn, 1998:98). Almost nine years later, she criticized African NGOs as being 'local managers of foreign aid money, not managers of local African development processes' (Hearn, 2007:1107). Kapoor (2005) also confirms that the links between INGOs, NGOs and local communities undermine the ability of these communities to assert themselves in the development matrix. This undercuts PAR, PRA and PLA methods, in that pre-planned development interventions weigh heavily on the ability of the funded NGO to carry out development projects that meet the needs or priority areas of local communities.

NGOs' subordination to donor interests has remained a matter of concern, as also evidenced in recent studies by scholars such as Ngwira and Mayhew (2019), Brass *et al.* (2018), Arhin *et al.* (2018) and Banks *et al.* (2015) among many others. Ngwira and Mayhew (2019:1) have observed that in some cases the relationships between NGOs and their donors 'affect service provision' and the NGOs' 'interaction with beneficiaries'. Likewise, in a study of 3338 journal articles, where 23% of them looked at NGOs' relationships with donors, Brass *et al.* (2018) observed that there was an acknowledgement within this extensive literature that 'donors influence program choices of individual organizations as well as the contours of the NGO sector at the national level' (Brass *et al.*, 2018:137). In an article on strategies being employed by Ghanaian NGOs in order to survive dwindling donor funding, Arhin *et al.* (2018:351) similarly observed that 'the relationship between NGOs and donors is mostly supply-led which reflects a type of relationship where donors set the goals of programmes because of NGOs' high dependence for funding'. Such relationships are a reflection of 'asymmetrical exchange relationships' (Arhin *et al.*, 2018:351) where NGOs are subordinated to their funders, thus making them closer to the donors than the local communities (Banks *et al.*, 2015; Banks and Hulme, 2012).

Over the years, there has been considerable consistency with the way in which donors have continued to 'dictate' the prioritization of development interventions largely against what local communities genuinely prefer. For example, in one of USAID's (2018) current survey of thirty-one African countries, the results echoed earlier findings by Banks and Hulme (2012:12) where NGOs were said to 'formulate their strategies and policies in line with donor priorities and interests'. Thus, the USAID (2018) survey revealed that in Côte d'Ivoire, NGOs 'continued to

receive donor funding for projects addressing donors' priorities'; in Burkina-Faso, the complaints were that the interests of donors did not 'always align with the goals' of the NGOs that they funded; in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the criticisms against donors were that they often determined 'the scope and geographical location of their activities', thus undermining NGOs' abilities to 'meet their target groups' needs and priorities'; and in Uganda, NGO projects were said to be 'largely donor driven' where local communities were not very involved 'during the formulation phase' (USAID, 2018: 53, 37, 63, 247). An earlier study by Morfit (2011) showed that donors in Malawi prioritized the funding of HIV/AIDS while grossly undermining other important sectors such as agriculture. In Zambia, Danida's funding to ActionAid International was severely shortened to only cover 'selected, smaller-scale projects' at community level, rather than the previous focus which was countrywide (USAID, 2018:254). In most cases, donor interests weaken participatory development practices such as PRA, PAR and PLA in that the local community is unable to determine the type of change or development project they want undertaken in their area. The essence of PRA, PAR and PLA procedures is for local communities to take a lead in deciding on development interventions that address certain problems found within their community.

Another drawback for NGOs is when donors withdraw funding, withhold funding, change funding priorities and cut down their funding, and also when NGOs themselves compete over the dwindling donor purse. In this regard, the overdependence of African development NGOs on donor funding has at times left them 'struggling to survive financially and operationally' (Arhin *et al.*, 2018:350), particularly in cases where donors significantly reduce funds (especially when a developing country attains a lower middle-income status), or when donors abruptly cease their operations (mainly because of political instability or political differences), and also where the donors focus on new priority areas (USAID, 2010; Morfit, 2011; Lewis, 2016; Arhin, 2016; Norad, 2017; Arhin *et al.*, 2018; USAID, 2018). For instance, when Ghana achieved lower-middle-income country (LMIC) status in 2010, this led to many changes within the donor landscape owing to its newly improved economic ranking (Arhin, 2016). This new setup was characterized by a continuing pulling out of donors who once supported NGOs and also a decline in the 'volume and pattern of aid to NGOs' in Ghana (Arhin *et al.*, 2018:348). Any changes in donor funding creates uncertainty about the NGOs' survival and sustainability (USAID, 2010, 2018).

NGOs which largely depend on donor funding are confronted by a ‘chronic dilemma’ on ‘whether to be pragmatic and focus on material survival, or whether to pursue a strategy that could risk funding, but make social and political gains’ (Ismail and Kamat, 2018:573). Under such circumstances, Knight (2013: 2) rightly argues that ‘in maneuvering through such pressures, NGOs tend to choose directions which best enable their own sustainability, often at the cost of the deep participatory forms that may heighten the legitimacy of their roles’. NGOs therefore try to survive by prioritizing projects that keep them in business rather than those which address the development needs of local communities. In earlier assessments of NGO work in Kenya, Radley (2008) observed that 30% of donor funding was directed towards HIV/AIDS and health. Other important sectors such as agricultural and livelihood activities got very little coverage. This was despite the fact that the rural farming community constituted 87% of all poor households in Kenya (Radley, 2008:6). Key community concerns are largely neglected if they do not meet the donors’ specific area of funding (USAID, 2018). NGOs compromise ‘their ability to lead grassroots driven and bottom-up programmes’ by ‘prioritizing greater accountability to donors’ (Banks and Hulme, 2012:12). In a number of cases, ‘NGOs go where funds are available - for HIV/AIDS, climate change or other issues that are fashionable among donors’ (USAID, 2010:66). Funding pressures result in many NGOs behaving unethically by putting their interests ahead of those they serve (Power *et al.*, 2002). Such unethical behaviour greatly inhibits the application of PRA, PAR and PLA methods.

As a way of maintaining a good reputation with their funders, NGOs are at times known to falsify or distort information regarding finances and the impact of the intervention on local communities (Burger and Owens, 2010). They bend the rules in order to access donor funds. According to Alexander (1998), NGOs sometimes come up with a strategy of ‘deflecting’, whereby they give wrong information or do not tell the truth especially when what the donor demands of them is incompatible with their own mission or interests. Similarly, Matthews and Nqaba (2017:2) note that ‘in times of decreased funding, NGOs adopt the strategy of “cultivating” donors, which might involve very careful proposal writing aimed at attracting the interests of particular donors’. The focus is no longer about coming up with people-centred development interventions guided by PRA, PAR and PLA practices, but rather with surviving in a world where other NGOs are likewise competing for funding.

Much literature on NGO funding (Banks *et al.*, 2015; Brass *et al.*, 2018) shares a similar perspective that donor funding has ‘compromised their innovativeness, autonomy, legitimacy, accountability, and ability to continue elaborating alternatives’ (Mitlin *et al.*, 2007:1707). In other words, donors have a huge and problematic influence over the activities of NGOs. Funds are usually available for a specific activity as set by the donor (USAID, 2018; Tanga and Mundau, 2014; Vivian and Maseko, 1994). Some scholars have drawn attention to NGOs’ ‘new managerialism’ role (Townsend *et al.*, 2002; Girei, 2015) in which they spend more time writing reports to donors than being in the field assisting poor communities (Ebrahim, 2003b). NGOs are alleged to be now more concerned with the demands of donors than those of beneficiaries. Under such circumstances, donor demands on NGOs may limit their ability to be participatory in the development process. Overall, the argument is that NGOs concentrate more on upward accountability (to donors) than on downward accountability (to beneficiaries) (Malena, 2000; Wellens and Jegers, 2017).

There are also those who argue that NGOs have resisted implementing development interventions as requested or directed by donors (Townsend *et al.*, 2004; Helliker, 2006). However, these scholars have acknowledged that only a few NGOs have managed to oppose such demands from funders. A recent study by Ngwira and Mayhew (2019) discusses a Malawian NGO’s attempts to negotiate donor demands. They show how this NGO initially complied with donor demands, but later put up some resistance to these demands, ultimately resulting in a compromise that gave the NGO more flexibility than it had previously had. Townsend *et al.* (2004) acknowledge that ‘few’ in the NGO sector have been courageous enough to seek alternative visions from those required of them by the funders/donors. The arguments raised above in one way or the other also affect Zimbabwean NGOs in general and the NGO under study in particular. It is therefore imperative to now focus on how NGOs in Zimbabwe operate in general in view of participatory development initiatives and also some challenges encountered herein.

#### **4.6 Attempts by Zimbabwean NGOs to drive development through participatory development initiatives**

In this section, I examine how participatory development is practiced by Zimbabwean development NGOs. In doing so, I examine Zimbabwean NGOs’ organizational objectives and statements, empowerment initiatives, project planning and the direct participation of community

members in development interventions. This section will also touch on NGO-state relations and will describe how indigenous and foreign NGOs lay claim to being participatory in their development interventions.

Drawing on early Zimbabwean literature on participatory development, scholars such as Vivian and Maseko (1994), Makumbe (1998), Moyo *et al.* (2000), and Bornstein (2003) among many others analyse NGO development interventions by focusing on a broader agenda, encompassing issues of strengthening rural communities' choices and capabilities through the use of participatory development approaches. Thus, Vivian and Maseko (1994:3-4) highlight that the prominence of development NGOs in Zimbabwe and other parts of Africa in the 1990s was attributed to their ability to 'provide innovative, participatory and sustainable solutions to rural development problems'. Similarly, Makumbe (1998) observes that in Zimbabwe (just like in other African countries), the 1990s was a period when development agencies began to focus on sustainable rural development programmes and began to emphasise that local communities should take a leading role in the development process. Makumbe (1998) indicates that local communities were to be involved in all stages of the NGO project cycle. This entailed a need by NGOs to incorporate participatory development approaches in their development interventions (Moyo *et al.*, 2000). Bornstein (2003) clearly captures the participatory development wave of the 1990s when she says:

In Zimbabwe in the late 1990s, the paradigm of participatory development ... was all the rage. Donors were funding and NGOs were scrambling to implement PRA-based development. In collaboration with the Zimbabwean state, NGOs sought to promote sustainable development that emerged from within communities instead of being imposed from donors and NGO bureaucracies (Bornstein, 2003:120).

Almost three decades after the neo-liberal popularizing of PD in NGO development work, Zimbabwean NGOs (just like many others on the African continent) still lay claim today to being participatory (Tsiga *et al.*, 2016; Mago *et al.*, 2015; Tanga and Mundau, 2014, Tagarirofa and Chazovachii, 2013; Knight, 2013). This suggests that community members are viewed as important participants in the development processes. Both local and international NGOs in Zimbabwe claim to make use of participatory mechanisms that support positive and effective community participation in development interventions. These assertions are found in the policy guidelines and operational documents of both local and international NGOs. The continued importance of participatory development is also evidenced in the use of various participatory catchwords or expressions on current Zimbabwean NGO websites. The most

common catchphrases on these NGO websites with a close link to participatory development thinking are: ‘community empowerment’, ‘consultation’, ‘community involvement’, ‘self-reliance’, ‘enhancement of skills and knowledge’, ‘gaining control over their lives’, ‘project ownership’, ‘needs assessments’, ‘participatory appraisals’, ‘base-line surveys’, ‘community-based participation’, ‘capacity to exercise own abilities’, and ‘gaining and exercising power over resources’ among many others. These participatory phrases signify an intention within the Zimbabwean NGO sector to use local decision-making capacities in order to shape and define the nature of development.

As a way of showing some commitment to downward accountability towards rural communities, many NGOs in Zimbabwe have come up with objectives as well as mission statements which imply a commitment to participatory development. According to Wellens and Jegers (2017:0196), NGOs are supposed to be ‘accountable to their beneficiaries as these are the stakeholders who receive the services the NGO provides, and therefore have the right to be involved in decisions that affect their daily lives.’ The following examples show how NGO downward accountability through community involvement in development interventions is portrayed in the development activities of three NGOs among many others found in Zimbabwe. The NGO Africare (2019) says it ‘designs projects with participatory appraisals’. A second NGO, Environmental and Development Activities (ENDA, 2018), highlights that it is ‘committed to working with marginalized people in Zimbabwe ... using participatory means by which the people ... may help themselves’. Similarly, the NGO Lutheran Development Services states that it ‘seeks participatory methods of community-based development ... and [it] promotes people-centred approaches to development that meet the unique needs of vulnerable populations’ (Lutheran Development Services, 2019). The above objectives/mission statements demonstrate the NGOs’ commitment (at least on paper) to creating spaces for the participation of local communities in development projects. This would seem to imply that participatory approaches inform the way they operate.

Tsiga *et al.* (2016) note that development NGOs in Zimbabwe use an integrated development approach where they focus on community empowerment as well as the provision of training, financial and material assistance to communities in need. The websites of both local and international NGOs in Zimbabwe put a strong emphasis on community/individual empowerment in development interventions. For instance, Oxfam Zimbabwe (2019) states that it seeks ‘to

empower marginalized women and youths so that they ... are able to challenge unequal power relations and influence important decisions about their community's natural and public resources.' CARE Zimbabwe (2019) seeks 'to empower disadvantaged and poor households to meet their basic needs', while Africare Zimbabwe (2019) seeks 'to support communities in overcoming problems they identify by empowering them to lead the change themselves'. The Organization of Rural Associations for Progress (ORAP) (2017) states that 'What we really do is to help our communities to find their own solutions to their problems'. When the above NGOs (and many others) emphasize the importance of empowering local communities, this denotes a strong component of participatory development where expectations are that, by participating in NGO development programmes, community members are expected to become themselves the very agents of change within their localities. This would seem to imply 'an empowerment-based (bottom-up) concept of participation, that is entirely beneficiary-driven and beneficiary-owned' (Knight, 2013:10).

The above views on how both local and international NGOs perceive empowerment in their varied development endeavors echo Samah and Aref's (2009:46) perception of empowerment, which sees it:

as a process whereby individuals or groups are able to exercise their ability and capacity to understand and interpret problems and define needs, which are then translated into an action process by organizing themselves in such a way so as to enable them to decide, influence, demand, negotiate and engage in carrying out activities.

The emphasis on community empowerment by both local and international NGOs in Zimbabwe signifies a willingness by these NGOs to embrace participatory approaches that give local communities a voice in the development process. Empowerment does not happen on its own but is a part of a process which develops through participation. In other words, the pillar that supports empowerment is participation (Blanchet-Cohen, 2015; Samah and Aref, 2009).

A common aspect among approaches to participatory development used by development NGOs in Zimbabwe is that of project design, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (Tsiga *et al.*, 2016; Tanga and Mundau, 2014; Tagarirofa and Chazovachii, 2013; Knight, 2013). For instance, the Lutheran Development Services (LDS) Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023 (2019:4) indicates that the NGO 'always encourage[s] the full participation of communities in designing and implementing programmes' and, similarly, the NGO called ENDA Zimbabwe (2019) emphasizes that 'all stakeholders participate in all the project stages from problem

identification to implementation, monitoring and evaluation’. These NGOs among many others claim to be involving grassroots communities in the design, implementation and the monitoring and evaluation stages of a development intervention. Participatory design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of a project signify a deep bottom-up approach to community-centred development (Tsiga *et al.*, 2016; Tagarirofa and Chazovachii, 2013).

The emphasis on project planning by development NGOs in Zimbabwe is significant in that it helps build among the community members a sense of ownership of the development intervention (Knight 2013; Tagarirofa and Chazovachii, 2013). This is important in that development programmes need to be grounded within community values, beliefs, priorities and needs, with this grounding seen as a major characteristic of a participatory and inclusive project cycle. Indeed, it therefore becomes imperative, as claimed by some development NGOs in Zimbabwe, that they also highly consider the involvement of grassroots communities in all phases of the project cycle. The cornerstone of genuine participatory community-based development initiatives is the active involvement of members of a defined community in at least some aspects of project design and implementation (Mansuri and Rao, 2004).

As a way of consolidating community participation through downward accountability, development NGOs in Zimbabwe also ‘attempt to increase the incomes of communal farmers by undertaking training programmes, and providing material and support services for income generating projects’ (Vivian and Maseko, 1994:3). NGOs in Zimbabwe such as Silveria House (2018), ORAP (2016), Plan International (2019) and Lutheran Development Services (2019) among many others also focus on participatory approaches that equip communities/individuals with technical skills for income generating projects. NGOs such as Jekesa Pfungwa/Vulingqondo, Kunzwana Women’s Association and Empretec Zimbabwe seek to ensure the participation of women in a range of practical courses to develop entrepreneurial skills such as dress-making, horticulture, candle-making, market gardening, weaving, baking, carpentry and welding among many others (Mandinyanya and Nyandoro, 2017). Other development NGOs, such as Practical Action, DAPP Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe Agricultural Income and Employment Development (Zim-AIED), have embarked on huge infrastructural projects as well as highly marketable income generating projects where community members have, at least it is claimed, participated on a massive scale in the development processes.



The work of development NGOs discussed above is by no means a complete list of NGO development work in Zimbabwe. The list is quite far-reaching as development NGOs have continued to assist various communities in Zimbabwe, as evidenced by the few cases mentioned above. Current studies on development NGOs in Zimbabwe have continued to examine NGOs in the context of their downward accountability towards grassroots communities. However, these studies have criticized some Zimbabwean NGOs for failing to be accountable towards grassroots communities. For instance, Tanga and Mundau (2014:465) have called upon development NGOs in Zimbabwe to ‘adopt better empowerment practices through community involvement in decision making, project ownership, and clear lines of communication with the NGOs’. On the other hand, Tsiga *et al.* (2016:237) have suggested that development NGOs in Zimbabwe should ‘institutionalize participation by employing participatory methodologies to guide them when working with their beneficiaries for their development projects to be successful’. In another case of development NGOs in Zimbabwe, Tagarirofa and Chazovachii (2013:74) suggest that ‘the nature of community engagement should be based on the principle of equal partnership among all stakeholders as this would encourage full cooperation and thus effective participation’.

The above recommendations suggest that NGOs are not putting into practice what they preach in terms of participatory development practices. These cases are not isolated as earlier and current studies have come up with almost similar conclusions. For example: Zimbabwean NGOs are said to have failed to institutionalize PD approaches because of their upward accountability towards donors (Vivian and Maseko, 1994; Moyo *et al.*, 2000; Knight, 2013; Tanga and Mundau, 2014; Mago *et al.*, 2015); they are accused of failing to involve community members in stages of the project cycle (Makumbe, 1998; Tagarirofa and Chazovachii, 2013; Mago *et al.*, 2015; Tsiga *et al.*, 2016); and they are said to impose development projects without much community consultation (Nyoni, 1987; Vivian and Maseko, 1994; Gukurume *et al.*, 2010; Mago *et al.*, 2015; Tsiga *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, critics accuse Zimbabwean NGOs of consulting RDC officials on project interventions rather than community members themselves (Tanga and Mundau, 2014; Tagarirofa and Chazovachii, 2013; Knight, 2013).

The state has also been seen as both facilitating and undermining NGOs’ participatory development initiatives (Knight, 2013; Mago *et al.*, 2015; Tsiga *et al.*, 2016; Mandinyenya and Nyandoro, 2017; Madziva, 2018). There are different ways of understanding NGO co-optation by the state. I will however only focus on Gary and Najam’s ideas on co-optation. The two views

echo what I wish to investigate. Gary (1996:154) focuses on ‘administrative co-optation’ where NGOs are ‘obliged to have their activities approved through the bureaucratic procedures used by the government itself’. When NGOs are required to have their work approved in accordance with central government procedures (especially where the government is perceived to be autocratic), this implies an element of co-option. Najam (2000:11) views co-optation as taking place where there is a ‘power asymmetry that will [be] decided [by] whether and which side gives in or gives up.’ In as much as NGOs are opposed to oppressive regimes, in the end they work with such governments. NGOs give in owing to their mandate to assist poor communities (Moore and Moyo, 2018). It is the above perceptions of co-optation which I find interesting, and which I believe can be useful in understanding how the Zimbabwean state has co-opted both foreign and indigenous NGOs.

State control of NGOs in both pre-independent and independent Zimbabwe has been done through the use of legislation. The Ian Smith Rhodesian government passed the Welfare Organizations Act (WOA) of 1966 in an attempt to control welfare organizations. In independent Zimbabwe, the WOA was superseded by the Private Voluntary Organizations Act (PVO) of 1995 (Raftopoulos, 2000). Since the passing of the PVO Act, Zimbabwean NGOs are required to be registered with the Department of Social Welfare under the Ministry of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare. The applications for registration can be done through the District and Provincial Labour and Social Services (NANGO, 2014). The Act calls for the registration of voluntary organizations which deal with humanitarian and development assistance (Takaza *et al.*, 2014:22).

The Act has greatly undermined NGO operations by giving government more power over them (Muzondo, 2014). According to Ncube (2010:93), the Act was mainly ‘set to control civil society through stringent registration provisions.’ The Act gives immense powers to the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare by mandating him/her to register and de-register NGOs, and to suspend NGO executive committee members if the organization no longer acted according to the objectives specified in its constitution or if the organization was poorly administered (Rich, 1997). In other words, the PVO Act has provided the government with various options to control NGOs either by denying them registration, suspending their operations or even cancelling their operating licences if they are suspected to be working against the state (Gutsa and Mandizadza, 2014). For instance, in June 2008, the former Minister of Public

Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Nicholas Goche, using the PVO Act, instructed all NGOs to suspend their operations until further notice (NANGO, 2008; USAID, 2010).

In 2004, the GoZ came up with the 2004 NGO Bill which was intended to replace the PVO Act. This came after a four-year period of confrontation with various civil society groups which included NGOs, churches, trade unions, and the independent media (HRW, 2004). The clauses in the Bill clearly stipulated that NGOs would not be allowed to receive foreign funding for activities that included the promotion and protection of human rights and issues of governance (Pambazuka, 16/12/2004). The Bill sought to undermine the global funding of NGOs operating in Zimbabwe (Helliker, 2006). Its purpose was to audit the funds of NGOs.

The Bill was hotly contested between CSOs, MDC parliamentarians and those from the ZANU PF camp. Bhenkikosi Moyo (2010) notes that the Bill was ZANU PF driven and civil society organizations campaigned hard to stop it from being passed in Parliament. The NGO debate was between those who believed that the best NGO policy should leave these ‘voluntary’ and ‘non-profit’ organizations alone (CSOs and MDC parliamentarians), and those who believed that such NGOs must be subjected to the same requirements for transparency, accountability and oversight which they had been demanding of the public sector and government (ZANU PF).

Former President Mugabe ‘saved’ the day by refusing to sign the controversial Bill into law (Helliker, 2006:11; Zimbabwe Institute, 2005:39; Moyo, 2010:7), most notably because he had realized that international donors would withdraw their aid if the bill became law (Muzondo, 2013; HRW, 2004). The primary concern was with humanitarian (including food) aid, which was needed in the context of a decline in agriculture in the immediate period following the introduction of fast track land reform measures. ZANU-PF’s rural supporters were dependent on such aid. This would have aggravated the living conditions of the poor rural masses had the aid been withdrawn. Muzondo (2013) recognizes that, by refusing to sign the bill, the Zimbabwean President ended up appearing as a reasonable leader whose government was prepared to abide to the democratic norms of the international community and the NGO sector. Another reason which Muzondo misses is that the proposed law might have led to disgruntlement among ZANU PF supporters who also relied heavily on NGO assistance in rural areas. Consequently, it can be argued that the fear of losing their rural stronghold to an opposition political party (Movement for Democratic Change) that was more sympathetic to the NGO sector, motivated the President to refuse to sign the Bill into law – for fear that the majority of rural Zimbabweans would

perceive his move as anti-NGO even though these NGOs were instrumental in rural development. Moore and Moyo (2018:596) and Bornstein (2003:110-111) cite cases where community members including government officials and political party representatives have appealed to NGOs not to pull out of an area.

Three years after President Mugabe had declined to sign the NGO Bill (2004) into law, the Zimbabwean government came up with new registration procedures for NGOs in order to complement the PVO Act. In April 2007, the Zimbabwean government gazetted a code of conduct for the registration and operations of NGOs (The Herald, 28 April 2007). This was supposedly done due to concerns over some NGOs which were alleged to be flouting the PVO Act. However, indications are that elections were to be held the following year, and the ZANU PF government, aware of the assistance the MDC party was getting from both development and advocacy NGOs, had to gazette the code of NGO registration procedure in order to curtail the proliferation of both political and developmental NGOs supportive and sympathetic to the opposition party.

Another pragmatic way used by the Zimbabwean government in co-opting and regulating NGOs has been ‘to have their activities approved through the bureaucratic procedures used by the government itself’ (Fowler, 1991:67). Kriger (2011, 2012) argues that in some districts, the RDCs are run by ZANU PF loyalists who end up hijacking NGO projects in order to boost ZANU PF support. This issue is further elaborated in Chapter 8. What is important to note in this interaction is that RDC officials are government workers and quite a number of them are loyal to ZANU PF, especially the decentralized offices of the District and Provincial Administrators (DAs and PAs) as well as the Provincial Affairs Ministers (who are appointed to these positions on a patronage basis). Simple logic shows that most subordinates in the decentralized RDC offices have little choice but to follow the ZANU PF way of doing things. Similarly, Tanga and Mundau (2014) also note that, at times, the local authorities take advantage of NGOs by manipulating NGO processes such that NGOs provide some of the services that are supposed to be provided by the RDCs and, in this way, help improve the status of local authorities. Local authorities may in fact claim that such services were provided by NGOs at their behest. However, such actions greatly undermine NGOs’ downward accountability towards community members as the decentralized local government ends up determining the type of project intervention for a specific rural area or district. NGO downward accountability (in terms of

participatory project selection) is supposed to focus towards community members and not upwards towards local government. Wellens and Jegers (2017) argue that beneficiaries need to be involved in the policy-making process because they are directly affected by the development intervention and so have a right to demand inclusion in determining the services that affect their daily lives. If the decentralized local government authorities want to direct NGO assistance within their district, then they can raise such issues in the Rural District Development Committees (discussed in detail in Chapter 3).

Kruger (2011, 2012) asserts that foreign aid has had unintended political consequences in Zimbabwe in that it has strengthened ZANU PF power as well as ‘patronage resources’ (Kruger; 2011, 2012). In some cases, NGOs may agree to be co-opted by the state. Moore and Moyo (2018:597) suggest that:

... as ruling parties such as ZANU-PF find it increasingly difficult to perform welfare, agricultural assistance and other legitimacy functions while accumulating and repressing in their own way, the NGOs indirectly and innocently support the ruling party’s legitimacy and ‘hegemony-lite’. Of course, the fact that thousands of lives would be affected even more negatively if the NGOs did not provide desperately needed services is a considerable one.

Indeed, NGOs have no option if their objects of interest are the project beneficiaries (Ebrahim, 2003b; Wellens and Jegers, 2017) who happen to be economically disadvantaged rural communities (Wekwete, 2016; Chatiza, 2010). Similarly, politicians are also aware of the ability of NGOs to penetrate communities in terms of development initiatives, and they have created a pragmatic relationship with these voluntary organizations as a way of boosting their legitimacy in the impoverished rural communities, which will be a focus of discussion in Chapter 8.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

The chapter noted that colonial-era NGOs in Africa were seen to serve the interests of colonial governments. In the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries, NGOs were accused of assisting Northern governments in propagating their ideological values in ‘developing countries’. The surge in NGOs in the 1980s was seen as a way by Northern governments, especially the US, to contain the spread of communism in developing countries. After the end of the Cold War in 1989, it was noted that the US, UK and other Western governments together with international donors manipulated NGOs through heavy dosages of funding. NGOs willingly cooperated with Northern governments in privatizing social welfare, depoliticizing poverty and in helping in the domestication of neo-liberalism in developing countries (Manji, 2017; Wright, 2012, Hearn,

2007). However, some literature mentioned above also recognized the important role in development work played by NGOs, especially their ability to reach out to vulnerable and poor communities often neglected and excluded from mainstream state development, and also for their participatory approaches in development work.

The chapter also looked specifically at the role of NGOs in Zimbabwe. The observation was that in their endeavour to create participatory spaces for local communities, Zimbabwean NGOs have included reference to participatory development in their official documentation and have claimed to be empowering local communities and involving them actively in their projects. However, critics argue that not all development NGOs in Zimbabwe are putting into practice what they say. Furthermore, the chapter examined NGO-state relations where it was observed that the relationship between Zimbabwean NGOs and the state undermines community participation in NGO development projects. The next Chapter introduces Community Share Ownership Trusts (CSOTs).

## **CHAPTER 5: INTRODUCING COMMUNITY SHARE OWNERSHIP TRUSTS (CSOTS)**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous two chapters have provided a general introduction to participatory development initiatives introduced by the state and by NGOs. The rest of the thesis will focus on case studies with Chapters 5 and 6 looking at CSOTs (and the Zvimba CSOT in particular) and Chapters 7 and 8 looking at NGOs (and Caritas in particular).

Chapter 5 picks up from Chapter 3 (which introduced state-led participatory development) as it introduces Community Share Ownership Trusts (CSOTs) which were established by central government using local government structures with the stated aim of pursuing participatory approaches in decision-making processes involving rural development projects. Central government through its Indigenization Ministry devolved fiscal, administrative and political power to chiefs, RDCs, government officials, community representatives as well as community members at large in the management of CSOTs.

The chapter begins with an analysis of the indigenisation policy and its link to CSOTs. It then discusses how CSOTs came about, what they are supposed to do and how they can be sustained. The chapter further goes on to look at the official documents which guide the creation and functioning of CSOTs with a special focus on how CSOTs are set up, who governs them, and how they are supposed to function. Finally, the chapter examines some rhetoric surrounding CSOTs. The state's rhetoric about CSOTs presents them as an embodiment of participatory development and an alternative to NGOs.

### **5.2 Zimbabwe's Indigenisation Policy**

As the pressure for indigenisation and economic empowerment began to grow in intensity towards the end of the twentieth century, the Zimbabwean government saw it necessary to come up with a policy framework on the indigenisation of the economy. This resulted in 1998, in the 'creation of the National Investment Trust of Zimbabwe (NITZ) intended to spearhead the participation of indigenous Zimbabweans in the mainstream economy' (Mupazviriho, 2011, n.p). Its major goal was for government to also reserve some shares in the productive sectors of the economy for indigenous Zimbabweans during the privatization of parastatals in the 1990s, under the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) (Sibanda, 2014:2; Mlambo, 2015:54).

Chowa and Makuvare (2013) point out that the GoZ took the above action in order to address the one-sided economic environment where almost 80 percent of the private sector was foreign-owned. After the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), which led to the indigenisation of rural land, the NITZ was revised leading to the adoption of the Revised Policy Framework for the Indigenisation of the Economy. It is this policy that paved the ground work for the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act (Chapter 14:33) – IEE Act – which was finally passed as an Act of Parliament in March 2008 (Mupazviriho, 2011; Chowa and Makuvare, 2013). Chapter 14:33 of the IEE Act defines indigenisation as ‘a deliberate involvement of indigenous Zimbabweans in the economic activities of the country, to which hitherto they had no access, so as to have an equitable ownership of the nation’s resources’. In addition, the Act defines economic empowerment as ‘the creation of an environment which enhances the performance of the economic activities of indigenous Zimbabweans in which they would have been introduced or involved through indigenization’. Accordingly, in 2010, the GoZ reviewed the IEE Act calling for the establishment of Community Share Ownership Trusts (CSOTs) which would assist in bringing various development projects to rural districts in Zimbabwe thus strengthening indigenization and economic empowerment initiatives.

The African Charter on Human and People’s Rights states that all peoples shall freely decide on what to do with their wealth and natural resources. This right is to be exercised in relation to the broad interests of community members and in no case shall a people be deprived of it (NIEEB, 2014:5). In this context, the indigenization and economic empowerment policy is, therefore, a focused response to the previous exclusion of indigenous Black people from participating in mainstream economic activities by the former (white) settlers (Mwase and Mangisi, 2013:3). The principle of community empowerment embodied in the indigenisation policy is calculated to remedy the historic socio-economic deprivation and disadvantages imposed on rural communities by colonial rule.

Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980 did not lead to economic empowerment of the majority of Blacks. Advocates of indigenization, such as Ankomah (2013) and Wakarindwa and Osode (2017), argue that Zimbabwe’s independence did not economically empower most Black Zimbabweans. Rather, the white minority continued to control much of the economy even though a Black government was in power. The majority of Blacks remained crowded in poor communal areas where the soil was not fertile (Kondo and Moyo, 2012). There was then a need



to redress this skewed economic set up that accorded some access to resources, while depriving others of access. Those who promoted the indigenisation and economic empowerment programme believed that it was the only way to correct these continued inequalities (Andreasson, 2010; Makwiramiti, 2011, Masunungure and Koga, 2012; Sibanda, 2014; Ankomah, 2013; Matsa and Masimbati, 2014; Wakarindwa and Osode, 2017).

The IEE was established to bring benefits such as more employment, poverty alleviation, community empowerment, infrastructural development, skills training, and control and influence over various sources of wealth. Scholars such as Matsa and Masimbati (2014), Sibanda (2014) and Ankomah (2013) are in agreement that indigenisation and economic empowerment initiatives can remain relevant only if they address social and economic gaps. Others believe that IEE is supposed to create employment and eradicate poverty through the participation of community members in the mainstream economy (Gomo, 2015). CSOTs in particular are perceived by their architects to create employment as well as to alleviate poverty in rural communities (Makanza and Makanza, 2014). Successfully implemented indigenisation programmes can provide local communities with skills and enterprise development (Makwiramiti, 2011 n.p). In agreement with Makwiramiti (2011), Mabhena and Moyo (2014) further point out that Zimbabwe's indigenisation and empowerment policy as well as Community Share Ownership Trusts (CSOTs) are a 'progressive effort' to empower community members provided they are well implemented.

There are two common ideas which bring out the importance of CSOTs to Zimbabwe's entire indigenisation programme and the relationship between IEE and participatory development. First, IEE development programmes implemented through CSOTs are claimed to help address past economic injustices by encouraging the participation of the rural communities in the mainstream economy (Mabhena and Moyo, 2014; Matsa and Masimbati, 2014). Second, there is an assertion that indigenisation and economic empowerment projects executed by CSOTs embody principles of participatory development in that community members are able to choose viable development interventions for their communities (NIEEB, 2014; Tshuma, 2011). Similarly, Wakarindwa and Osode (2017) believe that indigenisation schemes, which include the setting up of CSOTs, can genuinely help in improving the participation of the rural communities in economic activities. CSOTs have been claimed by their advocates to involve the participation of community members in the selection of development projects. The involvement of the local

communities in such development initiatives is professed to be done through community consultations or needs assessments which the CSOT Board of Trustees carries out with the concerned communities (NIEEB, 2014; Makanza and Makanza, 2014).

It is for the above reasons that the GoZ's indigenization and empowerment policy took into consideration rural communities, which were once historically marginalized, into the mainstream economy. This entailed a development policy premised on broad based economic empowerment where rural communities, especially women, the disabled and youth, were expected to participate fully through CSOTs in promoting rural development by facilitating viable economic activities within their communities (Mwase and Mangisi, 2013). Below, I briefly look at the genesis of CSOTs before I highlight some underlying weaknesses of the indigenisation programme.

### **5.3 Overarching goals of CSOTs and how they came about**

The ZANU PF Government (though questionable as further discussed in Section 5.5 below) found it necessary to introduce CSOTs in order to make companies contribute meaningfully to communities in which they were exploiting resources (Kasukuwere, 2012). As discussed earlier, CSOTs are entitled to benefit from shares within qualifying companies in the mining sector in particular. In the circumstances, CSOTs are expected to operate within the indigenization and economic empowerment programme as a way of complementing the GoZ's agenda of attaining broad based participation and economic empowerment of community members (Tongofa, 2014). The Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment (MYIEE) website states that CSOTs were established in order to ensure that communities benefit from what the Ministry terms 'God-given resources' (Ministry of Indigenisation, 2017).

The objectives of setting up CSOTs through the indigenisation policy have been as follows: first, to enable communities to benefit from resources found in their geographical area (Dube, 2013; Kasukuwere, 2012). Second, the initiative seeks to involve marginalised rural communities in meaningfully participating in the mainstream economy (Masenyama, 2013). Third, CSOTs are intended to strengthen the role of local communities in participating in development economic initiatives through giving them the chance to make decisions on their development priorities (Farawo, 2013). Finally, these Trusts aim to enable the once marginalised rural masses to hold equity in various companies within their locality (Ankomah, 2013:43; Dube, 2013:17; Kasukuwere, 2012:13; IEEA Statutory Instrument 21 of 2010). The Trusts are part of

the indigenization and economic empowerment programme which seeks to ensure that locals benefit from natural resources that were previously monopolized by whites and other foreign nationals.

The GoZ set up CSOTs as part of the requirements of the indigenization policy (Sibanda, 2014). The CSOTs were established under Section 14B of the Economic Empowerment (General) Regulations of 2010 which provided that local communities whose natural resources were being exploited by any ‘qualifying business’ must be guaranteed shareholding in such business (Mugabe, 2013:3). A ‘qualifying business’ means a company engaged in exploiting the natural resources of any community (IEEA Statutory Instrument 21 of 2010). In order to fully support CSOTs, the GoZ further set up the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment (General) Regulations 2011 [General Notice 114 of 2011] which specifically called on all mining companies to dispose of their shares to designated entities which represent indigenous ownership. The argument was that in the past, Zimbabwe’s natural resources, especially minerals, were being exploited by various foreign companies without any meaningful participation of the indigenous people especially, and so very little or nothing was accruing to these communities (Ankomah, 2013).

As a way of making the communities benefit from the extraction of natural resources, the GoZ decided that 10% of the equity shareholding of the company extracting the natural resources in a given geographical area would go directly to the communities. This 10% would form part of the 51% indigenisation and economic empowerment quota of a qualifying company and would be held on behalf of the communities by a CSOT found in various rural districts in Zimbabwe. A further 5% of the equity shareholding would go towards indigenous Zimbabweans employed by the company while the remaining balance of 36% equity shareholding is either purchased in part or in full by indigenous Zimbabweans who can afford to buy the company’s shares; or it is acquired by NIEEB to be channeled towards the Sovereign Wealth Fund where the money accrued from equity shareholding is used for development purposes in areas which do not have qualifying companies (Dube, 2013). Extractive companies with equities ranging from US\$5000 000-00 and higher were supposed to be involved in CSOTs.

The creation of CSOTs involved the decentralization of authority from the centre to Rural District Councils (RDCs). Central government transferred the administrative and financial responsibility of managing CSOTs to local government authorities and chiefs. This involved a

certain degree of discretion in decision-making processes to the Board of Trustees. However, the Board still remains accountable to central government.

The Zimbabwean government mandated the Ministry of Youth Indigenization and Economic Empowerment (MYIEE) to actively participate in the setting up of CSOTs. Part of the reason for the CSOTs was that there were not many benefits trickling to the local communities, despite the payment of royalties by these companies as well as the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes which the companies voluntarily carried out in areas where they were extracting resources. CSR development interventions included the building of clinics, schools, roads, bridges and the drilling of boreholes. The GoZ felt that these projects were insignificant compared to the huge profits the foreign companies were making each year (Kasukuwere, 2012). In addition, the implementation of CSR development interventions was in most cases done without consulting community members and the local leadership (NIEEB, 2014).

The first sector which the GoZ saw as in need of urgent indigenization and empowerment measures was the mining sector. Tsvakanyi (2012) attributes the targeting of the mining sector as a starting point for Indigenization and Economic Empowerment (IEE) initiatives mainly because the mining conglomerates had for several years been at the helm of extracting mineral resources without much or anything going towards the improvement of the livelihoods of the communities where the resources were being extracted or mined. The GoZ saw CSOTs as vehicles that would provide for direct participation of rural communities in their socio-economic development through funds accruing from resources being exploited in their locality.

In order to understand how CSOTs are set up and governed, it is necessary to examine various documents governing the formation and operation of the Trusts. The Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act (IEEA) Chapter 14:33 provides for the establishment of CSOTs and the creation of the CSOT Board of Trustees. It calls for the appointment of Trustees who will hold the Trust's monies on behalf of the community. However, it is silent on who exactly should be a member of the Board of Trustees. For clarity on this, it is necessary to consult the Operational Framework for CSOTs which outlines the implementation framework for the operation of Trusts. It provides a list of those who are supposed to manage the Trust including those who should be appointed as signatories to Trust funds. However, the Operational Framework does not elaborate on the tasks which, for example, chiefs as chairpersons or RDC

CEOs as secretaries are supposed to carry out in the day-to-day administration of the Trust. This lacuna is covered in each CSOT's Deed of Trust. Each CSOT must develop a Deed of Trust which particularizes the obligations of those who govern the Trusts. As such, when discussing the setting up and governance of CSOTs within a district, I focus on the Deed of Trust because it gives a more focused description on the setting up and governing of CSOTs than the IEEA and the Operational Framework for CSOTs.

Community Share Ownership Trusts operate within the framework of the Deed of Trust. The Deed of Trust is an official document that compels the Trustees or Board members to adhere to principles of good corporate governance and most importantly to allow for the participation of community members in undertaking socio-economic development projects of their choice. The Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment (General) Regulations, 2010, Section 14(b) Statutory Instrument 21 of 2010 sub-section (3) states that:

A community share ownership scheme or trust shall be constituted by a Deed of Trust registered with the Deeds Office and ... in the case where the beneficiary community are the residents of a Rural District Council, the Rural District Council shall have the right to appoint the trustee or trustees who will hold the shares or interest in the qualifying business on behalf of the community.

According to the Operational Framework for CSOTs membership of the Board of Trustees of a CSOT shall range from 7 to 15 people, excluding qualifying business representatives. These include the following: a Chief, who is the Chairperson of the Trust (this post is rotational on an annual basis if there are two or more Chiefs in the district); other Chiefs in the District; the District Head of the Ministry of Youth Development, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment; the District Administrator; the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the Rural District Council (RDC); the CEO of RDC (who take up the role of Secretary of the Trust); one representative for all women within the district (nominated by women representative bodies, appointed by the Minister) ; one representative for all youths within the district (nominated by youth bodies, appointed by the Minister); one representative for all war veterans within the district (nominated by war veteran representative bodies, appointed by the Minister); one representative for all the business community within the district (nominated by business representative bodies, appointed by the Minister); one representative for all the disabled within the district (nominated by representative bodies of the disabled, appointed by the Minister); a Lawyer (appointed by the sitting Trustees at a meeting of the Board of Trustees); an Accountant (appointed by the sitting Trustees at a meeting of the Board of Trustees); and any other person

co-opted by the Trust for their expertise and/or special skills. In the case of ZvCSOT, the representative from the qualifying business is found at the apex level where three CSOTs (namely Mhondoro-Ngezi CSOT, Chegutu CSOT and Zvimba CSOT) were merged to form Mhondoro-Ngezi-Chegutu-Zvimba CSOT (M-N-C-Z-CSOT). The M-N-C-Z-CSOT is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. It is compulsory that CSOT Boards include one representative for all women, youths, war veterans, the business community and the disabled. Makanza and Makanza (2014) highlight that the local government officials, because of their sound knowledge, relevant skills and experience in development initiatives, were called in to assist as Board members usually in the planning and implementation of projects (Makanza and Makanza, 2014).

Official documentation points out that the members of specific interest groups, who are made up of representatives of youths, the disabled, war veterans, business people and women, are to be appointed to hold office in terms of the conditions set by the founding Trustees in the Deed of Trust. The Deed of Trust insists that any representative of a specific interest group is first nominated by various bodies which represent these specific interest groups; then, finally, the appointment is done by the Minister of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment. The representatives are expected to consult their constituencies on the type of issues to bring up in CSOT Board meetings.

CSOTs can be said to be overseen by four entrusted sub-structures in a district. These are the traditional leadership (chiefs), central government representatives (DA and Ministry of Indigenization official), Rural District Council officials (RDC CEO and RDC Chairman) and a group of local community functionaries (a youth, a woman, a war veteran, a disabled person and a member of the business community). This seems to imply a localization of power, cascading down to community members where CSOTs are supposed to respond to the needs and priorities of the communities by providing development projects corresponding with their demands, aspirations and choices.

From a more critical perspective, the CSOT Board members could be said to be foisted on community members without their consent. Scholars have argued that the composition of the Board is exclusionary. For Mawowa (2013), the Board of Trustees is top-down and paternalistic; and, for Matsa and Masimbati (2014), the Board is top-down and male dominated. Machinya (2014) argues that community members need to choose their own representatives more openly and democratically on the Board, and Makanza and Makanza (2014) argue that the Board is not

representative of the community as it does not include village heads, councillors and other members of the community. I will engage further with these issues in a section below. Nevertheless, it is clear that all CSOT Boards are set up in such a way as to intrinsically operate in a top-down and male-dominated way as seen in the few women represented in these Boards. The problem is that there are few women chiefs, District Administrators, and RDC Chief Executive Officers. These areas have remained male dominated due to the nature of Zimbabwe's patriarchal society. While this is the way they have in reality operated, it does not necessarily mean that the structures are intended to act this way.

The powers of Trustees are accompanied by some restrictions which are also vividly spelt out in the Deed of Trust. The official documentation thus insists that Board members should exercise their powers in the best interests of the Trust and for the benefit of the Trust's beneficiaries (local communities). For example, if after needs assessments, the majority of communities indicate that their most immediate priority is the drilling of a borehole in an area, it is therefore important that a Board member's own biases should not undermine the majority's demands for a borehole. As suggested by this document, no single person is allowed to directly or indirectly control the decision-making powers of the Trust and lastly no individual Board member has the power to bind the Trust. The above restrictions are supposed to act as checks and balances to those Board members who might be contemplating to abuse the trust funds and assets to their own advantage. Furthermore, the deed document encourages Trustees to focus more on issues that are beneficial to various communities, rather than being parochial and self-centred (Mhondoro-Ngezi Deed of Trust, 2012). The NIEEB insists that CSOTs have a strong mandate to reach out and engage communities in order to implement development projects that address the needs and priorities of these local people (NIEEB, 2014). Furthermore, the official documents insist that decisions taken by the board are expected to be seen to be transparent and, as far as possible, not serving the personal interest of Board members. These are known as fiduciary duties of the trustees to which I now turn.

The Deed of Trust unambiguously stresses that Board members have no right under any circumstances to the Trust's assets. All members of the Board of Trustees are guided by the conditions which are set out in the Deed of Trust. Hence, the Deed of Trust categorically specifies that the Trustees have a fiduciary duty towards the beneficiaries of the Trust and must act in their interest when implementing the objectives of the Trust. The terminology 'fiduciary

duty’ is emphasized in the Deed of Trust as such. Fiduciary duties mean that the Board members have been entrusted by the MYIEE to act in good faith in the selection of development projects. This further means that when the Board sits, it is supposed to act in the best interest of the beneficiaries by coming up with projects that truly meet these communities’ development needs. In short, in choosing development projects, the Board should be quite aware that most of its actions affect others directly or indirectly. In these circumstances, the Board is faced with the task of choosing whether to pursue their own interests or those of the local community. At times, they may choose to act in ways that might be unpopular to some while benefitting others. Other times, they may try as best as they could to please everyone though in most cases such actions are not attainable. However, occasionally, they may manage to please everyone by coming up with development projects that are inclusive.

The whole idea of fiduciary duties assumes that board members can and are expected to act in the interests of communities, but it does not assume that communities themselves ought to decide on which projects will be implemented. In other words, the idea of a fiduciary duty is quite compatible with a paternalistic approach whereby trustees are seen to be better able to decide upon projects than are the beneficiaries. However, it is worth noting that in the Policy and Procedures Manual (PPM), reference is made to consultation and participation – it is therefore suggested that the community ought to be involved in the selection of projects. But even there, the PPM could be read as saying that the community is supposed to be consulted, although ultimately the board is entrusted with making the decisions and is seen to be best equipped to decide on the community’s behalf. Hence, embedded in the notion of ‘fiduciary duty’ is some tension in terms of the participatory rhetoric and practice of the Trust. Furthermore, there is real ambiguity or ambivalence about the role of participation in the rhetoric setting up CSOTs.

The Deed of Trust has a broad framework or guideline of participatory activities which are expected to be carried out by the Trustees to enhance community development and to benefit the beneficiaries. These activities are presented as the objectives of the Deed of Trust. The Deed of Trust mandates Trustees to bring about participatory activities that help to engage and nurture local entrepreneurial capacity in order to stimulate the growth of local economies. Thus, the CSOT as guided by the Deed of Trust is compelled to embark on participatory development interventions which genuinely appeal to rural communities – projects which bring about self-reliance, sustainability and empowerment.



Zimplats was the first company in Zimbabwe to officially launch a Community Share Ownership Trust through the founding of the Mhondoro-Ngezi-Chegutu-Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust (M-N-C-Z-CSOT) on October 13, 2011 (Kasukuwere, 2012; Mabhena and Moyo, 2014; Matsa and Masimbati, 2014:152). It was officially registered as a Trust in December, 2011 (M-N-C-Z-CSOT Parliamentary Thematic Committee Report, June 2014). Other CSOTs which were formed in earlier years included Tongogara CSOT (2011), Mimosa-Zvishavane CSOT (2012), Gwanda CSOT (2012), Zimunya-Marange CSOT (2012), Bindura CSOT (2012) and Masvingo CSOT [2013] (Matsa and Masimbati, 2014; Machinya, 2014; Kurebwa *et al*, 2014). To date, there are 61 duly registered CSOTs in Zimbabwe and, out of these, 60 are rural (Gono, 2016) and only one is urban, which is Mabvuku-Tafara CSOT found in Harare province (Wadyadyena, 2016; NIEEB, 2014).

CSOTs have been managed through seed capital disbursed in their bank accounts by the qualifying companies. Seed capital is money a company gives a CSOT in the form of a donation so as to enable the local communities living within a specified geographical area where the company is operating to benefit from the proceeds of the extracted natural resources (Dube, 2013). The seed capital deposited into CSOT accounts is a good starting point in cementing a lasting business association between the qualifying company and the community where the resources are being extracted (Sibanda, 2014). CSOTs have to ensure that there is growth of financial capital injected into their Trust funds as seed capital. Apart from solely relying on interest accruing from money deposited in banks, CSOTs have been advised to invest their funds in other participatory enterprise development projects that would generate income for the Trust and indeed for community members at large.

While the Community Share Ownership Schemes or Trusts Implementation Framework (2014) acknowledges the demand for social services in Zimbabwe's rural areas (construction of schools, clinics, roads and the repairing of boreholes), it equally argues that CSOT funds are expected to also be used to help community members in participating in building an economically empowered rural area that is self-reliant and not over dependent on external benefactors, such as foreign aid and NGOs. This can be achieved by harnessing the experiences that rural communities have in agriculture and also lately in artisanal mining (NIEEB, 2014; Tongofa, 2014). CSOTs are intended to become the catalyst that nurtures the full participation as well as the capacity of local communities towards growing a diverse and sustainable local

economy which ultimately feeds into the national economy (Tongofa, 2014; CSOT Implementation Framework, 2014; NIEEB, 2014:39). The MYIEE and NIEEB strongly believe that the resources which are being extracted are finite and so there is urgent need to ensure that the seed capital that some CSOTs have received is invested in viable participatory development projects such as agriculture and manufacturing in order to ensure the sustainability of the local economy long after the natural resources are depleted (NIEEB, 2014:2; Tshuma, 2015:33; CSOT Implementation Framework, 2014, Makanza and Makanza, 2014).

According to the MYIEE, the CSOTs have been very successful. Zimbabwe is currently witnessing significant infrastructural development in some rural districts largely financed from proceeds from CSOTs (Mwase and Mangisi, 2013). Through CSOTs, schools have been constructed, boreholes have been drilled and rehabilitated, roads have been constructed and repaired, and irrigation schemes have been developed in a number of rural communities (Masenyama, 2013; NIEEB, 2015, Tshuma, 2015). In information provided by the MYIEE, several success stories in the education sector are listed and these include the renovation or construction of classroom blocks, laboratories, teachers' houses as well as the provision of water, school furniture and electricity (MYIEE, 2017). Those advocating for CSOTs argue that instead of over dependence on NGOs and the government on socio-economic development initiatives, community members through funds accruing in their CSOT accounts can now carry out development interventions that can help tackle their development priority areas (Machinya, 2014).

#### **5.4 Participatory Rhetoric surrounding CSOTs**

In an earlier discussion, CSOTs were perceived as being participatory and as a more viable way of developing rural communities than what NGOs currently do. Under CSOTs, it is also claimed that development projects are decided by the local communities, thus challenging the advantages mainstream NGOs used to enjoy in rural communities (Guvamatanga, 2013:10). The rhetoric that underlies the claims being made about the centrality of communities' participation in CSOTs as well as the ability of CSOTs to create self-empowered communities that are not donor/NGO dependent, is further exemplified in the quote below:

Communities are bound to lose confidence in themselves and continue to always look towards Government and the donor community for social, economic and infrastructure development, and a general improvement in their livelihood. Genuine empowerment begins with making one's own decisions as opposed to being perpetual observers or by-standers and recipients of charity acts.

Community Share Ownership Trusts are a vehicle for broad-based participation ... by our communities. The approach from such participation shall be used for the provision of social and economic infrastructure in line with the priorities of the community concerned (Mugabe, R., cited in Zimplats M-N-C-Z-CSOT, 2015: ii).

In the quote, former president Robert Mugabe describes the CSOTs as alternatives to NGOs as well as being a means of people-centred development. In other cases, CSOTs are seen to have undertaken various development interventions guided by the development needs and priorities of rural communities. Take for example the claim in the Zimplats N-MCZCSOT Brochure (2015:iv) that ‘communities at district levels identified projects’ that were beneficial to their needs and they were funded by the Trust.

In 2014, NIEEB released its Policy and Procedures Manual (PPM) which set out relevant areas for CSOT improvements around procedure, and it also sought to bring about greater uniformity in relation to the procedures/guidelines CSOT Board members or Trustees were to follow in their day-to-day running of the Trust. The PPM dedicates almost three pages in outlining the need for CSOTs to engage local communities in meaningful participatory development. It calls on the CSOT Board members to allow local communities to give their input on matters affecting the Trust, its objectives and the community’s development priorities. Given the significance of participatory approaches outlined in the PPM, it is worth going through some of the important participatory claims which the official document lays out. The rhetoric used in laying out the goals of the CSOTs places much emphasis on participation.

For example, in section 4, the PPM emphasizes that the CSOT Board of trustees are supposed to ensure that the CSOT’s beneficiaries (all male and female residents of a district) are consulted so that they also contribute on which development projects their CSOT should pursue. Sub-paragraph 4.3.1 concerns itself with consultative needs assessment meetings. Here, CSOTs are clearly being represented as vehicles for participatory development. This is indicated by sub-paragraph 4.3.1’s calls for the CSOT Board to convene community meetings where community members participate by ‘giving their input on matters affecting the Trust and its objectives, including their development priorities’. Under sub-paragraph 4.3.2, the CSOT Board is directed to hold a meeting (feedback meeting) in each ward where the Trustees give the CSOT beneficiaries (community members) a comprehensive report on all development interventions they undertook in that ward. Financial matters are also meant to be discussed at such meetings. In Zvimba District (the district under study), there are 35 wards and this implies that each year in

November, the Zvimba Trust is duty bound to hold such participatory feedback meetings in each and every ward within the district.

The goals of the PPM mandate CSOT Trustees to practice participatory democracy. For example, under paragraph 4.4, the CSOT Board is compelled in the course of needs assessment and feedback meetings to guarantee that ‘the views and opinions of community members are freely expressed’. The CSOT Board is supposed to encourage the democratic free flow of ideas where genuine dialogue thrives. Clearly, the CSOTs are being presented as vehicles that open and widen opportunities for genuine participation of community members in the decision making processes. The CSOT Board is required to keep records of such participatory meetings. Paragraph 4.5 directs the Trustees to make comprehensive records of every meeting they hold with community members. This reflects transparency and accountability. The records are expected to clearly spell out all the recommendations put forward by community members concerning their socio-economic development needs and priorities. In other words, the CSOT Board needs to capture the genuine development needs of community members by seriously committing itself to the local community’s development priority list.

Farawo (2014) points out that the PPM was set up by the GoZ in order to strengthen the monitoring and administrative mechanisms of Community Share Ownership Trusts, which had been riddled by allegations of lack of transparency and accountability, prejudicing communities of needs based development interventions. The former Deputy Minister for Indigenization and Economic Empowerment, Honourable Tongofa outlined that his Ministry had adopted the PPM in order to guide the operations of CSOTs countrywide as well as to ensure that CSOTs operated effectively in a more accountable and transparent manner (Tongofa, 2014). As noted above, the PPM provides some general rules and regulations that spell out the relations between the beneficiaries and the Trust as well as the qualifying businesses. The PPM covers some specific gaps commonly found in the administration of CSOTs, especially on issues to do with the inclusion of local communities in the decision-making processes. This is in line with a bottom-up participatory approach.

The CSOT Deed of Trust is not as clear as the PPM in outlining the direct participation of communities in CSOT development interventions. The PPM instructs that CSOTs must set up information flows between the local communities (beneficiaries) and those who administer the Trust (Board members). The PPM highlights that, when prioritizing development interventions,

the local communities are to be extensively consulted before any development project is undertaken in their area. The PPM also further emphasizes the need for CSOT Board members to give priority to the needs of special interest groups (youth, women, orphans, the elderly and the disabled). However, the PPM does not contradict what is set out in the CSOTs' Deed of Trust and neither does it attempt to undermine it. What it does is to complement and not to replace the Deed of Trust.

The NIEEB guideline in the operations of CSOTs expects these Trusts to carry out needs assessments in which they hold meetings with local communities at ward level. It is during these meetings that the CSOT Board discusses with the community on their developmental needs and priorities (Interview, Mr. Mahobebe, 17/10/2016). Mr. Mahobebe (the National Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Board's (NIEEB) Compliance Manager for CSOTs) added that 'the current arrangement between the NIEEB and CSOTs is that the engagement between the community and the CSOTs are expected to continue especially on issues that the concerned community gives priority to' (Interview, Mr. Mahobebe, 17/10/2016). He added that it was now a thing of the past for CSOTs not to consult local communities on developmental issues. Mr. Rangu Nyamurundira (the personal assistant to the former Minister of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment, Mr. Patrick Zhuwao) argued that 'communities must benefit from their resources' (Interview, Mr. Nyamurundira, 11/10/2016). He further stressed that CSOTs were mandated to promote an inclusive approach to decision making. In addition, the accountability of CSOTs was supposed to go beyond a few elites (within the Board) to embrace broader sections of the community. According to Nyamurundira, such a move was likely to stimulate some cooperation and consent from the local communities.

The claims made about the monitoring of CSOTs places much emphasis on participation of community members in the selection of development projects. For example, in a previous interview with Tinashe Farawo published in the *Sunday Mail* of 13 July 2014, Mr. Nyamurundira (when still the NIEEB Compliance Manager for the CSOTs) had indicated that the MYIEE had decided to put in place strict monitoring and administration mechanisms for CSOTs. His argument was that:

There will be a needs assessment by the community because they are the ones who know what they want ...We are moving from situations where a rural district council could decide on projects. The interests and needs of the community will come first (Farawo, 2014).

Mr. Mahobebe (2016) concurs with Nyamurundira as he stresses that NIEEB had noted with concern that, from 2012 up to 2014, some CSOT Boards had not made the necessary consultations with local communities, making the locals feel excluded from the whole development process. The Ministry therefore saw it fit to come up with a CSOT Policy and Procedures Manual as a way of broadening the participation of community members in CSOT development projects. For instance, in cases of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), CSOTs funded the drilling of boreholes with some CSOTs purchasing drilling rigs in order to help community members to access clean water as well as to help the grassroots participate in household market gardening projects. In addition, the Zvishavane CSOT rehabilitated Mabwematema Irrigation Scheme and Chomunyaka Dam; the Tongogara CSOT repaired Chirume dam; the Gwanda CSOT renovated Guyu Chelsea and Sukwi Irrigation Schemes, while Bindura CSOT constructed two weirs. All these projects were carried out in order to help local communities participate in meaningful commercial agriculture. Information from CSOT brochures and booklets suggest that ‘CSOTs had meetings with people to get feedback on their preferred socio-economic and enterprise development needs’ (NIEEB, 2014:12). This seems to suggest that CSOT development projects in various districts were informed by communities’ needs and priorities. A good example to support the above views is a quote from former Minister of Indigenization Francis Nhema. He says:

CSOTs are the answer to development in rural areas because they take on the needs of the people, the stakeholders are on the ground, they are the ones affected on a daily basis so they respond quickly to issues that they deem to be necessary for the improvement of their lives (Nhema cited in Mugabe, 2014:2).

The former Minister of Indigenization is suggesting that CSOTs consider the needs of local communities prior to the implementation of development interventions, like those in the few examples mentioned above. In other words, the quote suggests that CSOTs will be close to the people ‘on the ground’ and therefore able to meet their needs.

In yet other cases, CSOTs have been viewed as being very much focused on rural communities’ development needs to the extent that, before they embark on any rural project, they first carry out needs assessments in order to capture the real development needs of rural communities. The NIEEB (2014:6) proposes that:

Through needs assessments, CSOTs are mandated to reach out and engage community members to draw from their needs and priorities when implementing socio-economic development projects.

The claim that needs assessments take place in the selection of CSOT development interventions is also put forward by two government officials quoted below. The first quote proposes that:

The communities will now decide how they want the trusts to operate, what they think must be done from proceeds of the shares and influence the day-to-day activities of the trusts. We have had problems where the boards were behaving as full-time employees of the community trusts (Nyamurundira cited in Farawo, 2014).

The quote is from an interview between *The Sunday Mail* reporter Tinashe Farawo with Rangu Nyamurundira, a senior official in the then Ministry of Indigenisation. Nyamurundira (2014) is opposed to a situation where RDCs decide on projects while undermining the interests and needs of the local communities. Nyamurundira suggests that the CSOTs will guarantee the participation of rural people in their development initiatives. The second quote suggests that:

.... one of the key features in the structure and modus operandi of CSOTs is that decisions on the selection of projects to be implemented by CSOTs in their communities are done by the communities themselves through their participation in community needs identification surveys and community engagement programmes. To this end, projects and programmes embarked upon by CSOTs have gone a long way in addressing pressing needs in these communities (Gwatiringa cited in Gono, 2016).

The quote comes from an interview between *The Sunday News* editor, Vincent Gono and the National Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Board (NIEEB) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Wilson Gwatiringa, where he also suggests that CSOTs carry out needs identification surveys before any development project takes place in rural communities. Evidently, there are some who regard the CSOTs as having significant potential to be participatory.

Further claims about CSOTs' participatory nature are to be found in the NIEEB (2014) which reports that CSOTs consult rural communities and allow them to fully participate in making important decisions concerning development interventions that affect their daily lives. For instance, the Zvishavane CSOT (ZCSOT) is applauded for undertaking needs assessment exercises in order to determine the development needs of the grassroots (NIEEB, 2014). After having completed the first phase of their socio-economic development projects, the ZCSOT is said to have carried out meetings to capture the grassroots' preferred socio-economic and enterprise development needs. These meetings were held between 25-28 February 2013 in Ward 19 as well as in Vukuso, Chenhunguru, Ngomeyebani, Mhototi, Murowa, Chionekano and Gurunguru Wards (Machinya, 2014; NIEEB, 2014:12). However, while Machinya (2014) acknowledges that these meetings took place, he argues that they were not necessarily participatory in the sense that the concerned Zvishavane communities were not able to consider

projects from a wide range of options, but were asked to say ‘yes or no’ to projects suggested to them by the Trustees especially the chiefs.

Research findings by Makanza and Makanza (2014) indicate that, despite some challenges faced by CSOTs at their inception, the identification of projects and their prioritization was observed to have been significantly participatory. Most CSOTs they studied used existing community development structures (VIDCOs and WADCOs) to consult local communities. Makanza and Makanza (2014) had confirmation from those interviewed that they had participated in the needs identification exercises undertaken by the Trustees. Overall, the two researchers were quite convinced that community participation in needs assessment exercises had to a great extent brought about feelings of ownership among the grassroots (Makanza and Makanza, 2014). In support of the participatory nature of CSOTs, Tshuma (2015) in his study of the Gwanda CSOT claims that the community was encouraged by the Trustees to participate in the prioritization of development projects. The community was said to be quite happy with the way the Trust was being managed. In Tshuma’s (2015) findings, the VIDCOs and WADCOs met at the beginning of every financial year where the Trust, together with the community members and the local leadership, would together prioritize on development interventions to be carried out in different wards and villages. An interesting observation is that in an earlier study of the same CSOT carried out by Mabhena and Moyo (2014), they give a different perspective to that given by Tshuma, by arguing that there was need for the local community in Gwanda to also actively participate in deciding on community empowerment projects that suited their needs.

In short, it seems that the rhetoric around CSOTs suggests that they promote community ownership and participation. Among some commentators, CSOTs are presented as challenging the over dependency on NGOs. The argument is that communities now work in tandem with their local leadership, embarking on projects that result in the construction of schools, clinics, roads and the repairing of boreholes among other infrastructure development projects (Mutongi, 2013:10). Through CSOTs, communities are envisaged to work together in pursuit of their own development objectives. The CSOT Trustees are supposed to ensure that the beneficiaries of the Trust are consulted to give their input in all development projects/initiatives that the Trust pursues. This can be realised when the CSOT Board of Trustees adheres to the dictates of the CSOT Policy and Procedures Manual 2014 (PPM) as well as the Deed of Trust as discussed earlier.



## **5.5 Critiques of indigenization policy and CSOTs**

Zimbabwe's indigenisation programmes have received varied criticisms. Claims by the architects of the Indigenisation Act that the programme has been inclusive, participatory and has supported broad based economic empowerment of the majority indigenous Zimbabweans have been heavily critiqued and refuted by some scholars. In this section, I lay out the existing literature critiquing the claims that the indigenization programme has been inclusive and participatory. I will engage further with these critiques in Chapter 6 when I assess the Zvimba CSOT specifically. Critics of the indigenization policy argue that community members rarely participate in broad-based economic development initiatives. The contention has been that ZANU PF elites, their cronies as well as those running various indigenisation schemes such as CSOTs have benefitted more from the indigenization programme than the disadvantaged black population (Matyszak, 2013; Warikandwa and Osode, 2017). The programme has been said to have been 'abused' as a populist tool to win elections (Magure, 2014). Nciizah (2015) argues that the policy as well as other programmes which support it (including schemes such as CSOTs), mainly gain momentum when the ZANU PF political party is preparing for parliamentary and presidential elections. Nyamunda (2013, 2016) and Magure (2014) echo the same sentiments. Nyamunda (2013:3) claims that the 'noise around indigenisation was just meant to win the 2013 elections', while Magure (2014) describes vividly how IEE was manipulated by ZANU PF in order to win an overwhelming electoral majority in the 2013 elections. Magure (2015:6) further asserts that the indigenisation policy was 'implemented when the ZANU PF government was cornered by winds of change and not necessarily driven by having the interests of the people at heart'. The winds of change denote political pressure coming from a strong opposition party namely the MDC. It is noteworthy that in the 2013 and 2018 elections respectively, the indigenisation and economic empowerment policy as well as the CSOTs were referred to frequently in the ZANU PF political manifestoes.

The MDC party has 'claimed that economic indigenisation is a recipe for ZANU-PF elite enrichment, clientelism, cronyism, corruption and political patronage' (Ndakaripa, 2015:1). Magure (2012:80) likewise argues that 'ZANU PF's militarised patronage system under the guise of indigenisation provides a perfect opportunity to well-connected members of the Zimbabwean ruling party-state complex to become rich overnight'. Warikandwa and Osode (2017:3) similarly observe that the benefits of Zimbabwe's indigenization programme including

those from CSOTs ‘have gone to a few well-connected elites due largely to unethical business practices such as business fronting’. These two scholars claim that the indigenisation policy is a wholly ZANU PF project, and that its implementation has mainly benefitted those sympathetic to the party and its policies. Matyszak (2013) claims that the ZANU PF government saw to it that the CSOT Board of Trustees became signatories to the Trust’s funds (that is local government officials and chiefs) so that the CSOT’s finances would be firmly in the hands of individuals loyal to the party.

There are also scholars who refute claims that CSOTs are participatory. Mawowa (2013) and Matsa and Masimbati (2014) believe that CSOT Board Members’ mandate of furthering local community participation in development interventions, through encouraging interactive decision-making and building strong relations with the community members (who are the rightful owners of the Trust as stated in the IEEA Statutory Instrument 21 of 2010), is still been largely driven and determined by the will of individual Trustees. The Trustees are seen to have continuously given preference to their own development priorities usually camouflaged as community interests. In the circumstances, this has minimised the opportunities for proactive grassroots participatory engagement which paves way for viable development interventions with a high appeal among the majority community members (Mawowa 2013; Matsa and Masimbati 2014).

In other cases, some scholars have argued that the rural communities were never consulted in the prioritization of development projects carried out by CSOTs (Mawowa, 2013; Kurebwa *et al.*, 2014; Machinya, 2014). Such scholars raise concerns about the politicization of Trusts and the non-participatory structure of the Board of Trustees. It is argued that there was significant political interference in the composition and management of the Trusts. This ended up serving the interests of the politicians at the expense of the grassroots (Mawowa, 2013; Kurebwa *et al.*, 2014; Machinya, 2014). Further observations were that local communities were supposed to choose the Trustees themselves, rather than to have them imposed on them by the MYIEE (Mawowa, 2013; Machinya, 2014; Makanza and Makanza, 2014). For example, in studies by Mawowa (2013), Machinya (2014) and Matsa and Masimbati (2014), they observed that decision-making in CSOTs is concentrated in the hands of a few CSOT Board members. Their observations were that CSOT decisions on development initiatives largely focused on three major players within the CSOT Board, that is, RDC officials (RDC Chief Executive Officer and

RDC Chairman), the DA and the chiefs. Nyamurundira cited in Farawo (2013) notes that, in some cases, the decisions on development interventions have tended to come from the RDC 'project bank', rather than directly from the grassroots themselves. It is also argued that those from the RDC offices have at times pushed forward a common development agenda at the expense of the real development priorities of the CSOT and local community at large (Mawowa, 2013; Matsa and Masimbati, 2014).

The District Administrators (DAs) are also heavily involved in CSOT decision making processes. They serve as Board Members and they have been active in calling for development interventions emanating from project proposals agreed on at the Rural District Development Committee (RDDC) meetings. The chiefs are not left out either. They serve as chairs of the CSOTs. This has been seen to sway some decisions on development interventions in their favour while undermining those of the community (Machinya, 2014; Mawowa, 2013). The concerns raised by these scholars counter the claims given by CSOT advocates that the Trusts are inclusive and participatory. Critics argue that in, some cases, CSOTs are not earnestly giving priority to the grassroots when determining how best development interventions should be undertaken. Other than the composition of the Board of Trustees, Mawowa (2013) has criticized CSOTs for what he terms the 'politicization' of the Trusts, which Kurebwa *et al.* (2014) and Machinya (2014) have similarly raised in their respective studies of CSOTs. Makanza and Makanza (2014) suggest that the various Deeds of Trusts be amended to create room for ward rather than district based representatives of interest groups. This is because in each ward there is a councillor and likewise, in each village, we find a village head.

In his study of the Mhondoro-Ngezi CSOT (M-NCSOT), Mawowa (2013) observed that the Trust had failed to put in place mechanisms to support grassroots participation in undertaking well-reasoned development interventions that were totally informed by the demands coming from the local community. He asserted that the Trust's decision-making structures were top-down and patriarchal. He further argued that the Trust was 'alien' to local communities as there was a lack of a sense of ownership among them. Part of the reason for this was that the Trustees or Board Members were selected by the MYIEE rather than by the local communities themselves. This view is also supported by Machinya (2014) who argues that, if the CSOTs were to be more accountable and participatory, they would then let the grassroots choose the Trustees who would represent them in the Board. The same concerns raised by Mawowa (2013) in his

particular study of M-NCSOT are echoed by Matsa and Masimbati (2014) in their respective study of Tongogara CSOT (TCSOT). They argue that the Trust does not involve the grassroots in both decision making and in its operations. Their major argument was that the Trust was male-dominated and its approach to development interventions was ‘top-down’. The two scholars suggest that, for the Trust to be inclusive and transparent in its management, it needs to allow for the participation of some members with relevant educational qualifications found within the district by involving them in negotiation platforms where the community’s interests are considered more fully.

Clearly, there is existing critique of Zimbabwe’s indigenization policies and the ways in which CSOTs operate. Keeping this critique in mind, the next chapter will present my findings on Zvimba CSOT (ZvCSOT), which is the major focus of this study.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

From the foregoing sections, it was noted that the major goal of CSOTs as stipulated by the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act is to ensure that the rural communities, as the guardians of natural resources, benefit from the exploitation of mineral wealth found in their localities. Observations were that the Deed of Trust guides how CSOTs are set up and determines who is responsible for governing them. However, the CSOT Board of Trustees have been accused of being elitist and of not considering the views of local communities. Regarding the PPM, it was noted that it focused on the functions of CSOTs. Furthermore, it was observed that CSOTs were intended to embark on development interventions which related to the genuine development interests or immediate development needs of local communities. The Chapter discussed various claims on how CSOTs are said to be participatory. Claims coming from various CSOT advocates suggest that the Trusts embodied participatory principles through which community members could identify development projects/programmes for implementation in their areas. Indeed, CSOTs were claimed to be community driven and people-centred. However, the chapter also discussed the views of critics who countered such claims. Given the various participatory claims made about CSOTs, it is important to investigate if their practices really match these claims. Chapter 6, which follows, analyses the extent to which the ZvCSOT is participatory.

## **CHAPTER 6: ZVIMBA COMMUNITY SHARE OWNERSHIP TRUST: AN ANALYSIS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT PRACTICES PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Advocates of participatory development argue that disenfranchised communities cannot experience development unless they actively participate in deciding on which development projects are implemented in their communities. As discussed in the previous chapter, CSOTs were ostensibly set up to give a life line to the once marginalized rural communities in order for them to benefit from the commercial exploitation of resources in their area. In this regard, 10% shareholding in these companies was to be reserved for CSOT funding. This could result in many benefits flowing to the once disenfranchised rural communities where mining was taking place. This chapter examines whether CSOTs do indeed encourage participation. It is imperative to find out in terms of participatory development whether the Zvimba CSOT (ZvCSOT) is close or far removed from community members who are supposed to be the main beneficiaries of the Trust. In other words, does the Zvimba community have a voice in terms of development interventions introduced by the ZvCSOT?

### **6.2 Demographic information of participants**

Before discussing and analysing the research findings it is helpful to provide a brief description of the individuals and groups interviewed for the findings discussed in this chapter. Formal and informal interviews were conducted with Ministry of Youth Indigenization and Economic Empowerment (MYIEE) officials (in both Harare and Chegutu); National Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Board (NIEEB) officials; National Youth Council (NYC) officials; Mhondoro-Ngezi Chegutu CSOT (M-NCZCSOT) Board members; Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust (ZvCSOT) Trustees (including one former one); University interns from Zvimba RDC; village heads (*sabhuku*); teachers; ZANU PF youths; councillors; and ordinary village youths, men and women. In addition, four focus group discussions were carried out at purposively selected locations in Zvimba district. Some photos were also taken at some selected project sites. The tables below illustrate the number of participants interviewed on issues concerning ZvCSOT. The questions were diverse, with some questions asked more frequently than others depending on their level of significance to the major goal of this research. These questions are included in Appendix 3. Some participants were quite knowledgeable about both

the Trust and the NGO (discussed in Chapters 7 and 8) and so they appear in tables below as well as in the tables in Chapter 8.

**Table 3: Central and local government participants**

Target group	No. of respondents
<b>Ministry of Youth Indigenization and Economic Empowerment (MYIEE)</b>	5
<b>National Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Board (NIEEB)</b>	2
<b>National Youth Council (NYC)</b>	2
<b>Mhondoro-Ngezi Chegutu Zvimba CSOT (M-N-C-Z-CSOT) Board Members</b>	2
<b>ZvCSOT Trustees (a District Administrator, a very senior RDC member who requested anonymity, and a former Trustee of an interest group)</b>	3
<b>Village heads</b>	3
<b>Councillors</b>	2
<b>University interns</b>	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>

**Table 4: Focus group participants**

Target group	Target respondents	Actual respondents	Actual respondents %
Focus Group A	8 males	6 males	75%
Focus Group B	8 males	5 males	62.5%
Focus Group C	8 females	8 females	100%
Focus Group D	8 females	8 females	100%
Total		27 males & females	

**Table 5: Community participants**

Target Group	Formal interview	Informal Interview	Total Respondents
Men	3	1*	4
Women	6	1*	7
Youths	5	2*	7
Teachers	5	2**	5
ZANU PF Youths	5	3**	5
Total			28

\* These consisted of informal interviews at the project site.

\*\* These consisted of ongoing communication of interviewer with interviewee to gain clarity on some pertinent issues as well as to add on to any new developments in the research field.

### **6.3 Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust (ZvCSOT)**

This thesis is focused on the Zvimba CSOT (ZvCSOT). However, before discussing the workings of the ZvCSOT, some background is needed regarding the operations of the umbrella body, Mhondoro-Ngezi Chegutu Zvimba CSOT (M-N-C-Z-CSOT), of which ZvCSOT is a part. As mentioned earlier on, Zimbabwe Platinum Mines (Zimplats) was the first mining company to launch a CSOT in terms of the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act (Mpofu, 2012). It facilitated the disposal of its shares to a community share ownership scheme called Mhondoro-Ngezi Chegutu Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust (M-N-C-Z-CSOT) where it invested \$10 million to be paid over a period of three years (African Development Bank, 2011). The M-N-C-Z-CSOT came up with a main Board or Apex Council, which is the umbrella Board with oversight over the three districts of Mhondoro-Ngezi, Chegutu and Zvimba.

Mhondoro-Ngezi District, Chegutu District, and Zvimba District each have their own CSOT though all the three are funded by one company (Zimplats) and they are all members of the main Board (Apex Council), the M-N-C-Z-CSOT. At district level, each district has its own district committee (DC) or Board of Trustees representing Mhondoro-Ngezi, Chegutu or Zvimba CSOT.

The main Board (M-N-C-Z-CSOT), also known as the Apex Council, comprises of four chiefs from Mhondoro-Ngezi, five from Chegutu and two from Zvimba, a representative of Zimplats, a MYIEE representative and three District Administrators (representing Mhondoro-

Ngezi, Chegutu and Zvimba Districts respectively). Zvimba actually has four chiefs, but only two are paramount chiefs and only paramount chiefs are represented on the apex council. However, the other two chiefs in the district are Board members of the CSOT despite not being on the Apex Council. A lawyer and an accountant were later incorporated into the Apex Board (M-N-C-Z-CSOT, 2014). The M-NCZCSOT is unique from other Trusts in the country in that its operations cover the three districts of Mhondoro-Ngezi, Chegutu and Zvimba; whereas other Trusts cover only one district each. The reason for this is that the seed capital for these three CSOTs comes from one entity, Zimbabwe Platinum Mines (Zimplats). The Operational Framework for Community Share Ownership Schemes or Trusts (2014), set out in terms of the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act [Chapter 14:33], states that:

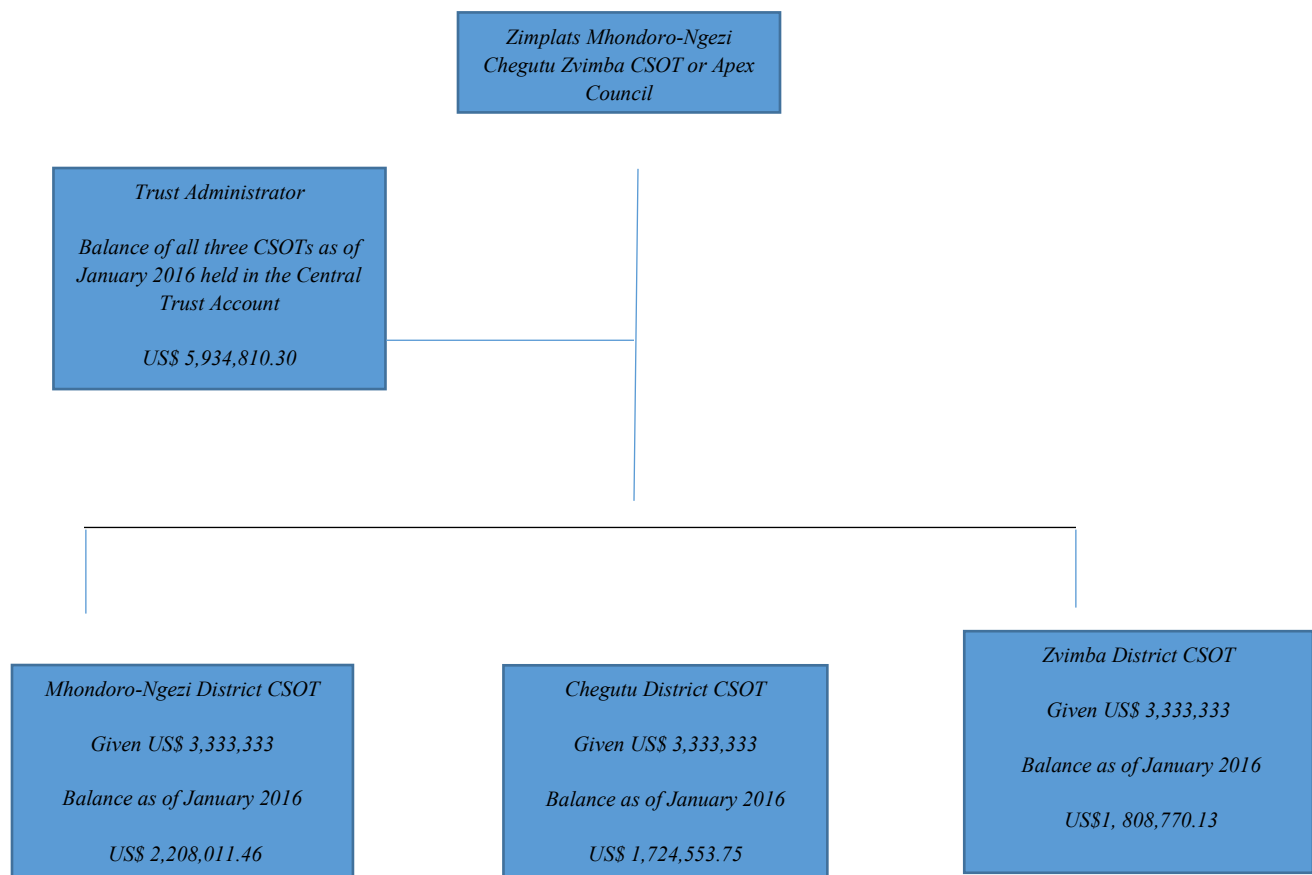
Where a company's operations transcend district boundaries, shares shall be held by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). The SPV shall ensure equal distribution of dividends amongst the affected Trusts. The Trust shall open a separate Trust Account whose signatories will include: The Chairperson (Chief), The Secretary (RDC CEO), District Administrator and any other authorized Trustee.

This CSOT extends over three regions because Zimplats' operation extends over all three of those regions. The IEE Act says that this means that there must be a SPV to determine how the benefits are shared (Mawowa, 2013a, 2013b).

Zimplats has since honoured its US\$10 million pledge of seed capital to the Mhondoro-Ngezi Chegutu Zvimba CSOT (M-N-C-Z-CSOT) which is being used for community development initiatives in the three districts. It paid the money in batches over a period of three years (from 2012 to 2014). In 2012, it disbursed a total of US\$ 4,133,000.00 million into the M-N-C-Z-CSOT account. By year end in 2013, the platinum giant had added another payment of US\$ 4,441,809.00 million. Thus, the total amount paid in 2012 and 2013 reached a total of US\$ 8,574,809.00 million. The year 2014 saw the final pay out to the M-N-C-Z-CSOT of US\$ 1,5 million, bringing the total amount paid in the three year period to US\$10 million (Nyamukondiwa, 2014). Below is a diagram showing the disbursement of funds to the three CSOTs.



**Figure 2: Diagram illustrating the structure of the M-N-C-Z-CSOT and the respective Districts benefitting from the Trust funds**



The above funds were deposited in the M-N-C-Z-CSOT's main account and later shared equally among each of the three CSOTs. The total amount each CSOT got as from 2012 to 2014 amounted to US\$3,333,333.00 million. Just like any other CSOT found in Zimbabwe, Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust (Scheme) (ZvCSOT) also has a Board of Trustees. The Board is chaired by one of the four chiefs in the district who rotate the chairmanship on a yearly basis. These are chiefs Zvimba, Chirau, Beperere and Chidziva. The other members of the Board include the Rural District Council Chairperson who acts as the Board's Vice-Chairperson; the CEO of the RDC who acts as the Board's Secretary; the District Administrator; the district head of the Ministry of Indigenization; a lawyer; an accountant; and a representative each of women, youth, the disabled, war veterans and the business community.

The CSOT Board of Trustees is a creation of a clause in the Indigenisation Act which outlines the number of members who are expected to constitute a Board as well as their designations. A look at the ZvCSOT Board reveals that women are very under-represented on the Board of Trustees. There is only one woman on the Board, who happens to be in that position owing to a compulsory requirement of the Ministry of Youth, Indigenization and Economic Empowerment that all CSOTs are supposed to have a representative of women on the Board. In Chapter 5, it was noted that scholars such as Mawowa (2013) argue that CSOT Boards are largely composed in a male-dominated way as seen in the few women represented in these Boards. These areas have remained male dominated due to the nature of Zimbabwe's patriarchal society.

The ZvCSOT Board includes a number of ZANU PF loyalists due to the fact that the Board consists of many government appointees, such as the chiefs, CEOs of the RDC, the DA and an official from the Ministry of Indigenisation. Matyszak (2013:9) argues that because CSOT Boards include so many government appointees, they tend 'to comprise of mainly ZANU PF loyalists'. In Chapter 3, it was noted that Zimbabwe's central government has immense power and control over local government structures because it appointed individuals loyal to the centre in the administration or oversight of local government institutions (Madhekeni and Zhou, 2012; Kurebwa 2015; Wekwete, 2016; Nyathi and Ncube, 2017; Chigwata *et al*, 2017, Makunde *et al.*, 2018; Muchadenyika and Williams, 2018). Both the DA and the official from the Ministry of Indigenization are central government officers who are Board members of the Trust while the senior RDC officers are also answerable to the Ministry of Local Government. The RDC Chairperson is a ZANU councillor who was nominated by other ZANU PF councillors to that position. ZANU PF nominates its own party loyalists to compete with other political parties in council elections. This makes rural councillors partisan to ZANU PF and it also reflects how patronage politics plays out between the centre and the local level. Consequently, the Zvimba RDC Chairperson too is loyal to ZANU PF.

As discussed in Chapter 3, traditional leaders are mostly partisan to ZANU PF (Mandondo, 2000; Makahamadze *et al.*, 2009; Makumbe, 2010; Govo *et al.*, 2015; Chigwata, 2015, 2016; Alexander, 2018). This makes it likely that the traditional leaders represented on the ZvCSOT Board are also ZANU PF loyalists. Furthermore, it is likely that many ZvCSOT Board members are ZANU PF loyalists (formal and informal interviews, 2016, 2017, 2018). In Chapter

3, it was argued that local government systems in Zimbabwe have continued to function along party lines directly or indirectly serving ZANU PF's political and economic interests (Matyszak, 2011; Feltoe, 2012:184; Kurebwa, 2015:105-6; Chakaipa and Chakunda, 2016:31; Chigwata, 2015:450-451, 2016: 89-90). The subsequent sections outline some of the main concerns relating to the functioning of the ZvCSOT Board.

ZANU PF's dominance in the CSOT Boards is not the only problem with the functioning of these Boards. The sub-sections below highlight some of the issues relating to the functioning of the Board that were highlighted in the interviews I conducted.

### **6.3.1 Limited participation of Board members with short term positions**

Some board members of the ZvCSOT Board of Trustees are more powerful than others due to remaining in their positions permanently while others serve only short terms. Out of the 15 representatives in the ZvCSOT Board, five members wield more power than the other Trustees. These are Chief Zvimba, the DA, and the official in the Ministry of Indigenization, the RDC CEO and the RDC Chairman. Chief Zvimba's dominant position in the Board in comparison to the other chiefs emanates from the fact that he was a cousin brother to the former (and now late) president, Robert Mugabe. Elsewhere it was observed that, under the Deed of Trusts' clause on the management and control of Trusts, Trustees from local government (CEO of RDC, DA, Chairperson of RDC) as well as an official of the MYIEE hold office in the Trust for as long as they remain in that official position. DA Tizora adds that:

From my own understanding, we cannot exclude the RDC CEO and the RDC Chairman since they are the ones tasked with the development of the political area (rural district) where we are all operating in. Council is the responsible authority that looks at all development programmes within their area. It is aware of the existing boundaries of wards and villages in the whole district. They already have plans for existing programmes (Interview, Mr. Andrew Tizora, 28/11/2016).

What DA Tizora is implying is that RDC officials are 'experts' in terms of rural development projects. Therefore, they are suitable candidates to propose appropriate development interventions to the Board since they already have some existing programmes in their development plans. Apart from the RDC officials, the Deed of Trust also indicates that traditional chiefs are members of the Board as long as they live, while the representatives from interest groups (representing youth, women, the disabled and business) shall hold office for a period of two years; and; if they are reappointed; they can hold office for another two years. The mere fact that local government personnel can be Board members as long as they remain in that

official position and that chiefs hold their position for as long as they live gives them more control over the management of the Board. Furthermore, it is a chief who chairs the Board. Clearly, these arrangements mean that some members dominate because they hold their positions for longer. According to one of the respondents, a consequence of these arrangements is that:

The chiefs and local government personnel can override the decisions of the interest group representatives since their positions are more permanent as compared to the two-year periods the representatives of interest groups are supposed to serve. This is aggravated by the fact that these other Trustees can only have their terms extended at the mercy of the more ‘permanent’ Trustees (Interview, Mr. H, 01/12/2016).

The minutes of ZvCSOT Board meetings help one to understand the power dynamics within the Trust. The special interest groups rarely raise anything significant as shown in the minutes. A former ZvCSOT Board member stressed that:

I ended up absenting myself from some of the Board meetings since I realized that our input as interest groups was not appreciated at all. It was only the war veteran whom they at times listened to, but it was not always the case every time (Interview, Mr. Q, 03/12/2016).

In another case, Malvern, a former interest group representative of the merged Mhondoro-Ngezi Chegutu Zvimba CSOT (M-NCZCSOT), claimed that the development projects which he had brought forward to the Board on behalf of the specific group he represented were never adopted or taken seriously and this frustrated him a lot. He remarked that:

The chiefs always reiterated to us [members representing interest groups] that President Robert Mugabe had given them overall authority to manage the Trusts implying that they also had the power to decide how the funds were to be used. Local government officials also claimed that they were the experts in terms of rural development initiatives (Interview, Malvern, 16/11/2016).

From Malvern’s narrative, it can be noted that there is a monopoly regarding the selection of development projects. The main culprits are the chiefs and local government officials. The big question to be asked is whether these projects were people driven as stipulated in the 2014 CSOT PPM.

It seems likely that representatives of interest groups will play a subordinate role to those members whose membership in the Board is determined by the years they remain in their positions which, in the case of government employees, is usually around five to thirty years and in the case of chiefs, until death. It is therefore nearly impossible to challenge these ‘seniors’ in the ZvCSOT Board as evidenced in an ensuing sub-section 6.3.2 that examines the fiduciary duties of Board members.

It is also important to stress that the structure of the ZvCSOT Board of Trustees is not representative of the community it purports to represent. The biggest challenge confronting ZvCSOT in terms of participatory development is that, for a district consisting of 35 wards, there are only five representatives of interest groups made up of a woman, a youth, a disabled person, a war veteran and a business person. Mawowa (2013) argues that such a small number is too insignificant to influence the operation and management of the Trust. The ZvCSOT Board, like other CSOTs, does not have councillors, headmen and village heads as Board members, yet these individuals have a more pronounced presence in the District. In each ward there is a councillor and, likewise, in each village there is a village head. If all councillors and village heads were Board members like chiefs, then this could improve transparency in the selection of projects as the ward-based representatives together with the help of councillors and village heads would be in a position to reach out to most people within their area of jurisdiction.

### **6.3.2 ZvCSOT Board in relation to development interventions**

In terms of decisions concerning development interventions undertaken by the ZvCSOT, the DA emphasized that:

Council has been for the past ten years failing to meet the development needs of local communities due to financial constraints that the country is currently facing. If parents want a bridge to be constructed in their area, and council also has such a plan in their project bank, but was failing to source for the necessary funds, then it will be quite reasonable that both the parents [i.e. community representatives] and council harmonize the programme. Those with resources [i.e. the CSOT Board] first agree on whether to assist or not (Interview, Mr. Andrew Tizora, 28/11/2016).

What DA Tizora is saying is quite plausible. However, the ZvCSOT's minutes of Board meetings show that the CSOT is still far from serving the interests of local communities (an issue fully discussed in sections to follow). Evidence from the minutes of ZvCSOT Board meetings indicate that the Trust is more inclined to serve the interests of a few, especially those who wield significant power within the Board. Commenting on the distribution of CSOT projects in a district with four constituencies, each coinciding with the jurisdiction of a chief, DA Tizora emphasized that:

We want a geographical spread. Projects are supposed to spread far and wide. If you are blind to that you end up focusing on a small area. We have four constituencies in this district and as a Board we are tasked to identify development problems of each constituency (Interview, Mr. Andrew Tizora, 28/11/2016).

In the above quote, DA Tizora is admitting that the Board pursues the project conceptualization phase without the involvement of local communities. This implies that the Board carries out needs assessments on its own without consulting community members. For instance, the Trust provided cement to various institutions in the district without first making necessary consultations with the concerned communities. DA Tizora stressed that:

Our bias by then was towards health and education. We strongly believed that if you get to a school, you have assisted the community. We bought 6 000 bags of cement which were used for infrastructural development; refurbishment of buildings, plastering of blocks, building of toilets, construction of classroom blocks and clinics (Interview, Mr. Andrew Tizora, 28/11/16).

Speaking generally about development, Mansuri and Rao (2013) observe that local communities hardly make any decisions in development interventions that concern them. This is quite clear in the DA's statement that 'We strongly believed that ...', meaning that participation was in this case restricted to the implementation of predetermined projects. In their various studies of CSOTs, Mawowa (2013) and Matyszak (2013) have observed that the mandate of CSOT Trustees to encourage local community participation through interactive decision-making processes is still been largely driven and determined by the will of individual Trustees. Likewise, in the DA's above statement, the Trustees have continuously given preference to their own development priorities usually camouflaged as community interests. This has minimised the opportunities for proactive community participation which paves way for viable development interventions that have a high appeal among the majority community members.

The Trust also embarked on the drilling of boreholes in the district. However, communities were never consulted to at least help in identifying areas which were genuinely in need of water. DA Tizora pointed out that:

Our projects are in all 35 wards. For borehole drilling, we selected areas with high concentrations of people in need of water. We would usually drill a borehole at a school. Our focus was on areas where we thought there was need (Interview, 28/11/2016).

In the DA's last statement, he points out that the Board sunk boreholes 'where we thought there was need'. This implies a top-down process of decision-making whereby decisions are the preserve of a few. His wording suggests that the decisions made did not come from community members but were the decisions of a few individuals who believed they knew what the community wanted in terms of development interventions.

The evidence from the minutes of the ZvCSOT Board meetings show that the Trustees decide on project interventions without first making consultations with the concerned

communities, as is supposed to be the case as per the general requirement of the PPM and the Deed of Trust. Even the very decision to create a CSOT Board of Trustees is a decision that was not initiated by the communities themselves, but originated through the MYIEE's Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act Statutory Instrument 21 of 2010. This Act determines the way in which the Board of Trustees is chosen and does not require them to be chosen by the community. This is evident when looking at the ZvCSOT Board of Trustees (made up of locals and government officials), who wield much power over the Trust's operations.

#### **6.4 Roles of central and local government vis-à-vis ZvCSOT's operations and development interventions**

Minutes of various ZvCSOT Board meetings showed that the Trust had held several meetings since its inception in 2011. In one Board meeting, it was indicated that proposals had been submitted to identify a piece of land to build a CSOT office at Murombedzi Business Centre. However, the ZvCSOT Board currently relies on RDC offices for its meetings. Under such an arrangement, Mawowa (2013) observes that there is a genuine danger that CSOTs might end up being incorporated into RDC sub-units, thus failing to involve local communities in the whole development process. Below I raise various issues concerning the roles of central and local government in relation to ZvCSOT's operations and development interventions. I therefore examine the ways in which projects determined before the existence of ZvCSOT end up being carried out by the CSOT, such that the CSOT is basically carrying out the work of other local and central government entities. I also discuss some cases of corruption and kickbacks in relation to ZvCSOT Trustees.

##### **6.4.1 The determination of ZvCSOT projects**

A key informant at the Zvimba RDC confirmed that the local authority (RDC) has always carried out consultative meetings with community members where they articulate their development plans. He indicated that, at the village level, local communities deliberate on various development initiatives for their area and this is done during VIDCO meetings which are chaired by the village head. The village head then forwards the development needs to WADCO meetings where the councillor is mandated to minute the reports of the development needs of various villages within his/her ward. From there, the councillor then forwards the whole ward's needs to

the District Development Committee (DDCom) which is chaired by the DA. He went on to stress that:

Even before the coming in of CSOTs, development concerns of the people have always been there and they are all captured in our [RDC] project bank. In most cases, what is done by the CSOT Board comes from RDC. At times, as council we also request the Board to assist us. Currently, we requested that the Trust buys us three ambulances to be used in the district. Our proposal went through and we are now waiting for the release of the funds from the Apex Board (Interview, Lameck, 28/11/2016).

RDC officials, the DA and chiefs meet in Rural District Development Committees (RDDCs) where they discuss various development initiatives for the district. The DA chairs RDDCs and, as a member of the CSOT Board, he can also pick up on development projects that are discussed in RDDC meetings. During an interview with the Zvimba DA, he indicated that:

We bought 6 000 bags of cement without consulting the community. We chose the projects from existing knowledge and information. We have a file here in my office which has various previous demands coming from schools in the district. These requests had been piling up at the District Development Council. We thought it was wise to immediately address these issues owing to pressure that was coming specifically from the politicians (Interview, DA Tizora, 28/11/2016).

The central concern is that, while the DA claims that they choose projects based on project banks drawn up through needs assessments they undertake in the community, interviewees were sceptical about this process. Out of ten respondents, seven out of ten of the responses from seven in-depth interviews and three informal discussions highlighted that what is discussed in VIDCO meetings is not taken seriously by the district officers. A further two respondents were of the view that, at times, the district officers do take the outcome of the VIDCO meetings seriously, though they take time to take such action. A third respondent indicated that she was not sure if the outcomes of these meetings are taken seriously. When DA Tizora says 'We chose the projects from existing knowledge and information', he is referring to the projects that they decide on in RDDC meetings which the local government 'technocrats' think can best address the needs of the people.

Furthermore, the RDDC is dominated by RDC officials so it may be that projects undertaken in Zvimba district originated from what was discussed in RDC meetings, rather than originating from the community's expressed needs. An interesting observation brought out by Matyszak (2011) is that RDCs do not raise much through the collection of taxes and levies and they are also over-dependent on central government. Currently, this funding is not very constant as the central government is reeling under economic challenges. It therefore becomes very



tempting for local government officials in the CSOT Board to divert CSOT funds to support RDDC rural projects.

From documentary evidence and information from primary sources (for example minutes of the ZvCSOT Board of Trustees meetings, interviews with a RDC key informant and the DA, and observations from fieldwork) it appears that the majority of ZvCSOT's development interventions have emanated from the RDC project bank as well as from projects deliberated at RDDCs meetings. These projects had been for many years gathering dust due to lack of proper funding. Notably, most of the projects undertaken by the ZvCSOT did not arise from issues raised in VIDCO meetings – as some academics such as Kurebwa *et al.* (2014) have recommended that they should be – but were projects which the RDC and DA felt were supposed to be implemented in the District.

The meetings which are 'closer' to the people, that is VIDCO or WADCO meetings, are not given as much attention as those of the RDC which is 'further' from the people. The argument is that if CSOTs are supposed to be encouraging community participation, they could and should do so through the existing structures that bring together people at village level. However, there is really no guideline regarding how CSOTs should relate to the whole existing development architecture – RDDCs, RDCs, WADCOs and VIDCOs.

Academics have come up with various recommendations on how best CSOTs can reach out to communities when capturing their development needs and priorities. In their research work, Mabhena and Moyo (2014) recommend that CSOTs work with RDCs. They suggest it can be done by synchronizing RDC and CSOT strategic plans and development arrangements. This view is supported by the former deputy Minister of Youth, Indigenization and Economic Empowerment, Honourable Tongofa, who similarly believes that CSOTs are expected to match RDC work. He stresses that since CSOTs are community-based and development-driven agencies, they are supposed to work hand in hand with RDCs and Rural District Development Committees (RDDCs). Kurebwa *et al.* (2014) likewise mention that CSOTs are supposed to use existing RDC development structures instead of creating their own parallel structures. The argument is that CSOTs are supposed to carry out needs assessments using the very structures that are used by RDCs (that is through VIDCOs, WADCOs, and RDDC meetings). Makanza and Makanza (2014) give a different perspective to that given by the above scholars by suggesting that, while it is plausible that CSOTs are supposed to harmonize the work of RDCs, it is also

imperative that they should not take over the development responsibilities of local authorities. The two authors strongly believe that a distinction is supposed to be made between CSOT and RDC development work.

When the CSOT works closely together with local authorities, the problems of elite capture and top-down development may arise. Interviewees in Zvimba expressed reservations about the role of RDC officials, the DA and the chiefs. As one respondent stressed, ‘When we heard that the board was made up of these people we immediately knew that nothing was ever going to come from us but from them’ (Interview, Getrude, 29/11/2016). Given the weaknesses of the RDC, DA and the traditional leaders in managing the ZvCSOT in a transparent and inclusive participatory manner, one wonders which RDC communication channel would best be able to come up with genuine bottom-up participatory approaches. In Zvimba district, reservations were expressed by community members relating to the ability of the RDC to respond to community needs discussed in VIDCO meetings. Field results indicated that local people often perceived the ZvCSOT as either an RDC or DA or ZANU PF or government-initiated programme rather than a community-based empowerment programme.

The findings of this research indicate that there is ample evidence that ZvCSOT has been used by local government institutions (DA, RDC CEO, RDC Chairman and the chief) in order to implement their existing development priorities. Observational evidence and the Zimplats-M-N-C-Z-CSOT Booklet (2015) show that the Zvimba CSOT Board funded the drilling of a borehole at the New Government Complex at Murombedzi Business Centre (where the DA’s offices are located), renovated and constructed mostly RDC owned schools in the district, and assisted in the upgrading of Murinye, Karoi and Manwahuku Bridges (a task which was supposed to have been carried out by local government through the district development fund). Whose interests did these projects serve other than those of local government officials? The minutes of the ZvCSOT Board meetings show that these decisions were mostly coming from the district officers as well as one of the chiefs.

It is clear that the funding provided to the CSOTs is being used to carry out interventions that should be the responsibility of local authorities. This is noticeable when one looks at development initiatives such as the construction of bridges, science laboratories, schools, mortuaries, clinics, toilets and the provision of furniture to schools. These responsibilities squarely fall under the mandate of the District Development Fund (DDF), Rural District Council,

Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. One clearly deduces that no real consultations were made with local communities in selecting some of these projects. On the surface, Zvimba District seems to be a role model for other CSOTs in terms of participatory rural development projects but, according to participants interviewed (whose views will be discussed in greater detail in sections below), most of these projects have been top-down, foisted on them without their consent and also without any needs-based assessments having been carried out.

It could therefore be said that the CSOT Board undermines the objectives laid out by the MYIEE insofar as it does not seek to empower local people. The CSOT pursues interests that are different from those of the local communities thus undermining the parent Ministry's major objective of empowering community members. Such a situation creates significant challenges to the Ministry in its quest to empower rural communities that are the supposed beneficiaries of the CSOT development projects. As has already been stated in Chapter 5, the community members are supposed to be consulted regarding CSOT development interventions.

#### **6.4.2 Corruption and kickbacks within the Trust**

Allegations of corruption and kickbacks arose several times during the interviews undertaken for this research. Seven participants who were well versed about the day-to-day operations of the Trust levelled serious allegations about corruption and kickbacks against some Trustees in the Zvimba CSOT Board. For example, one interviewee alleged that the procurement of some equipment had occurred in irregular ways. The ZvCSOT Board had approved the purchasing of road equipment including a front-end loader (924 H CAT US\$ 96,600.00), water bowser (5000L HINO/MAN US\$ 121,900.00), tractor complete with mower (US\$ 126,500.00), tipper truck (TATA US\$ 128,800.00) and motorized grader (140 G CAT US\$ 317,440.00). These amounted to US \$791,240.00. A further probe of the cost of the above equipment on the internet especially from renowned international companies and also from local dealers who sell the same equipment was quite revealing. The fact was that most of these prices were grossly inflated. In other words, the difference in prices between the equipment bought by the ZvCSOT and that offered by some local and international companies selling such equipment is so glaring. A former ZvCSOT Trustee said:

The buying of the earth moving machines was done in bad faith. That money could have been used to drill more boreholes in the district as well as to revive community gardens and irrigation schemes. The earth moving equipment was of low quality and was not even worth the money it was purchased for.

He went on to allege that:

That equipment was supplied by a relative of X [a senior Board member] and he is the one who pushed for the project to sail through. In the end, the well-connected Board members shared the spoils of such dirty dealings and the Zvimba community was short-changed by these crooks (Interview, Edward, 03/12/2016).

The procurement of the earth moving equipment by the ZvCSOT clearly spells out whose interests were actually being served at the expense of those of the community. Finer details on why the equipment was bought were readily available from some key informants and some ZANU PF insiders. A ZANU PF youth key informant alleged that ‘[s]ome Board members got amounts ranging from \$1,500, others \$5,000 and some as high as \$7,500’ for merely approving the buying of the road making equipment. According to the key informant, ‘[t]hese amounts depended on one’s position within the Board and RDC’ (Interview, Christopher, 13/02/2017).

**Figure 3: Some of the equipment bought by ZvCSOT lying idle at the Mhondoro-Ngezi Chegutu Zvimba CSOT offices in Chegutu**



The minutes of the Board meetings likewise show that three chiefs had boreholes drilled at their homesteads and not in the nearby villages where more people could more easily have accessed clean water. In the minutes, it shows that the first borehole which, had been drilled at chief X’s homestead, failed to reach the water table since it had hit a hard rock and so the Board requested that a second borehole be drilled at the same chief’s homestead. A key informant also highlighted that a fifth borehole was drilled at the homestead of Trustee M (a local government official) and it raised the ire of some well-informed community members. The irony is that communities we visited in some villages complained that they were walking very long distances in order to fetch (borehole) water, yet here was a Board which purported to serve the interests of the people calling for some of its members to have boreholes drilled at their homesteads. Worse

still, they had to drill a second borehole at chief X's homestead after the first one had hit hard rock.

A question that might need reiteration is: whose interests do the chiefs and local government officials represent? Is it that of the CSOT Board, their own, or that of their Ministry? The evidence on the ground suggests that the chiefs are serving their own interests, while the district officers do not always work in the best interests of the CSOT Board as they are also accountable somewhere else. Now I turn to broader issues where the Trust has carried out projects, not necessarily as determined by the Board of Trustees but dictated more by national policy and the ideologies of the political party in power.

### **6.5 Legitimizing pre-determined development interventions**

As discussed in Chapter 2, El-Hodiri and Ndiaye (2010) observed that in some cases, community members are made to follow certain development processes that give the appearance of participation yet these local communities are in reality excluded from the real decisions that shape these projects. The Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act, the ZimAsset Social Services and Poverty Eradication Cluster Document, ZANU PF's Manifesto of 2013, and the CSOT Deed of Trust, clearly lay out the development initiatives which CSOTs are supposed to carry out in rural communities. The lists of development interventions spelt out in these documents include the provision of schools, hospitals, clinics, dispensaries, dipping tanks, and the maintenance of water works, water sanitation works, and roads.

Of course, questions may be asked on whether, because there is uniformity between the products of CSOT activities on the one hand and the development objectives of the ruling party and RDC on the other, it therefore simply means ZvCSOT is merely serving the interests of the ruling party and RDC. The argument may arise on the realisation that various development interventions carried out by ZvCSOT are normally recognized as mainstream development projects. In addressing such concerns, the evidence from field work explicitly demonstrates that the ruling party and RDC do influence the Trust in a manner which explains why there is such consistency in ZvCSOT's development projects. I will support this claim in the ensuing paragraphs.

The ZvCSOT without consulting community members (as evidenced during field work), came up with the following development interventions: drilling of boreholes, provision of furniture to schools, construction of classroom blocks, clinics, supply of X-Ray equipment to a

clinic, rehabilitation of roads and construction of bridges, and the refurbishment of Murombedzi Vocational Training Centre. The development projects focused on socio-economic development initiatives with an emphasis on infrastructure development. These interventions are a mirror reflection of what is exactly found in the IEEA, ZimAsset Document, ZANU PF 2013 election Manifesto and the ZvCSOT Deed of Trusts. It is also noteworthy that the implementation of most development interventions in Zvimba, earnestly started after the 2013 elections.

During an informal interview at Murombedzi Business Centre, it was highlighted that during the 2013 election campaigns, ZANU PF politicians promised the electorate that they would provide furniture to schools, refurbish and build classroom blocks, build hospitals, and sink boreholes. This indicates the magnitude that ZANU PF influence (through its manifesto) has had on rural development interventions. It is clear that the infrastructural development interventions and provisions of furniture to schools and construction of clinics are all embedded in development blueprints found in various government and ZANU PF documents. The development interventions were never done after carrying out needs assessments with community members in Zvimba. This is one reason, as highlighted in the section above, why even during focus group discussions, the ownership of ZvCSOT was mainly attributed to ZANU PF party and government. It becomes clear that the ZvCSOT Board is using the ZvCSOT funds to fulfil the election promises made in the ZANU PF documents.

As mentioned earlier in this section, ZvCSOT's development projects have been done in a uniform way in line with the development projections cited in the IEEA, ZvCSOT Deeds of Trust, ZimAsset and ZANU PF 2013 Election Manifesto. The Statutory Instrument 21 of 2010 outlines in Section 14B the purposes for which the money accruing to the CSOTs is supposed to be used. The various Deeds of Trusts also spell out how the money being credited to CSOTs is expected to be dispensed. The list of development interventions stipulated in Statutory Instrument 21 of 2010 and the Deeds of Trust is almost similar to those set out in the ZimAsset Document and the ZANU PF Election Manifesto 2013. The ZANU PF Manifesto, just like the policies mentioned above, sees CSOTs as the means through which various infrastructural development initiatives can be achieved in rural communities. During fieldwork, Memory Mhonda, who is a senior officer in the Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment at the Chegutu offices pointed out that: 'The Board is guided by the guidelines in the Deed of Trust when it comes to the types of projects that are supposed to be carried out in

rural areas’ (Interview, Mrs. Memory Mhonda, 16/11/16). In addition, a respondent at the MYIEE in Harare stressed that: ‘When selecting development priority areas, the CSOTs are expected to ensure that the projects chosen by the people are those which lie within the development ambit of the Ministry’ (Interview, Mrs. V, 10/10/2016).

When one reads between the lines, the above MYIEE officials’ statements mean that it is next to impossible for any community member to choose or decide on a project which is outside the stipulated Deed of Trust guidelines (with 13 development objectives), the ZimAsset Document, the ZANU PF Manifesto as well as the MYIEE’s development scope. In other words, during needs assessment meetings, the community has to choose projects which lie within the range stipulated by the state and development agents. While the above objectives in the IEEA, Deed of Trust, ZimAsset Document and ZANU PF Manifesto seem quite reasonable, a question one might ask is whether the stipulated objectives or targets of the above state instruments do not stifle genuine participation of local people in decision making processes. It must be borne in mind that local communities might have different preferences, priorities and needs from those spelt out in the documents.

A look at ZvCSOT in particular, as well as other CSOTs’ development projects in general, shows uniformity which is clearly in line with what is stated in the IEEA Statutory Instrument 21 of 2010, the Deeds of Trust, ZimAsset Document and the ZANU PF Election Manifesto of 2013. This uniformity in approach raises questions about whether local communities really had a choice in deciding on development project priorities and needs. The study by Tembo (2003) would lend support to this question, as he asserts that a uniformity in development projects from one province, district, ward and village to another might be a result of the top-down nature of participation. In districts where consultations were held by CSOT Board members, the only choice that people had was to simply choose projects from a list of pre-planned development projects or those foisted on them against their own preferences (Machinya, 2014; Mawowa, 2013).

While the MYIEE and the CSOT Trustees say that they want people to decide on the types of projects which are in line with their priorities, are they not also contradicting themselves by ‘obscuring their own participation in participation’ or by producing what Kapoor (2005:1206) further terms ‘canned laughter’? This seems to imply that both the Ministry and the CSOT Board are participating in their own participation (Kapoor, 2005). They say local communities are

participating in the decision-making processes, yet they are the ones who are participating more by pre-determining the development interventions. While the MYIEE and Trusts say that they are calling for the interests and needs of the communities to come first, they have drawn up a list/set of project areas from which these communities are supposed to choose. Makanza and Makanza (2014) noted that, of the 13 objectives laid out in most Deeds of Trusts, much emphasis was given to infrastructural development while paying lip-service to livelihoods and enterprise development. The GoZ says its development policy is aimed at ensuring broad based participation of all Zimbabweans in the mainstream economy through the provision of social and economic infrastructure. However, one might question whether such participation is genuine, especially when the MYIEE and the Trustees of the CSOTs predetermine the types of projects that local communities are supposed to choose from.

Keough (1998:187) asserts that participatory development can be a manipulative tool to engage people in pre-determined processes. A senior officer at the Harare offices of the MYIEE argued that:

The government has a right to come up with a blueprint on the types of projects to be implemented in rural areas and the IEEA gives a rough plan of the types of development interventions our Ministry expects to see carried out in line with ZimAsset. The RDCs are in a better position to know what is good for rural communities in terms of development initiatives as prescribed by central government (Interview, Emmanuel, 10/10/2016).

Another Ministry official remarked that:

A framework to guide the types of projects to be carried out in rural areas is necessary since government also has the legitimate right to design sound development policies for rural communities. In addition, if the rural masses are allowed to decide on the types of projects they want they might end up choosing projects which are not in line or in tandem with the national development goals of government (Interview, Darlington, 11/10/2016).

The second official's explanation brings out a very interesting observation. The 'government', to which the official is referring, is one in which ZANU PF has overall control. Consequently, there is strong willpower to push through ZANU PF policies especially as spelt out in the party manifestos and other development-oriented party documents. The argument is valid when one looks at the contents of the 2013 ZANU PF election manifesto and ZimAsset, a ZANU PF brainchild on economic growth and infrastructural development. What is clear in these documents is that the party's major goal is to embark on extensive rural development initiatives which would see the provision of schools, hospitals and health care services; development projects such as the construction of dams, drilling of boreholes and construction of roads as well



as the establishment of projects which seek to empower rural communities. This can best be done through CSOTs which are managed by officials who, as I show below, are ‘religiously’ loyal to ZANU PF.

## **6.6 Participation of community members in ZvCSOT development interventions**

Given the significance of participatory approaches outlined in the PPM, Deed of Trust and other official documents (brochures and booklets) and statements (made by CSOT advocates), the ZvCSOT has also made claims that it is ‘committed’ to the participation of local communities in deciding on the types of development projects that they want to see being implemented in their localities. The NIEEB (2014:21) asserts that Chiefs in Zvimba district are ‘at the heart of community participation’ in as far as CSOT development projects are concerned. As a matter of fact, this claim echoes an embodiment of participatory development. During an interview with a journalist from *The Patriot* newspaper, Chief Zvimba maintained that:

CSOTs are meant to develop communities in consultation with the owners of the Trust, those people in the community. We don’t impose projects on the people that is why we emphasize on the need to have people-oriented development (Golden Guvamatanga, 2014:7).

In the above quote, Chief Zvimba is suggesting that ZvCSOT is people-centred in terms of decision-making processes. He is refuting that the ZvCSOT Board predetermines development projects, but is claiming that it comes up with development interventions that are guided by needs assessments. In the same quote, there is also an assertion of creating an enabling participatory environment where community members are able to give their input regarding any development intervention.

The Zimplats M-N-C-Z-CSOT Brochure (2015) also claims that the local communities are in a position to select development priorities of their choice. The Brochure asserts that ‘Communities in Zvimba District identified projects that would benefit them that were to be funded by the CSOT’ (Zimplats M-N-C-Z-CSOT Brochure, 2015: iv). This quote professes that ZvCSOT engages community members in development projects of their choice. The claim further suggests that community members have a right to choose their own preferred socio-economic and enterprise development needs which the CSOT then supports. Clearly, the official stance is that the ZvCSOT operates in a participatory way.

Given the above participatory claims of ZvCSOT by Chief Zvimba and the Zimplats M-N-C-Z-CSOT Brochure, it was important to find out more from community members about these claims. Similarly, it was also significant to probe the authenticity of the claims made by some

CSOT as well as government officials on whether CSOT development projects in Zvimba were wholly informed by the priorities identified by community members themselves. In order to determine the authenticity of these claims, I interviewed and conducted focus groups with a variety of community members including youth, ordinary women and men, teachers, village heads and councillors. Of the above participants, 57 out of 60 (95%) categorically stated that ZvCSOT never engaged them in project conceptualization or planning. Three out of 60 (5%) said they were invited to a meeting where they were simply briefed by the Trustees on the projects the Trust had implemented in the district as well as those the Trustees were going to carry out in the future. The feedback coming from all participants (60/60 or 100%) was that Zvimba CSOT was not fully participatory. They suggested that nearly all socio-economic development projects covering health care, education, water, sanitation and other services had been foisted on them by the Trust. No needs-based assessments involving communities were ever carried out. In all focus groups, participants indicated that the CSOT had never consulted them in the selection of development projects. Some of the participants (13/60 or 21.7%) indicated that they had assisted with their labour during the construction or refurbishment of classroom blocks, teachers and nurses' houses and clinics. However, the directive had come from school heads, councillors or village heads. A councillor pointed out that:

To be honest with you my brother, I don't know how the Board came up with the decision to help refurbish the clinic in my ward. They only communicate with us when they want us and village heads to mobilise communities in supplying their labour. A councillor friend of mine was told by a senior CSOT Board member that he was too junior to question him on how the Board selected projects for wards or villages (Interview, Councillor, 01/12/2016).

Tanyaradzwa, an unemployed university graduate, pointed out that:

As a village, we have never been called to attend any CSOT meeting as to give our own views on the types of projects we want. They think we are backward and we cannot think for ourselves. Who better understands the terrible misgivings of exclusion than us the excluded? Who suffer the effects of exclusion more than us the excluded? Who can best understand the necessity of inclusion other than us the excluded? We feel betrayed by our own local leaders (Interview, Tanyaradzwa, 01/12/2016).

Freire (1974) argues that, no matter how ignorant a community was assumed to be, if given the chance through a dialogical encounter, it would be capable of looking at issues in an informed and critical way. Advocates of participatory development share this view, believing that community members (no matter their level of education) know what they want in terms of development interventions, and that those at the top need to engage them in dialogue in order to

capture their views. The Zvimba community also has a right to identify development challenges they confront and to be given the chance, through dialogue and not exclusion, to come up with development priorities of their own, not those foisted on them by the CSOT Trustees. For Brighton, a local teacher:

The CSOT Board members are expected to learn to say the truth. I do not remember a day such consultations ever took place in my village. A country can fall into the abyss because those who are in leadership positions are not honest. The Zvimba Board members have a lot of soul searching to do (Interview, Brighton, 10/12/2016).

The findings detailed above suggest that the decision-making process of the Trust has remained the preserve of the Trustees. The Board determines development interventions for rural communities. It may be that the Trustees assume that they are better placed to come up with sound decisions that can help empower the poor and ‘illiterate’ rural villagers as suggested by some of the DA’s narratives in the above sections. However, these actions, as in Brighton’s narrative, clearly deprive rural communities of the opportunity to decide for themselves what they really want in terms of development projects. Brighton’s account, just like that of many other respondents interviewed, brings to the fore the pertinent issue that the local communities in Zvimba are not amused at all by merely seeing infrastructural development interventions taking place in their district without them also participating in the selection of some of these development projects.

A former Trustee, who was in attendance when the ZvCSOT Board discussed borehole sites, pointed out that ‘[d]uring one of the meetings we held in August 2015, all Trustees were urged to identify borehole sites in areas where it was thought there was need’. This evidence is further corroborated in the minutes of the August Board meeting of 2015. When further questioned if they had carried out need assessment meetings in wards or villages so as to come up with genuine cases of communities which needed such assistance, he/she said that ‘[w]e relied much on RDC records as well as what we already knew from the areas we come from’ (Interview, Edward, 03/12/2016). In some studies, it was observed that there were situations where RDC project banks would be used by CSOT Trustees in identifying development projects on behalf of community members (Makanza and Makanza, 2014). Time changes and so do people’s priorities and development needs. New assessments are needed in order to capture the current development needs and priorities of the local communities, rather than using some ‘outdated’ or ‘dust gathering’ RDC development interventions from project banks.

When the research team further probed a focus group in Chimanikire Village whether they had been consulted by the Trust to select development projects that best appealed to them, they said that such consultations had never taken place. In a separate interview, village head/*sabhuku* Tichaguta stressed that:

‘*Mwanangu*’ [My child] who do you give these suggestions to when no one from the CSOT Board ever consults anyone in this village about such issues? Can you say these things to yourself and won’t people start doubting your sanity saying that something must have snapped inside you? All these people gathered here do not know which office they can actually go to in order to seek for assistance (Interview, *Sabhuku* Tichaguta, 01/12/2016).

The local communities in Chimanikire, Hlohla, Madzorera and Mutongerwa Villages as well as at Murombedzi and Jari Business Centres have remained perpetual observers and mere by-standers as the CSOT seems to shun them completely from participating in the decision-making processes. During focus group interactions, some community members requested that their councillor organize a meeting with chief Zvimba so that he explains on how CSOT funds were being disbursed. Such demands point to the argument that community members are not only interested in the products being offered by the CSOTs, but they very much want to be consulted through needs assessment meetings in order for them to also decide on development projects that best suit them. The irony is that ward councillors are not members of the Board, and one councillor interviewed claimed that most of them only came to know about these development interventions during the implementation phase. In Chapter 3, it was noted that decentralization initiatives could be effective if elected local government representatives were answerable and responsive to the needs of community members who elected them into office. In the ZvCSOT case as well as other CSOTs found in Zimbabwe; these elected representatives are not part of the Board of Trustees. The Trustees who wield much of the power in the Boards are the delegated central government representatives.

From our observations and the responses coming from the focus groups and other individuals interviewed, it became clear that the communities had lost confidence in the ZvCSOT, preferring the services of some NGOs in the district which were engaged in infrastructure development initiatives. The focus groups were not quite aware of how best they could also get assistance from the Trust. The problem was that the ZvCSOT Trustees have kept the Trust’s operations shrouded in secrecy in terms of project conceptualization and planning. A key informant said:

The locals are increasingly becoming impatient and agitated by the inability of the Zvimba CSOT Board to consult various stakeholders concerning development projects that meet the community's stated priorities and changing needs (Interview, Christopher, 13/02/2017).

This comment was supported by the fact that 47 out of 60 (78%) participants generally argued that the Trust needed to respond better and faster to the current needs of the community through extensive needs assessment exercises. The major argument was that community members were quite capable of expressing their development needs in their own way.

DA Tizora gives a different perspective to that given by the majority of respondents as he argues that:

In 2015, they [the Trust] called for a stakeholders meeting in order to brief the local communities on what was going on as regards Trust activities. The two chiefs, village heads, councilors, the business community, the CEO of Zimplats Mhondoro-Ngezi-Chegutu-Zvimba were all in attendance (Interview, DA Tizora, 28/11/2016).

Despite the claims made by the DA that the ZvCSOT Trustees had called a meeting to discuss various development interventions with stakeholders, a village head who also attended the same meeting had this to say:

The meeting was attended by 34 village heads, some headmen and the two chiefs. They told us of various projects which had been set up for implementation. We were simply told what they wanted us to know not for them to hear what we also wanted to say. No ordinary community member was invited, and it was specifically a meeting where they were telling us [village heads and headmen] on projects which they intended to implement and those that they had already implemented. The meeting was simply top-down (Interview, Sabhuku KZ, 01/12/2016).

Building on the above, it can be noted that in participatory development literature, scholars such as Mansuri and Rao (2013) are opposed to situations where local communities are required to undertake pre-planned development projects. Still less do they support situations where only a few individuals have a final say in the selection of development projects. These scholars call for situations where both development agents and local communities dialogue on relevant development interventions. From the many narratives coming from respondents in the study, it is quite clear that community members were very interested in deciding on development projects of their choice rather than having them decided on their behalf by the ZvCSOT Board. Research participants whose schools had received donations of furniture and bags of cement from ZvCSOT stated that they had never asked for such assistance. Several respondents who were privy to what actually transpired highlighted that school heads were instructed to come and collect cement at Murombedzi Business Centre. This was more of a directive from the RDC than

anything else. The Trustees did not call for a meeting to discuss with the school heads their development needs. The interview with the Zvimba DA was quite revealing (especially what he says in the end of the conversation). He stressed that:

What we did was to ask schools to furnish us with information on existing construction problems they were facing. We asked them to give us the number of bags [cement] that they would require to help them address their problem. We never told them that we had 6 000 bags of cement. We allocated the cement accordingly. It was not done through a consultative process (Interview, DA Tizora, 28/11/2016).

As indicated in the above quote, the CSOT Trustees, using their own discretion or information from their project banks, simply picked on schools they unilaterally assessed to be in need of assistance without actually receiving any requests from the said beneficiaries. Noteworthy is that most projects which came from the project bank were those which tended to serve the interests of local government and not those of community members, as the majority of schools repaired were those owned by the RDC. Farai stressed that ‘had we been consulted we would have requested for income-generating projects rather than the cement and furniture they gave us’ (Interview, Farai, 12/12/2016). While the material supplied to schools and clinics was put to good use by the authorities in charge of these institutions (as verified through the observation of development sites), the most important thing that the ZvCSOT Trustees could have done was to consult various stakeholders in the local community on the type of assistance with which they wanted their school to be funded, rather than just imposing it on them. This might be one major reason why some locals were not concerned much or grateful towards what ZvCSOT had done in their area. A respondent at Murombedzi Business Centre explained that:

Construction of Murombedzi Secondary School blocks was the effort and dedication of the parents who contributed the money to buy all the roofing material as well as supplying bricks, sand, concrete and their labour. The CSOT only gave us bags of cement and I cannot specifically say they are the ones who were solely responsible for the construction of these blocks. That would be a lie (Interview, Chenai, 02/12/2016).

**Figure 4: Murombedzi Secondary School which received cement from ZvCSOT for the completion of the construction of 1x2 classroom block**



Evidence coming from individuals and focus groups also show that the ZvCSOT Trustees did not consult the local community to identify their development needs and priorities. All those who were interviewed or participated in focus groups, including the three chiefs interviewed, professed that they had not been asked to give their views or opinions on development challenges they were facing in their communities and also how best to overcome them. Some of those interviewed showed a complete lack of programme ownership, commitment and appreciation of what the ZvCSOT was doing in terms of development initiatives. However, 15 out of 60 (25%) said that they appreciated what the Trust was doing though they still insisted that it was supposed to involve communities in the project conceptualization and planning stages.

Overall, 50 out of 60 (83%) respondents highlighted that they were in the dark concerning their role in the Trust. As far as ordinary people's experiences go, CSOTs were perceived as just another government (ZANU PF) or local government programme. The participants did not see themselves as the owners of the CSOTs. A respondent in ZvCSOT Focus Group A said: 'My understanding of CSOTs is that they are projects which are being brought to us by our ZANU PF party' (ZvCSOT Focus Group A, 09/01/2017). This response was unanimously agreed upon by participants present. In ZvCSOT Focus Group D, the response from one participant which was agreed upon by the whole group was that 'President Robert Mugabe and his ZANU PF government are the owners of CSOTs' (Focus Group D, 12/01/2017). In Focus Group C, Rumbidzai said, '[t]he RDC and DA worked hard to bring the CSOT to Zvimba District' (Rumbidzai – Focus Group C, 29/11/2016). When asked who owns the CSOTS, there

were divergent views, but not a single respondent suggested that the community themselves are the owners of the Trust. These perceptions expose the top-down nature of the ZvCSOT. Shamiso, sounding a bit surprised, said:

In fact, I actually thought that these are just ordinary government projects which are decided for us by technocrats in high offices. To be honest, I had no idea that we are the beneficiaries of the Trust and as such, we have a right to be consulted in terms of selecting development projects (Interview, Shamiso, 01/12/2016).

A major finding is that ZvCSOT Trustees were not responsive to the development needs of the wards and villages they were intended to serve. The Trust failed to engage honestly with community members. From the perspective of advocates of participatory development, communities should decide on CSOT projects since they are on the ground every day and they are better placed to know about the type of development projects needed for their specific area. The significance of consulting local communities in development interventions is repeatedly endorsed in official documents such as the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment (General) Regulations 2010, the Community Share Ownership Trust PPM 2014, and the various CSOTs Deeds of Trusts. However, effective participation in the Zvimba district has remained elusive and the impact of elite capture remains a persistent obstacle to meaningful bottom-up decision-making, as further discussed in the following sub-section where I discuss youth and women projects.

#### **6.6.1 Youth and Women's Participation in ZvCSOT Development Interventions**

To cater for the needs of youth and women in the district, ZvCSOT set aside US\$ 1,333,333.00 million for income-generating projects. Of this amount, US\$ 333,333.00 was specifically earmarked for youth and women income generating projects (M-NCZCSOT Expenditure Report, 2014). This was a loan revolving fund to enable a number of youth and women in the district to start income generating projects.

The CSOT Policy and Procedures Manual (discussed in Chapter 5) also makes the participation of women and youth in CSOT development interventions one of its central concerns. In Section 4 paragraph 4.1, the PPM unequivocally states that the beneficiaries of CSOTs include youth and women among other groups and, in paragraph 4.2, the CSOT Board is compelled at all times to act in the best interests of all its beneficiaries. It is envisaged that CSOTs can promote rural development by facilitating participation in economic activities within local communities especially among the youth and women (NIEEB, 2014). It was therefore



imperative to find out from women and young people in Zvimba district if their CSOT was participatory by involving them in development initiatives especially those concerning income generating projects.

To do so, interviews were conducted with ZANU PF youth, youth in focus groups A and B, youth in the villages and at Murombedzi Business Centre, individual women in the villages, and older and younger women in focus groups C and D. In their responses on whether they had been involved in some of the CSOT's projects and also benefitted from them, 35 out of 40 (87.5%) of the above participants indicated that they had not been consulted by the CSOT at any given time regarding income-generating projects or any other project carried out by the CSOT. Participants were aware of some development interventions carried out by the CSOT but were not aware that they were supposed to be involved in such processes, including in any CSOT income-generating projects. The elderly and younger women in focus groups C and D were all in agreement that the CSOT did not carry out any needs assessments in their area. Women in the villages also pointed out that no project conceptualization phase had ever taken place for both income-generating projects and the other development interventions which took place in some villages. A younger woman in focus group D said, if they had done consultations, she would have requested for funds to open a hair salon at Murombedzi Business Centre since she claimed to be an expert in hair braiding. Ordinary youth in the villages and at Murombedzi Business Centre indicated that they were not aware of any income generating projects being funded by the CSOT. I will highlight some of these perspectives. Andrew says:

*Mukoma* [Brother], you can only benefit from these ZANU PF projects if you are a well-known supporter of the party. No ordinary youth can ever benefit from such projects. We have been excluded from countless youth projects but those whom we know to be staunch party supporters have always benefitted (Interview, Andrew, 09/12/2016).

Lucia laughs it off by saying:

In my life time, I will never dream of benefitting from these ZANU PF projects. There are always those who are more ZANU PF than others *mukoma* [brother]. Those who have 'pure ZANU blood' that runs in their veins and not us *tunhunzi* [houseflies] (Interview, Lucia, 02/12/2016).

Rwizi is not even aware that the Zvimba CSOT consulted youth on development projects. Sounding both surprised and confused he says to the research team:

I don't know anything about the youth projects you are talking about, *mukoma* [brother]. These projects are shrouded in secrecy. I cannot imagine that I live here at Murombedzi Centre but this is actually news to me. The ZANU PF guys at the top and the youth who are close to them are the only ones who always benefit from such projects (Interview, Rwizi, 09/12/2016).

Andrew, Lucia and Rwizi's narratives among many others (35/40) indicated that they were not benefitting from Trust funds. Those who are in the know and are likely going to benefit from Trust funds are not just ordinary card-carrying ZANU PF members as underlined in the above accounts, but rather those very active in day to day ZANU PF politics. Only 5 out of 40 (12.5%) participants (the active youths) pointed out that consultations had taken place and they were looking forward to benefitting from the income-generating projects. However, some ZANU PF youth were totally opposed to the imposition of projects by the CSOT Trustees as will be discussed below.

Documents from DA Tizora's office show that a total of 48 projects for both youth and women went through the first phase of approval for CSOT funding. These included mining, poultry, piggery, cattle fattening, manufacturing, maize growing, horticulture, a driving school, vending, peanut butter production, clearing and freight services and bee keeping. The total expenditure for these projects was estimated at US\$ 262,433.90. From the minutes of the ZvCSOT Board meetings, the horticulture project was seen by the Board as not viable without irrigation. Because of the elitist nature of the CSOT Board, there is a high possibility that this information was never communicated back to both individuals and groups who had forwarded the horticultural proposals.

A ZANU PF youth group whose project had been accepted for funding by the Zvimba CSOT Board but was yet to receive the funds came up with a revealing narrative. They openly admitted that they had come to know about CSOT youth projects thanks to their active participation in ZANU PF political processes. One of the youth said:

We heard about these funds from a CSOT Board member who has a post in our party [ZANU PF]. He told us to come up with viable project proposals so that we could be funded by the CSOT. We discussed these things at one of the offices at the RDC (Interview, ZANU PF Youth, 01/12/2016).

However, two ZANU PF youth indicated that in their initial project proposals they had requested for equipment to carry out artisanal mining, while the other youth said their group had proposed equipment to engage in peanut butter production. The Trust turned their proposals down and promised to include them in a poultry project that the Board had suggested in one of its meetings.

The first ZANU PF youth argued that:

Some like us were interested in artisanal mining and so we needed equipment to carry out these activities. Others were interested in piggery, carpentry, metal work, market gardening and so on. However, the CSOT insisted that our group carry out a poultry project which it sees as being

quite viable. They decide what projects the youth and women in the District should undertake while ignoring the projects that we are really interested in carrying out (Interview, ZANU PF Youth, 01/12/2016).

The other ZANU PF youth simply said:

If you are not free to choose a project of your choice how can you say you have been empowered. We want to start our own projects which will guarantee us a sustainable livelihood rather than being mere employees of the CSOT (Interview, ZANU PF Youth, 01/12/2016).

While the above two youths and the groups they represented were to benefit from a CSOT project, the underlying problem was that the poultry project was being foisted on them by the Trust. The two youth and the groups that they represented were reduced to implementers of predetermined development interventions. In addition, though the DA and the RDC CEO had claimed that messages were sent to all villages in the district pertaining to youth project proposals, the evidence on the ground totally contradicted their claims.

The research team also probed some youth about whether they had been consulted by the youth representative on the ZvCSOT Board. The youth representative is tasked to represent all the youth in a district made up of 35 wards. However, a major problem, as noted by some youth, is that ‘his appointment was done in a partisan way’ (ZvCSOT Focus Group B Interview, 21/11/2016). This implied that his nomination was done in favour of ZANU PF political party. Evidence from the minutes of the Board meetings show that a MYIEE representative, who is a Trustee within the Zvimba CSOT Board, was tasked by other Trustees to identify a person of ‘sound’ character who would represent youth as and when necessary. Arguably, this clearly meant that he would use his own discretion in selecting a youth representative. From an obvious perspective, he chose a youth aligned to ZANU PF as claimed by respondents in the focus group. The only criterion used was whether the person was a ‘strong’ supporter of ZANU PF or not.

It becomes hard for youth affiliated to other political parties to meaningfully participate in CSOT development projects or, worse still, to be considered for the post of youth representative. Besides the partisanship that surrounds the appointment of the youth representative, his position in the CSOT Board is also heavily compromised. As one ZANU PF youth retorted:

Our youth leader is useless; he is weak and is a stooge of the seasoned board members. He has not yet consulted the majority of youth in the District as to capture their development needs (Interview, ZANU PF Youth, 01/12/2016).

The youth representative is at the mercy of the senior Board members' preferences. Most development needs concerning the youth (as evidenced in the minutes of the Board meetings) are hardly, or never, deliberated upon or brought forward in CSOT Board meetings by their youth representative.

From the views given by 35 out of 40 (87.5%) participants, made up of young people and women, there was an expression of total ignorance about development opportunities offered by the ZvCSOT. Only 5 out of 40 (12.5%) participants (the five who were aligned to ZANU PF) admitted that they had submitted proposals, some of which had been approved and were now waiting for funding. Though 12.5% may sound low, it could be argued that one would not expect all young people in an area to submit proposals. Even if the call was distributed in a very open way, one would not anticipate that a large number of people would put forward proposals. However, Zvimba CSOT Board can be said to be actually discouraging genuine youth and women participation in indigenisation and economic empowerment initiatives, due to the exclusionary nature of the programme based on one's political affiliation. Ironically, Mr. Patrick Zhuwao (the former Minister of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment), when asked during an interview by *The Herald* newspaper's senior reporter Tendai Mugabe on how his ministry would ensure that all Zimbabweans benefitted from indigenisation and economic empowerment programmes, stressed that:

... I am talking about the National Empowerment Strategy that goes down to the district level and really talks to every individual with regards to creating employment – not only creating employment but overcoming underemployment which is the much more significant problem that we have (Zhuwao, 2015:2).

Contrary to the former Minister's high hopes about indigenisation and economic empowerment, the Zvimba community's hopes and dreams of benefitting from the GoZ's touted indigenisation and economic empowerment programme have since turned into hopeless dreams, and any zeal and vigor to become fully empowered citizens is not evident. As shown in Chapter 5, the government's rhetoric about CSOTs suggests that these trusts support economic empowerment. However, there is little evidence on the ground of meaningful, participatory economic empowerment. Scholars such as Narayan (2002) have suggested that economic empowerment involves self-strength, control, self-power, self-reliance, own choice, and life of dignity in accordance with one's values, while Mansuri and Rao (2013:15) simply see it as the 'exercise of voice and choice'. One can therefore argue that ZANU PF's empowerment

programme is not genuinely according community members in Zvimba district ‘self-power, self-reliance’ and an exercise of voice and choice. The inadequacy of the participation of the Zvimba community in development projects can also be attributed to the desire for dominance and political control over rural areas by the ruling ZANU PF party and government in Zimbabwe. This desire has resulted in everything else being relegated to the periphery in preference for ZANU PF led and/or state led (beneficial to ZANU PF) community participation as further discussed in the section below.

### **6.7 Participatory development and the politicization of ZvCSOT projects**

Given that views from scholars such as Magure (2013, 2014), Nyamunda (2013,2016), Nciizah (2015), Raftopoulos (2013, 2014, 2015), Doroh (2012), Bloc (2011, 2012), Matyszak (2011, 2013, 2014, 2016) and many others have criticized the indigenization programme as only serving the interests of one political party (ZANU PF), it was important to probe the respondents (ZANU PF youths, ordinary youths, village heads, women, men, key informants, CSOT Board members, central and local government officials) for more information in that regard. Divergent views came out, with the dominant perspective being that both CSOTs and the indigenization programme were politicized, exclusionary and non-participatory. Aaron argued that:

CSOTs are a ZANU PF political strategy to maintain power in rural areas by enticing the rural electorate to vote for them. These Trusts are deeply entrenched in ZANU PF politics and to me their major purpose is to give ZANU PF a political advantage over other parties especially here in rural areas. Why would it put local government officials in such Boards, many of whom we know to be sympathetic to ZANU PF party? Neither are chiefs neutral, the majority of them are ZANU PF political appendages (Interview, Aaron, 06/12/2016).

In Aaron’s narrative, CSOTs are seen as election bait for rural communities. This view echoes observations made by Nciizah (2015) and Magure (2014) regarding the way that ZANU PF implements policies in terms of gaining support especially when heading towards elections. This is done through the introduction of populist economic policies, programmes, plans and projects. Among the respondents, there were some who did feel that the projects were beneficial, but their comments reveal that they regarded the projects as being ZANU PF initiatives rather than community-led initiatives. Some of the local community members had this to say:

ZANU PF has brought development to most villages in Zvimba through the good works of our CSOT. I am proud that my party has built schools, clinics and drilled boreholes using money which was once stolen from us by the big mining companies (Interview, Pengai, 07/12/2016).

For Ngoko:

My party comes first in everything. Look at all the projects they have carried out in Zvimba. The Western controlled MDC parties cannot do that for us, it can only be done by ZANU PF which has the poor people at heart (Interview, Ngoko, 07/12/2016).

And for Fundai:

I want to thank President R.G. Mugabe and our party ZANU PF for working hard to develop Zvimba district through the money which Zimplats owed us from the extraction of our resources. Soon, the party [through CSOTs], will be giving us money to start our own income generating projects (Interview, Fundai, 06/12/2016).

As seen in the narratives of Pengai, Ngoko and Fundai, these policies can appeal to some groups in society since they are perceived as the only way the party/government can take back wealth from ‘greedy’ Multinational Corporations (MNCs) in order to give it to its rightful owners, namely, the indigenous people. Fundai’s response links up to the issue I brought up earlier about how the CSOTs are seen as closely linked to ZANU PF rather than to the community itself. Ngoko’s response is quite telling. His response also resonates with Alexander and McGregor’s (2013) findings that ZANU PF’s control of resources has helped it to win votes in rural areas and to undermine the MDC-T, which has little or nothing to offer in terms of material rewards to rural communities.

Aaron observes that CSOT Board members are aligned to the ZANU PF party. Similarly, Pedzisai says ‘CSOTs are ZANU PF campaign tools. They concentrate on infrastructure development in order for rural people to return the favour by voting for them in the next election’ (Interview, Pedzisai, 06/12/2016). Their views are consistent with the earlier findings of Kurebwa (2015) and Ndakaripa (2015) which revealed that chiefs are used by ZANU PF for partisan politics. Likewise, the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (2012) also questions the involvement of chiefs in the implementation and administration of CSOTs arguing that most of them have a strong allegiance to ZANU PF party.

Out of the many participants’ views on whether CSOTs were inclusive, participatory, empowering and free from political biases, some gave one-word answers such as CSOTs are ‘political’ (‘exclusive’) or ‘apolitical’ (‘inclusive’) - without bothering to explain the reasons why they thought so. Others simply avoided the question by refocusing on previously asked questions. The 30 views which I finally selected for analysis were well-articulated responses, as exemplified by the views of Ngoko, Peter, Lazarus, Mary, Allan, Brian among many others. Thus, the selected 30 respondents constitute a sub-set of the other responses given. The views were selected from ZANU PF youth, youth in the villages and at Murombedzi Business Centre,

individual women and men in the villages, CSOT Trustees, village heads and government officials. Overall, 21 out of 30 respondents (70%) perceived the Trust to be an instrument for politicking rather than an avenue for genuine participation and empowerment. Some of these views are highlighted in subsequent paragraphs. Five out of 21 further argued that the Board members' development choices were not based on evidence on the ground, but they rather looked at development interventions from a ZANU PF point of view, which suggests that people were not consulted and that in at least some cases the projects were not in line with their preferences. In quite a few cases, people seemed to say that they were happy that the projects were being implemented, but that they had not been consulted. The development interventions appear to have been chosen on the basis of ZANU PF's preferences rather than through extensive consultation of local communities.

Thirteen out of 21 emphasized the politicization and exclusivity of ZvCSOT. These include the views of Aaron above and those of Peter, Lazarus, Mary, Allan, Brian and the village head among many others. Nine out of 30 (30%) viewed CSOTs as either being inclusive, participatory, empowering or free from political biases. These include the above three quotes from Ngoko, Fundai and Pengai; two government officials; a CSOT Board member whose views are discussed in subsequent paragraphs; an elderly participant; and two ZANU PF youth. During separate interviews, one of the ZANU PF youth asserted that 'the problem is with our MDC brothers who exclude themselves from Trust activities because they are opposed to anything our ZANU PF party does for the people' (Interview, ZANU PF youth, 01/12/2016).

Below, are some of the views regarding the partiality of ZvCSOT. I further present a case which shows some elements of political biases in the selection of CSOT project beneficiaries.

CSOTs are used to serve a ZANU PF political agenda. The CSOTs occupy a contradictory agenda *muzukuru* [cousin], for they are not only an avenue for rural development but are also used as a political leverage for ZANU PF. The more the Board members act like ZANU PF officials, the more their development initiatives serve ZANU PF development interests. The Zvimba CSOT has taken on the character of a political party. It is now more of an attachment of ZANU PF (Interview, Peter, 09/12/2016).

CSOTs are highly politicized. Sometimes, the politicization is detrimental to inclusive participation and the attainment of development goals. *Munin'ina* [young brother], I think Zvimba CSOT is supposed to be managed by impartial professionals who live within the four constituencies of the District. (Interview, Lazarus, 09/12/2016).

The problem, *mukoma* [big brother] is that for you to benefit from these Trusts you are expected to know someone who knows someone who also knows someone influential in the Zvimba CSOT

Board or the Ministry of Indigenization. This means you have to be politically connected. The whole indigenization process stinks (Interview, Mary, 07/12/2016).

In Mary's account, for one to benefit from any CSOT project, one needs to first seek for favours from those who are related or attached to those in the Board or MYIEE. Participation under such conditions is very selective and exclusionary. Some can swim forward (the minority) while the rest (majority) are left to drown. For instance, the 2016 Constituency Profiles (for Zvimba North, South, East and West) show that the District has a total number of 260 615 people and of these 190 500 are youth and women. Yet out of a district with 35 wards, only five groups benefitted from a chicken layers' project.

According to information gathered from a key informant, these included one male adult D (who does not fit in the women and youth category), a youth group, and three women's groups. Of the three women groups, one group is not on the list of the 48 applicants who were supposed to get funding for various income generating projects. The other two women groups who got the layers are relatives of the Mugabe family and they live in Kutama Village, the same area where Robert Mugabe came from. The poultry project was named Sabina Mugabe in memory of the former Indigenisation Minister's late mother who was a young sister to former President Robert Mugabe. That in itself says much about the biases in selection of beneficiaries, which depends much on how closely related to or well-connected one is with those who are powerful. The same women's group is also said to have been helped by the Trust to access a loan for a fishery project.

**Figure 5: Layer's Project funded by the ZvCSOT**





The beneficiaries of the layer's project consisted of three groups from ward 1, and two groups from ward 3. This shows a gross misrepresentation of the wards in the district. A key informant who benefitted from the poultry project said:

I had to bulldoze my way, threatening some of the CSOT Board members that I would raise the issue at the ZANU PF Headquarters in Harare. I was not interested in the chicken layer project but at times you just accept these projects or you will completely lose out (Follow up Interview, Christopher, 13/08/2017).

The above key informant is an empowered community member who is close to ZANU PF and so likewise he illegitimately benefitted from the poultry project by threatening to report the ZvCSOT Trustees to the ZANU PF headquarters. The selection of the above individuals, out of a population of almost 190 500 youth and women, shows the deep networks of ZANU PF patronage politics. It also shows the exclusiveness of ZvCSOT income generating projects. The five beneficiaries of the chicken layer project are not ordinary youth and women living in the district but are strong ZANU PF supporters, some of whom are well-connected to the Trustees. The majority of those in the district are not even aware that the CSOT helps fund poultry projects. It is therefore difficult to see how these projects could be categorized as genuine youth and women economic empowerment.

From the foregoing case and narratives, it can be noted that politics dominates the discourse on CSOTs. These findings to a large extent help to explain why Zvimba CSOT is failing to be inclusive and participatory in its development interventions. Policies like the PPM were formulated but are only given lip-service due to political preferences. The accounts from the above participants show that there is significant politicization of government development projects leading to a heavy bias towards ZANU PF and its affiliated organs. A respondent consolidates the above findings by stressing that:

The problem my friend is that ZANU PF has adopted the chameleon survival strategy. Like a chameleon which changes colour to blend with any environment, the Party has taken the colour of the community and as the situation stands, it's hard to differentiate between the two. ZANU PF has permeated every aspect of community life to the extent that the community is now ZANU PF and ZANU PF is now the community. The political, economic and social environment smells ZANU PF. The party has polluted every facet of Zvimba life right from the DA, RDC and other Government offices to the ordinary man and woman in the village. The Party reigns supreme (Interview, Allan, 05/12/2016).

However, CSOT representatives denied that CSOTs are political. A Ministry of Indigenization official said:

CSOTs are apolitical. These projects are intended for all Zimbabweans irrespective of their political standing. We are a Ministry that serves every Zimbabwean. Our concern is not on politics, but on empowering indigenous Zimbabweans (Interview, Norma, 10/10/2016).

An official who works for the National Youth Council claimed that: ‘We represent all youth in Zimbabwe and we are not aligned to any political party. We encourage all youths to participate in CSOT development projects’ (Interview, Maxwell, 28/09/2016). A Board Member for the main CSOT board comprising of Mhondoro-Ngezi, Chegutu and Zvimba further claimed that:

Although CSOTs have their genesis in one political party, ZANU PF, they are now a legislated national programme and they serve the interests of all Zimbabweans regardless of their political affiliation. CSOTs are now part of government policy and as such they appeal to the whole nation than one political party (Interview, M-NCZCSOT Board Member, 16/11/16).

Though the above respondents, notably the M-NCZCSOT Board member and some MYIEE and ZYC officials, claimed that CSOTs were not politicized, their accounts were in total contrast to the accounts from both primary and secondary sources. In my findings and readings, CSOTs are quite selective and heavily politicized (Machinya, 2014). As discussed earlier, the composition of the Trustees was meant to appoint individuals with a strong allegiance to ZANU PF (Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, 2012; Matyszak, 2013; Kurebwa *et al.*, 2014; Kurebwa, 2015; Ndakaripa, 2015). According to Matyszak (2013:9) ‘the majority of ... Trustees are all government appointees suggesting that the ... Board of Trustees ... comprise[s] of mainly ZANU PF loyalists’.

The CSOTs were never meant to be independent bodies as far as development projects were concerned. In fact, as has been already stated all the senior members of the Board as well as those who represent specific interest groups are party members. Their loyalty is to ZANU PF first, the people second. When responding to a question on whether the ZvCSOT had consulted communities in identifying their development needs and priorities, DA Tizora highlighted that:

There is a political dimension to this. The CSOT came into being because of [ZANU PF] politics. So the [political] leaders, when they launched the CSOT in 2012, they expected the programmes to start there and then. We had to manage the pressure. We bought 6 000 bags of cement without consulting the community.... We thought it was wise to immediately address these issues owing to pressure that was coming specifically from the politicians (Interview, DA Tizora, 28/11/2016).

The politicians the DA is giving reference to are ZANU PF politicians. Thus, a respondent highlighted that:

Where resources and funds are typically administered or controlled by political party members or by persons designated by the party since the party is seen as the ‘spearhead’ of development, the

party is always closely associated with these development initiatives (Interview, Brian, 05/12/2016).

This shows a manipulation of public policies for political reasons. In Machinya's (2014) study of Zvishavane CSOT, he observed that ZANU PF was publicizing CSOTs at its political rallies. A village head stressed that:

At the CSOT meeting which I was invited to attend, ZANU PF slogans were being chanted now and again by those who were addressing us. Is it not that these *CSOTs ndee musangano* [CSOTs are ZANU PF programmes]? (Interview, Village head, 01/12/2016)

CSOTs can best be described as being theoretically independent of ZANU PF control but, in reality, they are typically guided by development initiatives found in the ZANU PF political manifestos. For instance, on pages 8 and 64 of the 2013 and 2018 ZANU PF election manifestos, CSOTs were referred to frequently. This seems to imply that ZANU PF's political and economic ideology also takes centre stage in the way CSOTs operate. Indeed, government policies often originate from a particular political party. The policy on CSOTs originated within ZANU PF and one can argue that it seems fair that the ruling party would champion it during their election campaigns. However, what has been unfair about this policy is that it has excluded opposition supporters from a supposedly government programme. It has largely favoured ZANU PF supporters in the allocation of the benefits that come from CSOTs.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

The chapter showed that the ZvCSOT does not promote the participation of community members in development interventions. Though projects had been carried out in Zvimba, these development interventions were not a true reflection of the communities' development preferences. The Trustees did not adequately consult community members through carrying out needs assessments. In Zvimba, needs assessments were never carried out. A few of the Trustees (local government officials and a specific chief) came up with most of the ideas on development projects implemented in the district. Some projects emanated from the RDC and DA's project banks. Other development interventions were also influenced by the development blueprints of the MYIEE, ZimAsset Document and the ZANU PF Election Manifesto of 2013. There were also some allegations of corruption and kickbacks against some Trustees in the Zvimba CSOT Board. As a result of these corrupt practices, money which could have been channelled towards more productive and people-centred interventions, such as the drilling of many boreholes in the

district as well as the revival of community gardens and irrigation schemes, was used to purchase road equipment which was not a major development priority for the district. Through a lack of transparency, accountability and inclusivity, boreholes were drilled at the homesteads of some Trustees. This disadvantaged many community members in dire need of water, or thus access to an essential resource. The current implementation of ZvCSOT's programmes and projects is highly politicized resulting in the marginalization of non-ZANU PF supporters. The Trustees were exclusively ZANU PF loyalists thus largely excluding non-ZANU PF members. As a result of such political biases, based on patronage orientations or political affiliations, ZvCSOT has lacked a broad-based and inclusive approach that involves the participation of community members (regardless of their political orientations) in its income generating projects.

This chapter and the previous one have looked at whether CSOTs practice participatory development. Having assessed the participatory practices (or the lack thereof) of the ZvCSOT, the study now shifts focus to NGOs and, in particular, to Caritas to see whether its practices are more participatory than those of the ZvCSOT.

## **CHAPTER 7: INTRODUCING CARITAS – NATIONAL, DISTRICT AND LOCAL STRUCTURES**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In the previous Chapter, the fieldwork results showed that ZvCSOT did little in involving people in needs assessment meetings and in decision-making processes. Since this study is a comparative analysis of the participatory practices of CSOTs and NGOs, the thesis now turns to look at the NGO in question, Caritas, which will form the focus of Chapters 7 and 8. Chapter 7 will give a general overview of the NGO under study and Chapter 8 will examine the extent to which Caritas practices participatory development. The Chapter begins with a general background of faith-based organizations since Caritas, the NGO under study, is a religious NGO. A history of the evolution of Caritas up to today is given. The Chapter then largely examines the work of Caritas with a major focus on its participatory endeavours.

### **7.2 An overview of faith-based organizations (FBOs)**

Among several million NGOs operating in the international system today, there are a number of NGOs that define themselves in religious terms (Berger, 2003). These organizations have been referred to as either ‘religious,’ ‘spiritual’ or ‘faith-based’ NGOs (Berger, 2003:15). Studies of faith-based NGOs have mostly been confined to Christian NGOs or organizations. The major reason for this has been that Christian NGOs have had an advantage over other world religions in that their funders are mostly Western industrialised countries.

Hefferan (2007), Berger (2003), Tomalin (2012) and Clarke and Ware (2015) point out that a precise definition of faith-based organizations is quite contestable. Hefferan (2007:888) argues that the term faith-based NGO is complicated as it covers a variety of organizations ‘with vastly different belief systems, funding channels, programming’. However, it still remains imperative to highlight what some authors have suggested as a possible working definition for FBOs which will also serve as a guide in defining Zimbabwean faith-based development NGOs in this Chapter. According to Hefferan (2007:889), faith-based development NGOs are made up of a wide range of organizations that link religion (whether Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, or others) with development. Others such as Berger (2003:16) see them as ‘formal organizations whose identity and mission are ... derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions’. Clarke and Ware (2015:40) identify them as organizations that can be ‘distinguished through their affiliation with a religious structure, doctrine or community’

(Clarke and Ware, 2015:40). In the above definitions, there is a common emphasis on religious beliefs or teachings. Clarke and Ware (2015) observe that some FBOs are directly linked to a religious body and are formally incorporated within the religious body; others are directly linked to a religious body, but independent organizationally; and yet others have no formal association with a particular religious body but are motivated by a broad religious tradition.

FBOs can be correctly understood as a sub-category of NGOs in that the work that they carry out is similar to that of secular NGOs. What differentiates FBOs from secular NGOs is that the former employ some religious guidelines which greatly influence how they carry out their development work. Faith-based development NGOs are religiously focused in their development approaches and do not separate religion from development interventions. Bornstein sums it all when she says that for FBOs:

Religious beliefs inform the ways that economic development projects are received, interpreted, and accepted in specific social and historical contexts. Religious beliefs also inform the ways in which development projects are constructed by [faith-based] development organizations. They inform the way development is planned, conceptualized, motivated and instituted (Bornstein, 2005:2).

Faith-based employees synthesize the principles of faith and material advancement in their development initiatives (Hefferan, 2007). First, just like secular NGOs, they act as development agencies that seek to improve the lives of the poor rural communities. Second, unlike secular NGOs, they are religious establishments which seek to propagate their religious beliefs amongst those they assist. As Berger (2003:19) explains, faith-based NGOs identify themselves in religious terms and ‘their mission and operations are guided by a concept of the divine and recognition of the sacred nature of human life’. Berger is suggesting that religious values are dominant in the development work carried out by faith-based NGOs.

What motivates the activities of Christian-based NGOs is the Gospel of Jesus Christ with its major focus on lessening of human suffering and fostering justice in the world. Faith-based NGOs see development as a means of achieving social justice and human dignity. Thus, development encompasses ‘the whole person: the full human, material and spiritual’ (Bornstein, 2005:49). Similarly, Hefferan (2007) contends that Christian development attempts to address two types of poverty: material and spiritual poverty. FBOs perceive development as not only concerning material gains for the beneficiaries as secular NGOs do, but also involving the spiritual whole-being of an individual.

Caritas, which is affiliated to the Catholic church, is correctly understood as being an FBO. In the sections below, I introduce Caritas as well as how it carries out its charity/development work.

### **7.3 Evolutionary background of Caritas Zimbabwe**

Caritas, the NGO under study has gone through three major changes right from its inception in 1972 up to its present state today. Driven by compassion for marginalised Africans in colonial Rhodesia, Catholic Bishops motivated by their religious conviction based on equality among all mankind decided to come up with an organization that would provide basic services for poor Africans. The faith-based NGO did not cease operations when Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, but continued with its work. The evolutionary stages which the NGO has gone through have been as a result of the Catholic Church's shifts in approach, in line with the changes within the international development landscape discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Below, I analyse the various changes the NGO has gone through, right from its genesis to the present day.

#### **7.3.1 Commission for Social Service and Development (CSSD)**

Caritas Zimbabwe, which is a faith-based NGO, was 'established by the Rhodesia Bishops' Conference in 1972 and from the onset the organization defined itself as an arm of the Catholic Church' (Jerie 2010:219). According to Mr Christopher Mweembe (the national Caritas coordinator):

Caritas was established as a development initiative which responded to the emergency situation that prevailed at that time of the liberation war. By then, it was known as the Commission for Social Service and Development [CSSD]. (Interview, Mr. Mweembe, 24/10/2016).

CSSD, a predecessor to Caritas, came about during the difficult pre-independence period during which there was little effective service delivery to black Zimbabweans. It is from this background that we see the Rhodesian Catholic Bishops coming up with the Commission for Social Service and Development (CSSD). It was a 'commission' in the sense that it had a 'responsibility', 'duty', 'assignment' or 'task' to look at the service delivery and development concerns of the socially excluded and economically disenfranchised Africans. Bornstein (2005:13) rightly asserts that the situation in Rhodesia 'brought a crisis of consciousness to the mission churches, which for years had seen themselves as advocates of Africans.'

The Bishops were inclined to side with the majority Africans because the Church had been influenced by the 'personal histories' of Bishops and priests, 'especially those who had

experience of colonialism or fascism' (Dorman, 2003:78). Similarly, the Church's social teachings, especially on themes of human dignity, solidarity and charity work, also had an influence on these Bishops. Dorman (2003) notes that, in 1972, the Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace (CCJP) was formed by the Rhodesian Catholic Bishops as a way of documenting the abuses or atrocities being perpetrated on the Black population by the Ian Smith government. In the same year, the Bishops formed the CSSD in order to address the social developmental needs of the Black population. CSSD was founded with the purpose of carrying out community development and humanitarian work involving politically, socially and economically disenfranchised Zimbabweans, their families and communities in order to improve on their economic and social conditions as well as to consolidate their appreciation of the Gospel.

The above developments did not take place in a vacuum, but were as a result of various Catholic documents, statements, decrees, and papal letters. These many Catholic documents, statements, decrees, and papal letters offer key arguments that I find useful in explaining why the CSSD had to be formed in 1972 by the Rhodesia Catholic Bishops Conference. First and foremost, the Second Vatican Council of 7 December 1965 came up with a declaration which they termed *Ad gentes* in reference to Jesus' appeal to the apostles to go forth to preach the Gospel to the world. This proclamation came to be defined as the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church. The Vatican Council exhorted the Catholic Church to commit itself to spreading the gospel of Christ (evangelization) as well as to carry out charity work for the less fortunate. These were established as the fundamental goals of the church (*Ad gentes - Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, 1965*). According to McGregor *et al.* (2012:1132):

The Vatican II Reforms of 1962–65 saw a move to addressing modern social, economic and political problems. The Church re-emphasised social justice issues such as the increasing marginalization of the world's poor and oppressed, the protection of human rights, and liberation from injustice.

Four years later in 1969, we then witness the establishment of the Rhodesia Catholic Bishops Conference (RCBC). The formation of the RCBC had among other things been precipitated by the Church's need to spread the Gospel, encourage Christian worship and religious teaching as well as to provide social services (charity work) to the majority economically alienated Africans.



It was in 1971 that the Synod of Bishops, which had been established by the Second Vatican Council, began to put more focus on issues of justice and human dignity concentrating specifically on developing countries (including Rhodesia). The Vatican Bishops came up with a report entitled *Justice in the World* where they proclaimed that development and human dignity could only be achieved through participation of people in economic, political and social spheres (Gremillion, 1976). The Bishops highlighted that: 'The right to development must be seen as a dynamic interpenetration of all those fundamental human rights upon which the aspirations of individuals and nations are based' (Gremillion, 1976:516). The Vatican Bishops' argument was that, since man is created in the 'image of God', this 'signifies that each person is entitled to a decent and dignified living' (Oladipo, 2001:223).

A year later in 1972, Pope Paul VI in his letter to the Secretary-General of the UN declared that '[t]he Church feels wounded in her own person whenever a man's rights are disregarded or violated, whoever he is and whatever it is about' (Refoulé, 1979:77). This statement's major focus was on countries which were still under the colonial yoke (for example Rhodesia, South West Africa and South Africa) and those experiencing dictatorship (especially some Latin American, East European and Asian countries). As noted earlier, Ian Smith's UDI government had also racially alienated, politically excluded and economically marginalized the majority Africans. In line with the above decrees, episcopal documents, Catholic social teachings, and statements coming from the Vatican Bishops and Pope Paul VI and his predecessors' writings (encyclicals), the Rhodesian Bishops were thus compelled to form the CSSD in 1972 in response to the Church's calls for the respect of people's freedom from oppression, misery and injustice and also a need to bring social services to the economically deprived Africans.

### **7.3.2 Catholic Development Commission (CADEC) 1984-2009**

The Commission for Social Services Development (CSSD) was changed to Catholic Development Commission (CADEC) in 1984, due to a shift in the emphasis of its work, from social welfare to development work. However, the changes did not mean a variation in principles and core orientation of the organization (Jerie, 2010: 219).

When Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980, many NGOs (including faith-based organizations), international donors, and other civil society groups came to assist the war-devastated African country. The major goal of these varied organizations was infrastructural

development and other development interventions. These extensive development initiatives had not been possible under Rhodesia's white rule. In Chapter 4, it was highlighted that the 1980s witnessed an increase of development NGOs on the African continent and elsewhere owing to huge donor funding. Zimbabwe was no exception and also witnessed a proliferation of NGOs during that period. Faith-based NGOs had increased in influence in post-independence Zimbabwe, both because NGOs in general were increasing in number at the time and because the Catholic Church began paying more attention to development work, largely focusing on its laity. It cannot be overlooked that the Catholic Church itself was now giving a 'new' depth to development work and evangelism mainly due to the development discourse of that period. Pope Paul VI indicated in his encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi* that the Church's major goal was to evangelize as well as to proclaim God's Kingdom through words and deeds (development initiatives). When Pope John Paul II took over the pontificate in 1978 after the death of Pope Paul VI, he made evangelization the 'core theme' of his papacy.

The CSSD had focused on clergy-oriented evangelism, but CADEC began to involve both clergy and laity in evangelical and charity work. Here, it must be noted that, from around 1984 to 2009, CADEC's development work focused more on assisting the Catholic faithful found around Catholic dioceses, parishes and smaller village churches. The development work covered by CADEC included health (nutritional gardens and supplementary feeding), water and sanitation (boreholes and Blair toilets), and HIV/AIDS (income generating projects) among many other projects. In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI came up with his encyclical, *Caritas In Veritate*, (Love in Truth) where he implored the Church among its many other duties to focus on development work that was more inclusive. CADEC focused on assisting Catholics only and this went against what Pope Benedict was promoting. This is why we later see that there was a shift to calling the organization Caritas, which was more inclusive whereby the Church's development initiatives would reach out to Catholics and non-Catholics, Christians and non-Christians and the evangelized and unevangelized alike.

### **7.3.3 Caritas Zimbabwe 2009 to date**

In 2008, Zimbabwe went through an unprecedented economic crisis such that Eric Block, an independent economist, commented that 'Zimbabwe's is the world's highest inflation, exacerbating the immense poverty afflicting most Zimbabweans' (Block, 2008:12). The high inflation levels had a huge impact on the operations of local NGOs, including CADEC. The

faith-based NGO's funding (in the form of small grants) came from the Catholic Church's national offices in Harare. These donations were sourced from Catholic charity organizations based in Western industrialised countries. When the inflation levels increased, this hugely affected the funding office since monies coming from international Catholic donors were always converted into Zimbabwean dollars. Unlike Catholic Relief Services (CRS), with a broader funding base and wider international appeal because of its internationalized orientation, CADEC lacked in such regards because it was a localized faith-based NGO.

The economic crisis and some developments taking place within the Roman Catholic Church itself helped create a realisation among the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) that, if the NGO was to continue with its development work, it also had to look outward; it had to be a part of the international family of Catholic charity organizations. Funding would then be easily accessible than merely depending on the funds from the national offices which were also aiding in the running of other local Catholic organizations (Informal Interview, Blessing, 04/04/2018).

New developments in the Universal Catholic Church saw Pope Benedict XVI calling on the Church to focus on a more humanistic approach to charity work. The Pope's 2009 encyclical *Caritas In Veritate* greatly influenced how the Church was to carry out its development work in any part of the world. The Church through its various development arms now had to look beyond its own laity by also casting its net wider in order to bring evangelism and charity work to all: that is, Catholics, non-Catholics, Christians, non-Christians and the faithless. As mentioned in an earlier sub-section, there was a shift in overall Catholic policy in that the focus began to go beyond providing services to Catholics in favour of an approach that promoted development for all, not just Catholics. Thus, in 2009, through the ZCBC, CADEC 'adopted the name Caritas being a member of Caritas Internationalis and in line with its work ... to make God's love visible in the world' (Catholic Diocese Chinhoyi, 2018). In order to address its funding constraints, it was through the initiatives of the ZCBC that CADEC decided to become a member of Caritas Internationalis which is a highly resourced grouping of Catholic charity organizations.

Caritas Internationalis was founded in December 1951 when 13 Catholic member organizations (in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Switzerland, Netherlands, Italy, Canada, Luxembourg, Austria, Portugal, Spain and the USA) agreed to be bound under a confederation. Pope Paul VI had (prior to his pontification) also given much support to the creation of this

partnership of Catholic charity organizations. Caritas Internationalis has grown from the 13 organizations at its inception in 1951 to its current 165 Catholic member organizations around the globe (Maradiaga, 2011: 7). The international faith-based organization has its presence in over 200 countries and territories which also include Caritas Zimbabwe and its 8 Catholic Dioceses (ZCBC, 2017). A few examples of the Caritas Internationalis family are Caritas USA, Caritas Australia, Caritas Canada, Caritas Zambia, Caritas Nigeria and the list goes on.

The change of name speaks of a new consciousness within the ZCBC where membership to Caritas Internationalis would enhance the NGO's funding base thus bringing more efficiency to its operations which CADEC lacked. In an interview, the Caritas Zimbabwe National Coordinator explained that:

Caritas Zimbabwe is the relief and development arm of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe and is a member of Caritas Internationalis [CI, a worldwide federation of the Catholic Church relief and development organizations. This means we work in partnership with other Caritas agencies to implement emergency and development programmes; such as Caritas England and Wales-CAFOD, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) USA, Caritas Ireland-Trócaire, Caritas Australia and Caritas (Interview, Mr. Mweembe, 24/10/2016).

Indeed, working in partnerships with well-resourced Catholic charity organizations within the Caritas Internationalis family entailed better funding for the once poorly resourced CADEC. Caritas is now in quite an enviable position regarding donor funding. It directly sources for funds from its various international partners (Informal Interview, Blessing, 04/04/2018). The name Caritas implies a more globalized approach to the faith-based NGO's current development work, as it now constantly interacts with many international Catholic development organizations as well as other international organizations which assist faith-based organizations. According to the ZCBC (2017), 'Caritas is one of the largest international humanitarian networks, working with people regardless of their religion, race, gender or ethnicity'. Caritas Internationalis literally means 'love between nations' (Maradiaga, 2009).

Caritas Zimbabwe has become internationalized, unlike CADEC which was merely localized. It currently offers various services which include human development, emergency relief and welfare and sustainable development. This reflects a new response by the Church to reach out to almost everyone especially the poorest. Those assisted need to be witnesses of God's love through the charitable works (development interventions) of Caritas staff and volunteers (Interview, Mr. Mweembe, 24/10/2016).

Christian values are still evident in Caritas' work today, especially in its development interventions. From 1972 at its inception to the present, the development initiatives of Caritas Zimbabwe and its affiliate body Caritas Internationalis have mainly occurred within the context of Christian values. The values are necessary in that they shape the faith-based NGO's existence and character as they help to justify its role in communities where it has a presence.

#### **7.4 Caritas' organizational structure**

Caritas Zimbabwe has a unitary organizational structure which is centrally managed by a board of Catholic Bishops who also constitute part of a family of Caritas Internationalis faith-based NGOs found in almost every part of the world. These local Bishops play an important role in its operations by providing some oversight on its various development initiatives as well as in fulfilling its objectives. Caritas officially works through dioceses and parishes which are part of a hierarchical structure of a central body (Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference) governed by Catholic Bishops and local parish priests. In the categorization of faith-based NGOs given by Clarke and Ware (2015), Caritas falls in the second category where it has a direct link to a religious denomination (the Roman Catholic Church) and is officially integrated within the institutional arrangement of the Catholic Church and its dioceses as well as parishes.

The Caritas website indicates that, at the NGO's national level, the highest authority is the National Executive Council (NEC) which is responsible for policy and decision making. It consists of a bishop, who is the president, officers of the National Office (National Coordinator and his team), diocesan ex-officios and diocesan coordinators. The NEC is made up of three accredited delegates from each of the eight dioceses, officers at the national office, the Bishop Chairman and the Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC). The development affairs of Caritas Zimbabwe are therefore governed and managed by the Bishop (better known as the Bishop Chairman) who is appointed by ZCBC. Upon appointment, the Caritas Manual (2015) indicates that the Bishop automatically takes charge of policy and spiritual guidance of Caritas Zimbabwe.

The National Coordinator (NC) is appointed by the ZCBC. The NC coordinates Caritas development activities in the eight dioceses found in Zimbabwe. The Caritas website names the eight Catholic Dioceses as follows: Harare, Mutare, Masvingo, Bulawayo, Gweru, Chinhoyi, Hwange and Gokwe. Caritas Zimbabwe implements all its development activities through the National Office (diocese) in Harare and the eight diocesan offices. All other staff members of the

National Office are appointed by the General Secretary of the Conference on the recommendation of the National Coordinator.

As mentioned earlier, Caritas targets both Catholics and non-Catholics. Its structures are also not exclusively made up of Catholics. For example, the national coordinator at present is not Catholic (Informal interview, Susan, 27/11/2016). The Caritas website indicates that staff members in each diocese are recruited locally and that these are both Catholics and non-Catholics. The faith-based NGO operates with paid staff stationed countrywide under the supervision of Bishops and priests. Caritas' organization is based at the parish, diocesan, national, regional and international levels. The dioceses where Caritas operates from are each autonomous under their bishop. However, they combine as Caritas Zimbabwe under the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference.

In almost every district in Zimbabwe; Caritas has a sub-office at a parish. It is here at the local level where the parish priest manages a smaller branch of Caritas which is subordinated to the larger offices of Caritas at the diocese level. Depending on the type of development intervention in a rural community, the diocese deploys its project officers at the parish branch where they partner with the parish priest since the area will be under his jurisdiction (Informal discussion, Carlton, 27/07/2019). The Caritas website indicates that the faith-based NGO carries out development initiatives in 8 Caritas Dioceses and 238 Caritas parishes. In total there are 340 parishes in Zimbabwe with 238 of them having a Caritas sub-office at the Catholic parish. Normally a parish is made up of 300 families but in rural areas it can be a large geographical area covering the population in that area. The priests are in charge of the parish and they are answerable to the Bishop who is in charge of the diocese (Informal discussion, Carlton, 27/07/2019). This suggests that Caritas' development initiatives also enjoy wide coverage like those of other well-established FBOs in Zimbabwe. The eight dioceses ensure that this coverage extends to local communities through an established network of volunteers who, depending on the type of development intervention, are at times trained and even monitored by full-time Caritas officers (who are diocese-based). Caritas development projects are carried out through a nationwide network of salaried project officers (who are diocese-based) as well as an established number of village volunteers (who are not paid at all).

## **7.5 Caritas Zimbabwe's funding**

Caritas Zimbabwe, just like many other local NGOs operating in Zimbabwe, is donor funded. The faith-based NGO's funds mainly come from well-resourced members of the Caritas Internationalis family. Caritas Zimbabwe's pool of donors is mainly those which are closely linked to the Roman Catholic Church as well as those donors that might also have an interest in funding the NGO. Unlike other NGOs in Zimbabwe, which struggle to source for donor funds, Caritas Zimbabwe has an advantage because of its permanent resource base that comes from its Catholic development partners (members of the Caritas Internationalis family). These include the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), Caritas Australia, Jesuit Relief Fund (JRF), and Trócaire (Caritas, 2017). According to a former Caritas intern, there are also quite a number of non-Catholic organizations that fund the NGO. These include organizations such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), Southern Africa Aids Trust (SAT), United Nations Development Programme, Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) (Interview, Agrippa, 15/12/2016). However, these are not as constant as those of the Caritas 'family' of funding partners. Mr. Mweembe clarified this issue by saying:

We get most of our funding from Caritas Internationalis. Because this is the Church, so it differs from other NGOs. Like within the Catholic Church in the United Kingdom we have got Bishops under the banner of CAFOD; in America we have the Bishops under the banner of CRS; and we have Bishops in Ireland under the banner of Trócaire. So, these monies are coming from the Church. They fundraise from the Church. In other words, these are offerings from the Church which finally come to Africa and specifically to Zimbabwe to support either long term or short term projects. And as I am speaking, we have got our dioceses that are currently undertaking long term projects that range from 2-3 years. Those dioceses which are fortunate [have] projects [that last] up to five years (Interview, Mr. Mweembe, 24/10/2016).

In the case of Caritas Chinhoyi Diocese where this case study falls under, the faith-based NGO has been funded by Misereor - a German Catholic organization; Catholic Relief Services (CRS) - a Catholic based organization in the USA; and Jesuit Mission - a Catholic based organization in Australia. These have remained its main funding partners (Informal discussion, Carlton, 18/03/2017). The faith-based NGO works with international partners 'in addressing the causes of poverty among community members and bringing about long-term change' (ZCBC, 2017). The website states that donor-partnered interventions touch on health improvement, eradication of illiteracy, alleviating environmental catastrophes, maintaining community members' cultural identities and providing training for better agricultural practices. The

interventions demonstrate a well-established relationship between Caritas Zimbabwe and its donor partners.

## **7.6 The faith-based NGO's claims to participatory development**

Caritas' major focus which guides its participatory claims has been the prioritization of the Roman Catholic Church's social teachings (CST). These social teachings have helped to shape its continuation and the justification of its role as a faith-based NGO. The Catholic social teachings relate to a liberation theology founded on uplifting the poor and vulnerable from their disadvantaged positions in society by focusing on 'a holistic approach to development' (Caritas Australia, 2018). The social teachings comprise of various themes but here I only concern myself with those ideas which answer to participatory development. These are human dignity (which is not only about participation/empowerment, but also covers broad social, political and economic issues), subsidiarity, solidarity and allowing the poor to have a say in the development processes.

Concerning human dignity, the FBO claims that its development programmes are people-centred and their major goal is to empower local communities (ZCBC, 2017; Caritas Australia, 2018). People-centred programmes are based on the idea that 'local people have a better understanding of their conditions and constraints, and their motivation to participate would be stronger when they are free to choose their objectives' (Vadivelu, 2011:4). As discussed earlier in Chapter 2, empowerment suggests that 'potential beneficiaries are able to make key decisions' and 'participation becomes self-initiated action which is known as the "exercise of voice and choice"' (Mansuri and Rao, 2013:15). It also implies 'self-power, self-reliance, own choice' and 'life of dignity in accordance with one's values' (Narayan, 2002:13-14). In relation to subsidiarity, the NGO believes that its 'decision-making processes ... engage those affected by decisions and policies and reflect transparency and accountability' (ZCBC, 2017). This seems to imply that Caritas Zimbabwe does not impose decisions on local communities, but it engages them in a transparent and accountable manner so that the communities decide on what they exactly want or need.

In terms of participation, Caritas Zimbabwe believes that 'all people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives' (ZCBC, 2017; Caritas Australia, 2018). This suggests that grassroots communities are given the opportunity to decide on which projects truly address their development needs. What Caritas Zimbabwe suggests about participation echoes the view of Mansuri and Rao (2013), who also see participation as an involvement of local



communities in decision-making processes. Regarding solidarity, the FBO believes that its goal is to create a better future for poor communities ‘where the common good of all people is promoted’ (ZCBC, 2017). This suggests that Caritas Zimbabwe, in working in solidarity (as equal partners) with local communities, assumes the facilitator role where the community and the FBO together identify issues as well as propose solutions based on an understanding of the local context (Chambers, 2008). As to the preferential option for the poor, the faith-based NGO puts the needs of all those in deprivation first (Catholic Charities Office for Social Justice Website, 2018). This implies that the NGO considers the needs of poor communities rather than foisting solutions on them from above. Participation concerns itself with giving a voice to the poor (Mansuri and Rao, 2013) so that they can drive their own development (Osei, 2017).

Caritas’ philosophy which emanates from CST highlights that people are not only marginalized owing to the inequitable distribution of economic resources and opportunities, but also through power structures exercised in social, cultural, and political contexts (Thompson 2004). Drawing on this belief, Caritas claims on its website that ‘the local communities design and manage their own development programmes in a manner which is culturally appropriate and owned by the community’. By making such a claim, it is suggested that Caritas endorses participatory approaches which are intended to give the excluded a say in the development process.

The current Pope Francis sees Caritas as an indispensable arm of the Church. He underscores that the faith-based NGO (at the local and international levels) is a symbol of God’s love both within the Church, and in the outside world. The Pope further emphasizes that ‘Caritas is the caress of the Church to its people, the caress of the Mother Church to her children, her tenderness and closeness’ (Caritas Internationalis, 2018). Caritas’ Mission is therefore stated as follows:

Caritas Zimbabwe works towards the creation of a world that God desires to be just and compassionate. Caritas works for the freedom of those who are oppressed by injustice, bringing ‘sight’ to both those who are powerless and powerful and proclaiming to the poor the good news of their human dignity. This work is undertaken principally through the life-giving activities of aid and development (ZCBC, 2017).

The faith-based NGO’s aim is grounded on claims that it gives hope to the hopeless, a voice to the voiceless and light to those in darkness and love to those living in a heartless society. This makes the faith-based NGO see itself as a ‘living sign and witness for God’s boundless and irrevocable love’ (Gillen, 2011:8). The love being referred to is believed not to be limited to

Catholics, but is claimed to focus broadly on all mankind. Curran (2014:4) underscores that this love is about ‘attending to man’s sufferings and his needs, including his material needs’.

The Catholic Church, through its development arm Caritas, is exhorted to carry out charity work. Pope Benedict’s 2005 encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est* calls on the Catholic Church to put charity at the heart of its mission. The Pope emphasizes that: ‘For the Church, charity is not a kind of welfare activity which could equally well be left to others, but is a part of her nature, an indispensable expression of her very being’ (Pope Benedict XVI: *Deus Caritas Est*, 25a). In his second encyclical *Caritas In Veritate* written in 2009, Pope Benedict further implored that:

Charity is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine. Every responsibility and every commitment spelt out by that doctrine is derived from charity which, according to the teaching of Jesus, is the synthesis of the entire Law (Pope Benedict, *Caritas In Veritate*, 2).

Both encyclicals suggest that the Church’s charitable commitment through Caritas, is not merely a minor or marginal activity, but is the very foundation of the Christian faith. For Pope Benedict (2009), charity work is claimed to be the face of Christ which compels the faithful to do good to those who are disadvantaged, and such acts of rendering assistance to the less fortunate are said to resemble God’s plan for all humanity. When Caritas (through the Church) makes claims of carrying out charity work, its emphasis is not about merely giving those in misery/difficulties handouts that will in the end create some form of dependency syndrome. Pope Benedict VI argues that charity/development aid is not supposed to lock people into dependence (*Caritas In Veritate*, 58). Charity work is expected to empower the beneficiaries. Freire aptly captures the position held by Caritas and the Catholic Church concerning charity when he describes charity by saying:

True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity. False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the ‘rejects of life’, to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands - whether of individuals or entire peoples - need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world (Freire, 1972:45).

The faith-based NGO, as alluded to in Freire’s quote, similarly believes that its charity work is supposed not to create a welfarist mentality among the beneficiaries, but is expected to permanently help uplift those in privation. For Pope Benedict XVI, ‘[o]nly in charity, illumined by the light of reason and faith, is it possible to pursue development goals that possess a more

humane and humanizing value' (Benedict XVI: *Caritas In Veritate*, 9). The ZCBC (2017) also indicates that:

Caritas Zimbabwe believes that the weak and oppressed are not objects of pity, but agents of change leading the struggle to eradicate dehumanizing poverty, unacceptable living conditions, and unjust social, economic and cultural structures.

Through charity work (development interventions), Caritas claims to reach out to those on the fringes of society (the poor, orphaned, elderly and disabled) in order to make them human again, rather than to leave them in constant humiliation owing to their levels of poverty or economic and social disadvantages (ZCBC, 2017). Caritas further seeks to encourage self-reliance as a result of its development interventions or charity work.

In performing charity work, Caritas and the Church's many other charitable organizations are seen by both Popes Benedict XVI and Pope Francis (the current pope) as fundamentally engaging in the promotion of human development (Caritas Internationalis, 2018). According to the Catholic Church, human development can be meaningless if it lacks a spiritual dimension to it. Earlier, it was mentioned that FBOs synthesise development and faith. Pope Benedict XVI (2009) emphasizes that genuine human development is supposed to focus on the perspective of eternal life. He argues that:

Development requires a transcendent vision of the person, it needs God: without him, development is either denied, or entrusted exclusively to man, who falls into the trap of thinking he can bring about his own salvation, and ends up promoting a dehumanized form of development (Pope Benedict XVI: *Caritas In Veritate*, 11).

In line with this kind of view, Caritas emphasizes that those being assisted should be considered to be sons and daughters of God, thus implying that those being assisted are of equal value to those doing the assisting and, therefore, that they should partner together in promoting development.

Like many other local NGOs in Zimbabwe, Caritas claims to promote participatory development. This can be seen in the quotes below which lay out some of the participatory claims made by the FBO as well as its international sister organizations which help it with funds:

Caritas Zimbabwe promotes partnerships. Local autonomy is paramount in ensuring effective teamwork for the good of all. Caritas is able to identify issues at the grassroots, analyse them at national and international levels, and then take action locally, regionally and globally... The agency's staff and volunteers carry out development initiatives in the 8 Caritas Dioceses and 97 Caritas parishes so local people are in control of the implementation process, and in turn, their own development (Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC), 2017).

Caritas works shoulder to shoulder with people in poverty in 200 countries. Our programmes encourage communities to use their resources to work together and improve everyone's lives. It is only through empowering those who are disadvantaged to contribute to their own development that any real progress on poverty can be made (Caritas Internationalis, 2015).

Caritas always undertakes projects that are decided by the community themselves. We don't impose. Remember we are working for the Bishops, for the Church, and the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference. These are a group of eight Bishops in Zimbabwe and then as Caritas we are specifically looking into the diocese development projects that are being implemented by the Bishops in Zimbabwe. So as workers of the Church, there is that spirit of volunteering that says: I am doing this because I am working for God. We have been called to work for Christ (Interview, Mr. Mweembe; 24/10/2016).

Caritas believes that all people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Subsidiarity requires that decisions are made by the people closest and most affected by the issues and concerns of the community (Caritas Australia, 2017). (Caritas Australia helps fund Caritas Zimbabwe and Caritas Chinhoyi's development projects).

Evidently, these quotations represent claims that the faith-based NGO has significant potential to be participatory. The faith-based NGO and its international partners speak about promoting participatory development through transformative development projects owned by local communities. In this regard, Simbi (2003:5) also indicates that Caritas is 'a community development organization, involved in community-based projects'. Madzara's Evaluation Report (2010) likewise supports this view by claiming that the beneficiaries and local authorities are involved in needs assessments and project evaluation as will be further discussed below.

#### **7.6.1 Caritas' baseline surveys/needs assessments**

As indicated in Chapter 2, for a development initiative to qualify as participatory, efforts need to be made to find out what community members value and need. This can be done through conducting surveys or needs assessments. According to Mr. Mweembe (Caritas National Coordinator), Ms. Mudiwa (Caritas Chinhoyi Finance Officer), Father Chenyika (Caritas Chinhoyi Diocese Development Coordinator) and Crispen (a Caritas officer) the NGO carries out baseline surveys in various districts where it operates. The surveys are done to capture the most pressing development needs of community members or to assess pertinent issues prior to the commencement of an intervention. Mr Mweembe (Interview, 24/10/2016) was of the view that these surveys are done when the project is about to start in order to gauge whether there are any changes from the period the project was initiated to the time the project is to be implemented. Normally, a few communities in the project target areas participate in the baseline survey. The idea is to validate information that had been used to generate the project proposal and to make

adjustments if there is need. The project proposal's implementation is informed by the baseline survey.

According to Ms. Mudiwa (Interview, 15/11/2016), baseline survey findings are used to address problems/issues at hand. These surveys are conducted collectively by both the funding partners and implementers. The idea is to gauge if there is need to make any adjustments before the commencement of the development intervention: 'Normally, baseline surveys are done by our funding partners such as Catholic Relief Service (CRS) in collaboration with us, the implementing organization' (Interview, Mr Mweembe, 24/10/2016). All key community stakeholders, such as traditional leaders, religious and political leaders as well as the vulnerable/target beneficiaries, participate in the baseline survey. Normally one-on-one interviews are used to gather data. The findings are said to give valuable information on how the project will be implemented.

According to Crispen, a key informant, the NGO's baseline surveys use different data gathering methods in identifying community needs and priorities. He said that the NGO 'carries out community consultations which include group discussions and household interviews' (Informal Interview, Crispen, 18/03/2017). Crispen further highlighted that 'during these surveys, questionnaires are also used including structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, as well as some PRA tools' (briefly analysed in Chapter 2). He mentioned PRA techniques or methods such as social mapping, Venn diagrams, wealth ranking, ranking and scoring and pair-wise ranking. Therefore, according to various Caritas officials, the NGO engages in participatory practices by conducting needs assessments through baseline surveys.

### **7.6.2 Caritas' evaluation exercises**

Another way, in which Caritas Zimbabwe purports to make their initiatives participatory, is through the conducting of project evaluations which aim to determine whether or not community needs have been met. Caritas Zimbabwe has over the years, invited consultants to undertake end of project evaluations for their various development interventions in rural communities. Father Walter Chenyika claims that:

We make sure that when we come to the end of a project we make our evaluations. We have an external evaluation which we do when a project terminates. We always look for an external evaluator for with internal evaluation, it is compromised. ... For me, it is about objectivity, maybe transparency too. We are not only looking at things which we have failed to do but, reasons why things did not go the way we wanted and [we want to know if there are] remedies

that we can make because we are also planning for future projects and it will not be helpful for us to ... try to smoothen everything (Interview, Fr, Chenyika, 15/11/2016).

Among many other things, the overall purpose of Caritas' evaluation exercises is claimed to be that of assessing whether action taken, or the intervention carried out, has brought about anticipated changes. This entails an examination of factors which are helping or hindering the development intervention with an aim of drawing lessons for future interventions. Tanga and Mundau (2014) also emphasize that 'project evaluation is of vital importance and is meant to establish value as to whether the project is or has succeeded in meeting the expected outcomes or not' (Tanga and Mundau, 2014:474). Based on the two scholars' arguments, it can be noted that, indeed, most Caritas' evaluation exercises are designed to address some specific objectives. During an informal discussion with Carlton, he stressed that:

The objectives of any development intervention might include an analysis of the general results and impacts of the intervention. These cover the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the development project. Second, it is important that as Caritas, we identify the gaps in the specific area of intervention. Of importance here is to find out the perceptions of the targeted group. These views will help us to make recommendations for future development projects (Informal discussion, Carlton, 18/03/2017).

What Carlton is claiming echoes some aspects of participatory development. There are claims about attempting to create an enabling participatory environment during project evaluations where community members are able to share, analyse, and act upon the impacts of a development intervention. Community members are able to learn of the positive or negative impacts of a project in relation to the local conditions which affect their lives. This is quite significant for future development interventions.

## **7.7 Caritas Zvimba**

The focus of this study is on the work of Caritas in the Zvimba region. The Zvimba region falls under the broader Chinhoyi diocese and the Caritas website indicates that, at the diocese level, a Catholic Bishop is the legal holder and custodian of all Caritas operations in a specifically given geographical area. In the case of Chinhoyi diocese, the Bishop designated by the Catholic Church to work in Chinhoyi is in charge of all Caritas undertakings which are spread across two provinces of Zimbabwe. These are Mashonaland West and Mashonaland Central. Currently, Bishop Raymond Mupandasekwa, who was ordained on 7 April 2018, is managing Caritas Chinhoyi Diocese (Informal discussion, Lamas, first discussion 13/01/2018 then later 09/04/2018). The Diocesan Development Coordinator (DDCor) reports to his superior, the

Bishop. The Bishop is the legal holder of all Catholic commissions and institutions at the diocese level. He is therefore the head of the diocese as well as the principal signatory to the institution's bank accounts. The Bishop is responsible for signing agreements with donors and in some cases he is responsible for sending reports to donors. He also audits the accounts of commissions and institutions under his leadership. Each of the eight dioceses where Caritas operates from is an autonomous structure which is wholly under the leadership of a Bishop. Due to the Bishop's very busy schedule he delegates the running of Caritas to a priest, the DDCor, who cannot do anything concerning Caritas without being given such authorization by his superior, the archbishop (Informal discussion, Lamas, 27/07/2019).

In an interview with Father Chenyika, who is the DDCor for Chinhoyi, he highlighted that Caritas Chinhoyi operates in nine districts, namely, Makonde, Hurungwe, Zvimba (our case study), Kariba, Rushinga, Mt Darwin, Centenary, Guruve, and Mbire. According to Tafanenyasha, a former Caritas intern:

The Diocese covers an area of 56 000 square kilometers to the north and east of Zimbabwe cutting across the two provinces of Mashonaland West and Mashonaland Central. The Diocese has an estimated rural population of 2 000 000 of which 100 000 are Catholics (Interview, Tafanenyasha, 10/01/2017).

In each of the eight Caritas dioceses found in Zimbabwe, the NGO targets both Catholics and non-Catholics. Much of the development work in Chinhoyi falls under the Diocesan Development Coordinator (DDCor), Father Walter Chenyika. The DDCor is in charge of the NGO's project management, direction, leadership and accountability. All in all, he provides the overall strategic vision and guidance for any development interventions. He also provides feedback to the Bishop, board members and development partners on the undertakings of the NGO in the districts under its jurisdiction (Interview, Father Chenyika, 15/11/2016). Mr. Mweembe added that:

The task of development projects is mainly with the national coordinator and the assistant coordinators [who are diocese based]. But, under these, we have the programme officers who are a technical people. We have someone who has a specialty in livelihoods, emergencies, someone good in protection issues or maybe gender specialists (Interview, Mr. Mweembe, 24/10/2016).

A key informant indicated that a Programmes Manager (PM) who is under the authority of the DDCor is responsible for supervising the Development department. His duties are to write project proposals as well as to organize field officers who monitor and evaluate the NGO's development interventions in districts which they oversee (Informal discussion, Blessing,

18/03/2017). According to a former Caritas intern, the development team comprises of field officers who are paid employees and they administer various projects according to their work designations. For example, one is a Water and Sanitation Officer, another is a Livelihoods Officer, another is an Agriculture Officer and there is also an Education Officer. In addition, Mr. Mweembe stressed that:

We have a list of development projects which are to be implemented in rural areas for instance we have the livelihoods and food security programmes, water and sanitation projects, irrigation projects and community gardens. These are some of the projects that we are doing there. I think suffice to say we have got long term (LTP) and short term projects (STP). STP mainly to relieve the immediate suffering of the community and these are in the form of emergencies. LTP are in the form of building community assets and also if you look at livelihoods there are so many assets which we can talk of (Interview, Mr. Mweembe 24/10/16).

The field officers are said to move around the operational areas where they monitor the progress of their development interventions as well as write and submit reports to the PM who then reports to the DCC (Interview, Tafanenyasha, 10/01/2017). In the villages, the field officers also liaise with the Catholic Parish Priest (CPP) as well as with the Caritas volunteers who are the NGO's 'ears and eyes' in the communities.

### **7.7.1 Caritas Zimbabwe's volunteers**

The Caritas website points out that the agency's staff (field officers) and volunteers carry out development initiatives in the Caritas Dioceses and Caritas parishes. Caritas volunteers are committed Catholics (a part of the Catholic congregation) who live in local communities. The act of volunteering itself is borne out of a conviction that one ought to do God's work without any benefits accruing to oneself. In other words, a volunteer is someone who through his/her strong Christian faith and persuasion gives his/her life in glorifying Jesus Christ through pious acts to others who are less privileged, or in the same condition as his/hers. The volunteer strictly adheres to the Catholic social teachings, such that humbleness or humility becomes a virtue /desirable quality in carrying out the faith-based NGO's development initiatives as well as the Church's evangelical work. The faith-based NGO aims to create an individual who among other Christian attributes respects human dignity, has love and is compassionate towards others. Caritas believes that:

There is an inseparable relationship between love for God and love for one's neighbour. The real test of our living this love is to discover the other in all other people, so that within the community of believers there can be no room for poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified life (ZCBC, 2017: n.p).



Volunteers are expected to be exemplary in their communities by objectively and impartially assisting both Catholics and non-Catholics in undertaking community development projects as well as the NGO's individual-centred development initiatives (goat, cattle, and poultry projects). A volunteer's personal actions in the community (as guided by Catholic Social Teachings) are supposed to help stimulate the faith of other community members (especially amongst those still to hear the gospel and those who now have doubts about their faith) by understanding and appreciating the Gospel message owing to the volunteers' honesty and humility (life style evangelism). Emphasizing the importance of volunteers to Caritas' development initiatives, Mr. Mweembe stressed that:

When you look at the dioceses around the country, they are embarking at both short term and long term projects. This also depends on the funding available. Because of our Caritas volunteers, it [i.e. using volunteers] is one of our key sustainability strategies, we say [that] these projects should not be stopped when the funder leaves the area. (Interview, 24/10/2016).

The quote is suggesting that, when the NGO leaves an area, there needs to be continuity of a project. This can be possible through the work of local volunteers who always remain on the ground long after the NGO would have left the area. In reference to the work of volunteers, Mr. Mweembe also highlighted that:

On the ground, we also have Caritas volunteers. Each parish has its own volunteers who give the parish priest and field officers all the information that is happening on the ground and these are later turned into project proposals with the guidance from the field coordinators or assistant coordinators who then give the national office this information. Caritas volunteers are Catholics. They are identified within the parameters of the local church (Interview, Mr. Mweembe, 24/10/2016).

Mr. Mweembe, who is the Caritas national coordinator (NC), claims that volunteers (as community members themselves) also help in the selection of development interventions possibly after consulting community members. This claim demonstrates, in a way, that the faith-based NGO is committed to community participation especially when considering projects brought to the attention of the NGO by the volunteers. Thus, it is claimed that the DDCor and his development team also at times choose projects from among those referred to them, by the volunteers. As noted above, part of the way that the faith-based NGO involves community members in its development initiatives is through volunteers who are found in different geographical locations all around the District.

### **7.7.2 Caritas parishes in Zvimba**

Caritas' work in Zvimba is organized through the parishes. There are four parishes in the District, namely: St Kizito, located at Murombedzi Business Centre; St Xavier, situated at Kutama (where the former president Robert Mugabe comes from); Sacred Heart, found in Banket; and St James, located in Mutorashanga. These parishes are found in each of the four constituencies in Zvimba District.

A priest is in charge of the parish. He is the one who coordinates Caritas' activities in all the villages under his jurisdiction. In each village, there are smaller Catholic churches which fall under the responsibility of the parish priest. He normally holds church services only once every month in the villages which are not situated close to the main parish centre. It is during these monthly visits to the smaller Catholic churches in the villages that he gets first-hand information about the challenges the villagers are facing in their community.

The smaller churches in the communities also set up some cell groups now commonly known as 'Thursday meetings', where Catholic women (and at times a few men) come together for prayer sessions as well as deliberating on issues of how best to help the needy in their communities. The discussions on community development usually take place after the Thursday prayer meetings. The Catholic women raise various issues affecting their communities. The areas discussed, among many other concerns, include health matters, water problems, food worries, difficulties in buying seed and fertilizers, and how the Church can assist the needy (usually orphans, the elderly and underprivileged) in the community.

**Figure 6: St. Kizito Parish offices at Murombedzi Business Centre**



Mrs. Mhepo, a Caritas volunteer stressed that: ‘The Sunday that Father comes to our village for service, many people attend mass more than they do during ordinary Sundays’ (Interview, Mrs. Mhepo, 08/12/16). It is after service that the parish priest dialogues with the congregants on the challenges that they are facing in their communities. The parish priest also gets reports from the volunteers in the village. A Caritas volunteer, *Sekuru* (Grandpa) Mwedzi indicated that community participation is implemented by Caritas through a group of volunteers found in each village. The volunteers interact with community members on a daily basis and it is they who liaise with the parish priest or Caritas field officers on development needs of the local community. The volunteers from various villages under St Kizito parish meet once or twice every month to discuss issues taking place in their villages (Interview, Sekuru Mwedzi, 05/12/2016).

## **7.8 Conclusion**

The Chapter established that Caritas is a faith-based NGO which was founded in 1972. The NGO claims that it facilitates the participation of community members in a plethora of development projects which include water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), livelihoods, relief; HIV and AIDS, and health. Further claims were that the NGO’s participatory development work aims at raising awareness through empowering community members to be fully responsible for their own development, thus leading to self-reliance and the sustainability of development interventions. The most important goal of Caritas, as claimed on its various websites as well as by some Caritas officials interviewed, is to demonstrate Christ’s love for mankind through participatory development initiatives. Chapter 8 which follows gives a detailed analysis of the fieldwork findings concerning Caritas’ actual participatory development initiatives in Zvimba District.

## **CHAPTER 8: CARITAS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT PRACTICES PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The previous Chapter introduced Caritas and looked at its basic functioning with a special focus on its work in Zvimba. As shown in the previous chapter, Caritas claims that its development interventions are participatory and are always done in consultation with community members. This chapter seeks to evaluate such claims in detail.

This chapter is quite similar to Chapter 6, only now focused on Caritas rather than on the ZvCSOT. As this thesis aims to be comparative, the themes used in this chapter are similar to those used in Chapter 6 in order to aid comparison. The chapter will help to bring out the comparison more explicitly. Each section in this chapter will also be an attempt to address the research questions as highlighted in Chapter 1. This chapter first looks at how both central and local government relate to Caritas in Zvimba district. The chapter goes on to examine donor funding in relation to the legitimization of pre-determined development interventions. The focus will be on whether NGO-donor funding allows for a top-down or bottom-up participatory approach in development interventions. The chapter further touches on a very important area of the thesis which is the participation of community members in Caritas' development interventions. Here, among other issues I also concern myself with the way some pre-planned project themes coming from baseline surveys might have had an influence on the types of development interventions carried out in rural communities. I further give an analysis on the works of volunteers looking at whether they consult community members on the identification of development projects. The chapter also examines issues of participatory development in relation to the politicization of Caritas projects. The pertinent question is on whether political interference affects the participation of community members in NGO development interventions since, in Zimbabwe, NGOs like Caritas are required to first consult local authorities before they can operate in any district.

### **8.2 Demographic information of participants**

Before discussing and analysing the research findings, it is helpful to give a brief description of the individuals and groups interviewed for the findings discussed in this chapter. Information for my fieldwork was collected through formal and informal interviews with Caritas officials,

University interns at Caritas Chinhoyi, Caritas volunteers, teachers, Caritas beneficiaries, ordinary village youths, men and women. In addition, three focus group discussions were carried out at purposively selected locations in Zvimba district. Some photos were also taken at some selected project sites. The tables below illustrate the number of participants interviewed on issues concerning Caritas. The questions were diverse with some questions asked more frequently than others depending on their level of significance to the major goal of this research. Some participants were quite knowledgeable about Caritas as well as the Trust discussed in Chapter 6, and so I also include them as respondents both for the ZvCSOT and Caritas.

**Table 6: Individual participants - Caritas**

<b>Target group</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>
<b>Caritas officials</b>	3
<b>Caritas volunteers</b>	4
<b>Caritas interns</b>	2
<b>Total</b>	9

**Table 7: Community members - Caritas**

<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Formal interview</b>	<b>Informal Interview</b>	<b>Total Respondents</b>
<b>Men</b>	2	2*	4
<b>Women</b>	6	2*	8
<b>Youths</b>	5	1*	6
<b>Teachers</b>	3	1**	3
<b>Caritas Beneficiaries</b>	5	2**	5
<b>Total Respondents</b>			26

\* Interview at project site

\*\* Continuous communication of interviewer with interviewee

**Table 8: Focus groups - Caritas**

<b>Target group</b>	<b>Target respondents</b>	<b>Actual respondents</b>	<b>Actual respondents %</b>
<b>Focus Group A</b>	8 males	5 males	62.5%
<b>Focus Group B</b>	8 females	8 females	100%
<b>Focus Group C</b>	8 females	8 females	100%
<b>Total – 21 participants</b>			

**Table 9: Participants - local government**

<b>Target group</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>
<b>District Administrator</b>	1
<b>Village heads</b>	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>

### **8.3 Roles of central and local government vis-à-vis Caritas' operations and development interventions**

In Chapter 4, it was noted that in Zimbabwe, before an NGO commits itself to development work in the rural areas, its first port of call is to notify the responsible authorities of its intentions to operate in a specific district or area. Just like any other NGO, Caritas was obliged to sign an MOU with the RDC before it could operate in Zvimba District. This meant a meeting was held with the Zvimba RDC on whether they wanted to work with the NGO or not. It is in such meetings that the local authorities can give their reasons or reservations in relation to why they do not want an NGO to operate in their District. Other government departments are also invited. According to a Caritas key informant; 'The MOU is signed by the RDC CEO and the DA. Sometimes they want other departments to sign. After that, other relevant government departments are then engaged' (Interview, Key informant 04/04/2017). If the project is on health issues, they engage with the Ministry of Health. The NGO also works with the Ministry of Social Services since the Ministry, as highlighted in Chapter 4, wants reports of the NGO's operations in an area. The DA for Zvimba, Mr. Andrew Tizora, indicated that:

If they want to operate in a District they first go through the processes of the Ministry of Social Work and Social Services. This might take long because of bureaucracy. From there, the Ministry sends the application to the Provincial Administrator (PA) of the province where the NGO intends to operate in. The PA's office is tasked to find out more about the NGO and if satisfied that its intention is not political or it is not there to cause problems in the province, they then allow it to operate. A letter of approval is then sent to the DA to allow the NGO to operate (Interview, DA Tizora, 28/11/16).

In addition, Ms. Mary Mudiwa, Caritas Chinhoyi Diocese finance officer, highlighted that:

At times, the government bureaucracy is quite time consuming. For you to get into the field it might actually take time. You are required to see the Resident Minister and the Provincial Authority (PA) in order for them to give authority to the DA to talk to you. At times we say, honestly what do these poor communities have to do with all these processes? After that, we also go through the police and president's office (CIO) for the verification of our project. (Interview, Mudiwa, 15/11/2016).

The concerns raised by Ms. Mudiwa are quite genuine. Reports are that some NGOs have ended up shelving some development interventions due to the time they have to spend in having their operations approved. Tafanenyasha, a former Caritas intern stressed that '[d]ue to state bureaucracy, some NGOs have relocated to other neighbouring countries which have more friendly NGO policies'. In Zimbabwe, the legislation on Public Order and Security Act (POSA) makes it mandatory for NGOs to seek police clearances before holding community gatherings in urban and rural communities lest they be accused of harbouring political ambitions. NGOs end up avoiding development work in areas which are deemed to be politically sensitive. This inhibits the affected communities from fully benefitting from NGO development interventions. However, DA Tizora suggests that the process need not be so onerous:

The easiest process is that the NGO after having sent its application to the Ministry of Social Welfare also gives another copy of their letter to the office of the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs. The Minister has the authority to grant them permission to operate in a province long before the Ministry of Social Welfare through the above bureaucratic procedure would have approved the NGO to operate in an area. After being authorized to operate by the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs, the NGO can start its operations while of course waiting for official confirmation from the PA's office. The letter from the PA's office would just be a formality; especially after approval from the Minister of State (Interview, DA Tizora, 28/11/2016).

Likewise, Father Walter Chenyika, Caritas Chinhoyi Diocese Coordinator, emphasizes that:

The RDCs, they give us that independence. Yes, we have some autonomy. We sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). What they only need is us, informing them of what we are doing – period! If we are doing this and it's in our MOU, for them that is fine. But, you can't go over bounds. You are supposed to stick to your parameters. That is why we signed the MOU. We need to know what we are supposed to be doing (Interview, Fr Chenyika, 15/11/2016).

In contrast to what DA Tizora and Father Chenyika say, others, such as Muzondo (2014), suggest that the introduction of NGO legislation in Zimbabwe has been a smokescreen intended to give the government more control and the ability to monitor the sector's activities and to interfere when necessary. He argues that the PVO Act does not create an enabling environment for NGOs nor does it assist in the development of the sector. Rather, the PVO Act signals the eagerness of the Zimbabwean government to control the NGO sector especially the funds which donors channel to these voluntary organizations, lest they be used to prop-up support for opposition political parties (Raftopoulos, 2000).

Knight (2013) underscores that all NGO work in Zimbabwe's rural areas must first be approved by the DA and the RDC. She notes that state institutions seek to 'determine the NGO's intentions prior to their direct involvement with communities' in rural areas as well as 'require that NGO actions work toward or at least complement the district's development plan' (Knight, 2013:75). In Chapter 3, we noted that most development interventions are first deliberated in the Rural District Council Development Committees (RDDCs). We observed that the RDDCs are chaired by the District Administrator, and attendance at such meetings is reserved for Chief(s), RDC officers, Government departments, security sector institutions, NGOs and other officials who might be invited to such district development planning *indabas*. Though NGOs participate in the meetings, much of what comes out has had a bias towards central and local government's development priorities (Makumbe, 2010; Chatiza *et al.*, 2013; Kurebwa, 2015; Matyszak, 2011; Zimbabwe Institute, 2005).

At times, the local authorities are said to take advantage of the NGO by identifying their own needs and the problems which are affecting the RDC and not those of the intended beneficiaries. Ms. Mudiwa pointed out that: 'At times, the RDC says we are having such and such a problem in let's say, ward 20 and then, we go into that ward to assist. From our own assessment, we at times, just go to feed into the projects of the local authority' (Interview, Ms. Mudiwa, 15/11/2016). The local authorities (RDC and DA) in Zvimba have been seen by both ZvCSOT and Caritas respondents to choose priority areas which are in line with services they think are relevant to the needs of the rural communities.

In the case of Caritas, there are some mixed reactions on how the interactions between NGOs and RDCs can encourage participatory processes that take into consideration community



members' development needs and priorities. Suitably, Caritas' National Coordinator Mr. Chris Mweembe had this to say:

You know, I said we have our presence from as low as the village level, the ward level, to the district, provincial and national level. We are partners in development with local councils and as Caritas, we participate in the District Development Coordinating Committees (better known as RDDCs) and the Drought Mitigation Committees. We also participate through our Caritas volunteers who are at the ward level and in doing so, these projects would have been influenced by members of the community and these people whom we are saying are the poor people. Some of them are within the Catholic Church and besides even being Catholics, they may be in other denominations or they are non-Christians, but the fact that Caritas is represented in these structures it's testimony to say, we consider we work with the communities. The plans that the District officers have, come from these communities and hence, participation at the lower level as well as participation at the District Coordination processes where we also have a voice and give our views and recommendations specially to safeguard the interests of the poor on the ground rather than for the technocrats at the District level to amend the project ideas that could have emanated from the grassroots. We are there also to see as an eye in these RDDC meetings. Our Caritas volunteers will give us minutes and reports of what they would have discussed and using these, we also have that in mind to say in the District meetings; where those ideas could be translated into development plans for the District (Interview, Mr. C. Mweembe, 24/10/2016).

Mr. Mweembe sounds very optimistic that community members indirectly or directly influence the types of projects that are implemented in a District owing to the VIDCO and WADCO meetings, where they are said to make their input on future development interventions in their area. A question would be: is Caritas supposed to be representing community members in RDDC meetings, or it is the communities who are supposed to be invited to these meetings to take the initiatives themselves? The essence of participatory development approaches (such as PAR, PRA, and PLA) discussed in Chapter 2 is to let community members be the deciders and drivers of their own development. The claims made by Mr. Mweembe, while noble, contradict what Caritas and ZvCSOT respondents said as well as what scholars such as Matyszak (2011), Chakaipa (2010), Kurebwa (2015) observed in their research findings. The above scholars have noted that RDDC meetings are quite intimidating due to the presence of the securocrats whose major aim is to propagate and safeguard ZANU PF interests in rural communities. Thus, it becomes quite questionable if NGO officials can be brave enough to see to it that community members' needs are also taken into consideration.

It is also seems unlikely that the fact that Caritas volunteers and other Catholics attend VIDCO meetings automatically means that these attendees' contributions will have a significant impact in RDDC meetings, as Mr Mweembe implies. It would be more effective if Caritas conducted baseline surveys or needs assessments in order to capture the community's

development needs, rather than relying on mere assumptions that what is deliberated in VIDCO meetings can influence project planning at the RDDC level.

When asked about VIDCO meetings, interviewees had mixed views on whether local communities' development needs and priorities are taken into consideration by both central and local government. Three community members give their views on VIDCO meetings they once attended. Chiedza points out that:

The headman has invited us on several occasions to VIDCO meetings but the challenge is that the borehole we have been requesting for in the past thirteen years is still to be sunk by the RDC (Interview, Chiedza, 07/12/2016).

For Ambrose:

VIDCO meetings are a place where we talk and talk and nothing is ever done in terms of development interventions. Nothing tangible ever comes out of those meetings. I have since decided not to attend any future meetings. Central and local government do not listen to our demands but, they simply bring in projects which they think are good for us (Interview, Ambrose, 09/12/2016).

For Mary Jane:

It wouldn't be fair if we are to say that what we discuss in VIDCO meetings is never considered. Some time ago, the RDC repaired the borehole at the local school after it had been broken down for almost a year. This was after we had raised the issue in the VIDCO meeting (Interview, Mary Jane, 07/12/2016).

Responses to the effectiveness of local committees (VIDCOs) which help in the identification of development projects in the community were mixed. Overall, 21 out of 26 (81%) of the community members interviewed felt that authorities did not listen to the views of community members, while 5 out of 21 (19%) said they did. Village heads said that local authorities were not taking issues discussed in VIDCO meetings seriously. One village head stressed that VIDCOs were more effective for mobilizing villagers for grain collection or other government programmes than for forwarding communities' development needs upwards. Another village head was all praises for the Member of Parliament (MP) and not for the RDC. The MP had sourced for funds for a garden project after responding to such a request made by some villagers in his constituency. Community members, including Caritas beneficiaries and volunteers, perceived local authorities to be turning a blind eye to issues they raised in VIDCO meetings.

Respondents from one village argued that they had actually raised money on their own to buy pipes to bring water to their village from the nearby dam. This was after their plea to council via VIDCO meetings had not brought anything fruitful. Two respondents from the same village

argued that the RDC was supposed to have at least given them some feedback merely as an acknowledgement that Council was aware of such a project. Three local women and two (female) Caritas volunteers complained about walking long distances to fetch water because local authorities were not doing anything about their predicament, despite having raised this issue almost whenever there was a VIDCO meeting. Some youths and Caritas beneficiaries indicated that the RDC had failed to listen to community concerns raised in VIDCO meetings because of alleged cases of corruption, politicization of Council and elite capture. The more radical views were calling for a complete change of government in order to clean up what they termed the 'rot' or 'mess' in Council. The respondents who gave positive responses largely cited the repair of boreholes and roads. As we went around villages during fieldwork, we also observed that some roads which link Zvimba with other districts had been repaired. However, those found around villages were, indeed, still in a very bad state.

While the above consultations at the VIDCO level also include Catholic volunteers and parishioners as well as other community members as alluded to by Mr. Mweembe, it is imperative to note that, as the people's development preferences or priorities filter up to the higher levels, they may not receive much attention. Scholars such as Makumbe (2010), Chatiza *et al.* (2013) and Kurebwa (2015) have identified issues of elite dominance in the selection of projects. Some are ignored while others are merely shelved elsewhere in preference for projects deemed relevant by those at the top. Yes, people do participate in identifying their development needs but, in the end, it may be that very little of what they have contributed in VIDCO meetings will ever see the light of day as implicitly highlighted in a number of responses given above.

In Chapter 3, we noted that VIDCOs and WADCOs are often used by RDC officials, District Administrators, local and central government as well as politicians as platforms for conveying government information and directives. In Mr. Mweembe's perception, he sees the lower structures (VIDCOs and WADCOs) as being effective bottom-up channels where the views of community members (including those of Caritas volunteers and parishioners) can influence the decisions made at the top (RDDC). While some interviewees, like Mr Mweembe, claim that community members can get their views across effectively through using structures like VIDCOs and WADCOs, other participants made it clear that they did not feel listened to at such meetings. For instance, in an earlier discussion, it was mentioned that one village head perceived MPs to be better than the RDC in responding to their needs, while another village head

argued that local authorities hardly listened to views deliberated in VIDCO meetings. This is despite Caritas officials' presence in some RDC meetings where they claim to represent the development needs of their churchgoers.

While Mr. Mweembe is suggesting that the RDDC has effective consultation processes through VIDCO and WADCO meetings, the research findings suggest that these meetings are not very effective processes in representing the development interests of Caritas parishioners and other community members. In Chapter 4, a very interesting argument by Manji (2017) was raised. He stressed that NGOs as well as government officials cannot claim that they can speak on behalf of community members and neither can they be responsible representatives of local communities, as compared to groups that represent community members themselves.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the most pressing concern has been that RDCs and DAs do not take the development inputs of the VIDCOs and WADCOs seriously. Instead, most RDDC development meetings are top-down where central government blueprints and RDDC development planning take precedence over the development decisions of community members. Such hegemony is also observed in Chapter 6, where CSOT development interventions were shown to have been a preserve of the RDC, DA and the Chief(s). Community members rarely contribute meaningfully to the District's development plan. Participation in these structures remains far from being satisfactory. Development projects which do not often come from the needs and priorities of the concerned communities still abound despite the calls for more people centred participatory approaches. This is an area I now turn to.

#### **8.4 Legitimizing predetermined development interventions**

Many scholars (Clark, 1992; Fowler, 1992; Hudock, 2000; Power *et al.*, 2002; Abdul-Raheem, 2007; Shivji, 2007) show that efforts have been made by NGOs to make their development projects more participatory and accountable to local communities or beneficiaries, but that an underlying challenge has been that donor funding has undermined the ability of these NGOs to come up with projects that genuinely address the needs and priorities of community members. It therefore becomes imperative to find out whether Caritas' international donors are also into the habit of dictating the type of development intervention to be implemented in a specific area, thus undermining community members' ability to prioritise their development requests and major concerns.

On the topic of donor funding, Mr. Mweembe highlighted that:

Most of our projects are donor funded and this funding is mainly coming from our Caritas Internationalis member organizations. Yes, here and there, we have individual philanthropists within our Church and they at times, fund some projects in different dioceses (Interview, Mr C. Mweembe, 24/10/2016).

He went on to say:

As Caritas, we have much independence because most of those projects come from the people especially we have the donor round table where bishops present the issues from each commission. Caritas is a commission, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace is a commission, Health is a commission, Education is a commission, Communication is a commission and so on. So, each Bishop mandated to chair those commissions in collaboration with the national director of each commission they present and the funding partners will be there, picking issues or project ideas to be developed. And in doing so, I can totally say we have that independence of course. And also from another end, the funding partners might be aware of some technical issues which then they would assist Caritas to come up with (Interview, Mr. C. Mweembe, 24/10/2016).

Providing a somewhat different perspective on donor funding, the Caritas Chinhoyi Diocese finance Officer Ms. Mudiwa stressed that:

All our projects are donor funded. We rely on donor funding. The bulk of the money is channelled towards community level development. Some say 70% should be channelled for community development while 30% should cater for overheads while others insist on 80% and 20%. All donors are into accountability and transparency. They need proof of accountability and transparency from us and, we have budgets that we do and we operate according to those budgets. Every donor has its own regulations and expectations so you have to familiarise yourself with the expectations of the donors. In the implementation of our projects we always ensure compliance with our donors. We have to account for all the funds that we receive. It also goes with the compliance issues (Interview, Ms Mudiwa, 15/11/2016).

From the first quote, Mr. Mweembe seems to be suggesting that donors do not drive the development agenda. But the impression is that maybe bishops drive the agenda on behalf of community members whom they represent at the international donor round table fora. However, according to Ms. Mudiwa, donors have many rules and regulations and expectations. So, in a way, she is suggesting that donors do drive the development agenda. This echoes the findings of Powell and Seddon (1997) and other scholars who have argued that the development industry is made up of various Northern agencies who through multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, European Development Bank and regional banks now exercise extreme power and influence over governments and people of the 'developing countries'. Of concern to these authors is whether local NGOs can be in a position to put and fit together their own strategic development plans (which are pro-poor) with those of the funders who design the project concepts far away in Northern capitals. Father Chenyika makes it clear that:

I think in Zimbabwe, if you want to be very truthful, that question is not only difficult to answer, but, we try you know, to sugar everything else. Why? Because we rely 100% on donor funds, isn't it? We have projects which we know if they were implemented in the community they would better their lives. But, since we don't get a funder to give us money to help these people we then have to rely on what the donors offer us. For example, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) money from UNICEF, we usually search our data base to see if there is a community that once requested for such assistance. After that we then channel the resources to the community which we would have identified in the data base (Interview, Fr Chenyika, 15/11/2016).

In Caritas' case, it is next to impossible for the NGO to challenge the funders on what they decide their funds are supposed to be used for. Father Chenyika is clear that it is only after the donor has decided on which development project they want to be funded, that the NGO can identify if there is any community in their data base which has a similar project in mind. This implies it is through sheer luck or mere coincidence that a project chosen by a community similarly happens to be the one chosen by the donor. In other words, donors select projects of their choice and if communities are lucky enough their project preference might tally with that of the donor. NGOs cannot turn down donor funds. They need them to sustain their operations. Donor funds are the life blood of their very existence. Fowler (1992) emphasizes that the work of NGOs is critically dependent on donor funds. The three Caritas officials also acknowledge this. Father Chenyika adds that:

You get where the catch is? We don't have the liberty to go with projects to the donors and say the communities are saying that and then you get the money; rather, we get donors who say they can fund such and such a project and then now the onus is on us to look at all these communities we are working with – then we say, that project can suit this community because this is what they had requested. We are not really free. You are only free when you are working with unrestricted funds. But when we have these restricted funds – usually they are mainly for a specific purpose. Sometimes you are forced to implement some of the projects not because you really want to do this, but, you don't have an option because you rely 100% on donor funds. So, they tell you what to do – or they just tell you that we are funding these thematic areas and now it's up to you to find where you can implement such programmes. (Interview, Fr Chenyika, 15/11/2016).

Father Chenyika's comments resonate with what was said in Chapter 4 in relation to the ways in which donor funding undermines the innovativeness, freedom, legitimacy, accountability, and ability of NGOs to come up with people centred development initiatives (Mitlin *et al.*, 2007). In the case of Caritas, it seems its donors also have a lot of influence over some of its activities. While in Chapter 7 claims were made by the faith based NGO that it undertakes needs assessments and baseline surveys, evidence from fieldwork suggests that these practices are carried out in such a way that the questions asked tend to follow pre-determined

donor thematic areas, thus limiting people's choices in selecting projects that really concern them. Sub-section 8.5.2 provides a more nuanced examination of the relationship between donors, funding, Caritas and Caritas' needs assessments/baseline surveys. In Section 8.3, it was noted that Ms Mudiwa argues that Caritas' projects fit into RDC project initiatives. This is so since, even if Caritas' development interventions have been predetermined by donors as suggested below by DA Tizora, they still have helped to complement some of Zvimba RDC's development plans, bearing in mind the financial challenges being currently faced by Zimbabwean RDCs. The RDC officials as noted in Section 8.3 also largely endorse NGO projects which they mainly consider to be beneficial to local communities. Thus, a big challenge that most NGOs face, as alluded to by Father Chenyika, is that while they might want to come up with projects that can benefit many people, this depends on whether their donors are willing to fund such an initiative and whether the initiative matches the RDC's priorities. This creates a huge dilemma for NGOs since most funders determine what projects the NGO is expected to undertake. Similarly, RDCs only accept NGO projects which do not carry any political connotations. At times, if lucky, a donor might be thinking of funding a project in an area and so it happens that it is also the same project that the community would have requested or that the RDC wanted to be implemented within the local community.

Caritas' constraints are not unique. According to DA Tizora, other NGOs operating in Zvimba District also arrive in the community with their own pre-planned projects:

NGOs in Zvimba come with their own ideas. They come with predetermined development interventions. Fortunately, or unfortunately, since we are in a state of want, we cannot turn them away. They have never come to ask us what type of projects we need in our district. Maybe it is because those who fund them determine what projects they are supposed to undertake in a district. We have no option but to accept what they offer us. They always come with targeted projects in areas where they want to operate. When they come in our district, we always have consultative meetings with them. However, I wouldn't want to call them consultative meetings, but they are actually sensitization meetings. They always sensitize us on the projects they want to carry out. So, they don't consult, they sensitize us (Interview, DA Tizora, 28/11/16).

Regarding Caritas projects, the DA went on to emphasise that:

Caritas is not different from the rest of them; it also makes us aware of the projects or it sensitizes us on the interventions it wants to implement in the wards. The last time they were here, they came up with their predetermined projects. I think it has a lot to do with their funders. They do not carry out consultative processes .... (Interview, DA Tizora, 28/11/16).

I argue that poor rural communities are supposed to be seen as the primary stakeholders in the development process. It is not asking for too much to call for their 'full participation' in

matters that help shape their future lives. Failure to do so will undermine the whole gamut of participatory development. In Zvimba, as argued by DA Tizora, the donors and NGOs' interests subordinate the interests of community members and these dominant interests undermine the genuine needs and priorities of the local communities. I highlight some of these concerns in the sections below. Thus, Caritas at times advances the development interests of the donors at the expense of those of community members as alluded to by Father Chenyika. A former Caritas intern said that, '*Mukoma* [big brother], no one in his right sense can turn down donor funds. If you are told to jump, you don't ask how high. You simply do it' (Interview Tafanenyasha, 10/01/17). Caritas therefore willingly or unwillingly legitimizes pre-planned donor-driven development interventions while undermining community members' own development initiatives. As such, donor demands become an 'albatross' on the faith-based NGO's operations limiting its ability to be participatory in development processes.

### **8.5 Participation of community members in Caritas' development interventions**

This section forms a crucial part of this thesis as it focuses on answering the key question asked in this thesis: does the community participate in the decision-making process of Caritas? As laid out in Chapter 7, Caritas officials made claims to the effect that they promote the participation of community members in their development initiatives. The claims implied that community members were in control of their own development. Similarly, during field work, Caritas officials whom I interviewed made claims that their development interventions were anchored in participatory development initiatives. Mr. Mweembe pointed out that:

We normally involve the community in whatever we are doing. Communities participate actively in designing, identifying and planning, and implementing and evaluating the intervention... We are on a journey together with the grassroots. We can't prescribe solutions to the challenges that they are facing ... Since I joined Caritas in 2016, from what we have been emphasizing with the diocesan coordinators or the managers at the diocese level is to involve everyone who is affected in terms of development interventions in order for us to be more relevant as well as to empower the communities. Caritas' current thrust is to play with the community, journey with the community, laugh with the community, cry with the community, and so on (Interview, Mr Mweembe, 24/10/2016).

In Section 8.4, I included a quote in which Father Chenyika argued that donors determine what Caritas does; however, at another point in the interview, he suggested that a bottom-up approach is better:

If you want a project to be owned by the community, there is only one way to do it. The project should use a bottom-up approach. Programmes should start from the communities. The



communities tell the implementing partners what they need and then you look at the positives which the said communities cannot provide. If you use a top-down approach, you risk a situation where at the termination of the project, that is the demise of the project. This is what we have come to realize – the projects should come from the communities. (Interview, Fr Chenyika, 15/11/2016).

Another Caritas official, Ms. Mudiwa, also spoke in favour of a bottom-up approach:

Some communities say they want dams or gardens. Normally, its agricultural based projects. From Zvimba, they have requested us to establish a market where they can sell their own produce. They want to set up a market place here in Chinhoyi from Zvimba. So, they have come up with everything and currently we are now sourcing for funds from donors to fund that project (Interview, Ms. Mudiwa, 15/11/2016).

The above claims will be compared to what was on the ground regarding Caritas projects in general and Zvimba District in particular. The claims will be analysed in the sub-sections below.

### **8.5.1 Community participation in Caritas' development interventions**

The Caritas website indicates that they have Catholic volunteers who are recruited locally in the villages. This encourages local participation in development projects since these local volunteers can easily communicate and consult with other community members regarding development interventions. The three senior Caritas officials interviewed in this study were also in concurrence that the volunteers play a huge role in capturing the development needs of community members, which they then forward to Caritas field officers who then also forward these concerns to the Diocese. From the Diocese, these concerns are then further forwarded to the offices of the national coordinator. To be more specific, when Catholic volunteers meet at St Kizito Parish at Murombedzi Business Centre, they brief the priest about the problems or challenges faced in the communities they come from. Written reports are given to the priest who then forwards them to Chinhoyi where the DDCor and his team of development 'experts' will analyse the documents for immediate or future consideration.

Mrs. Chiutsi, a Caritas volunteer in Madzorera village, stressed that '[c]ommunity members always approach us about problems they are facing in the village. The most pertinent ones are water, community gardens and poultry projects' (Interview, Mrs. Chiutsi, 08/12/2016). Chinhoyi Diocese communicates its intentions to carry out development projects for a specific community through the priest, who then informs the volunteers about the intervention (Informal interview, Caritas Key informant, 17/01/2018). These volunteers will then help to prepare the ground (mobilizing community members) before the intervention commences. The volunteers

also play a very active part in mobilising community members in the implementation of Caritas projects. It is these volunteers who are then tasked to temporarily oversee Caritas projects, such as projects related to the raising of the heifers and goats.

I will not dwell much on the heifer project since during field work, when word circulated that there were people (in reference to me and my research assistant) who were inquiring about the heifers and goats, some beneficiaries threatened the two Catholic volunteers who were assisting us in trying to locate them. One of the volunteers told us that word going around the village was that two Caritas officials had been tasked by the Diocese to take away the calves, cows and bulls from those who had benefitted from the heifer project. This made many of the beneficiaries avoid us. We later heard that some had temporarily moved their animals to friends and relatives in neighbouring villages. However, the majority of those who had benefitted from the goat project, some like Gogo Mbudzi (discussed in a sub-section below), were more than willing to speak to us and so what follows will focus on this project.

Caritas volunteers regularly attend meetings at St Kizito Parish at Murombedzi Centre where they are told that about projects which Caritas wants to carry out in the villages. The meetings are held monthly and are attended by volunteers from various Catholic churches in villages under the jurisdiction of St Kizito Parish. *Sekuru* (Grandpa) Mwedzi indicated that:

It was at one of the meetings that we were told that various projects were in the pipeline for Zvimba District. The following month when we attended another meeting, we were then told about the goat project. They told us that they were going to give orphans and the elderly some does (female goats) for breeding (Interview, 05/12/2016).

After about two months, the volunteers were abruptly informed to come to St Kizito Parish with their selected beneficiaries to collect the goats. The programme was designed in such a way that vulnerable community members would be grouped in threes. The first beneficiary would be given a doe (female goat). He/she would then have to wait for about five months' gestation period of the doe until it bred its kid(s). The kid(s) would then belong to the first beneficiary and the doe would be handed to the second beneficiary after the weaning of its young ones in about 12 weeks' time (nearly three months). The first beneficiary would also have to wait for another 13 to 15 months before his/her bred kid (s) would also start breeding. That adds up to almost a year and seven months after their birth. The second beneficiary would also go through the same long process before handing the doe to the third beneficiary, who would eventually remain as the owner of the goat and the kids bred thereafter.

The volunteers were never told beforehand when exactly the goats would arrive. When they finally came, the announcement caught them by surprise since they had not yet identified those individuals who were supposed to benefit from the programme. Mrs. Mhepo admitted that:

We were simply told to bring the beneficiaries with us. Of course, unprepared as we were, we simply ran around picking on those orphans and the elderly whom we knew. To tell you the truth, the selection was *chipata pata* (quite haphazard). We did not have enough time to search widely for others who were also quite vulnerable (Interview, Mrs. Mhepo, 08/12/2016).

From my field work observations, I also noted that the goat beneficiaries were not spread out as I had expected. The beneficiaries lived quite close to the Catholic volunteers. The net had not been cast wide enough to represent a fair distribution of the goats to other areas within the village. It was thus, no wonder that, during Caritas Focus Group B discussions, a respondent highlighted that:

There are many vulnerable people in this community and in my own view I think the NGO was supposed to have assisted us with a garden project so that many poor people would have also benefitted. This does not mean I am against those who were given the goats, but I think more people were supposed to have benefitted from a bigger project. (Interview, Caritas Group B, 08/12/2016).

For another respondent in focus Group C:

Projects which target a specific group in society at times create some unintended results. From my own experience, such projects usually cause some bitterness among the non-beneficiaries especially those who also thought that they were in the same, or worse off position, than those who benefitted (Interview, Caritas Group C, 09/12/2016).

As argued by the above respondents, others who were even worse off than some of those who had been chosen were completely left out. Chambers (2008) gives reference to indigenous technical knowledge where he asserts that community members have abundant knowledge and a deep and accurate understanding of some issues, more than the NGO or government experts. He notes that community members themselves can easily identify those who are poorer in their communities. Caritas could have relied on a wealth ranking participatory technique (discussed in Chapter 2) in identifying individuals for the goat and heifer projects.

If such an approach had been adopted, the volunteers, with the help of the village head, could have convened a meeting with the whole village during which the most vulnerable members in the community could have been identified. Such a selection process would have also minimised the varied complaints that later characterized the goat project.

While the volunteers did all that they could in identifying those they thought were the most vulnerable in the village, the problem was that they only chose from a pool of those whom they knew within the areas they lived. However, the volunteers believed that what they had done was the right thing. In this regard, Mrs. Mhepo pointed out that:

Of course, word also came to me that some volunteers had either benefitted themselves or had given the goats to some close relatives whom they categorized as being vulnerable. I fear God and so it was my task to do what the Bible teaches us about those who among us are less fortunate than some of us. I therefore did not personally benefit from the goat project. My heart feels a lot of joy for having assisted people like Gogo Mbudzi, whom I really knew needed that assistance (Interview, Mrs. Mhepo, 08/12/2016).

In Chapter 7, we noted that the volunteers who carry out Caritas work in the villages are expected to be selfless, altruistic, generous, humane and above all benevolent and compassionate towards others. Sekuru Mwedzi pointed out that ‘[t]hough I am also very poor, I had to give the goats to those who were poorer than me.’ (Interview, Sekuru Mwedzi, 05/12/2016). However, there are always those few who always defy such teachings out of sheer greed and selfishness. The heifer and the goat projects were indeed not spared of such cases of greediness and egotism. A Catholic village chairman confiscated a heifer from a beneficiary who was non-Catholic and that was that. When he heard that we were moving around, he conveyed a message full of vulgar language and death threats to the two volunteers who were assisting us to locate such beneficiaries. Apart from the threats, the majority of villagers who had not benefitted from both projects did not hide their annoyance towards those who had. An elderly Catholic woman did not hide her resentment of non-Catholics like Gogo Mbudzi who had benefitted from the goat project. She said that ‘Caritas was supposed to give Catholics first than non-Catholics. We are old, poor and were also supposed to be given the goats too’ (Interview, Elderly Catholic woman, 08/12/2016). A local teacher stressed that:

No matter how vulnerable a person is, the moment you give him or her something like a heifer or goat, this will always create some envy among the beneficiary’s neighbours. Surprisingly enough, this jealousy is despite the fact that these local people have these animals at their homesteads. I think Caritas erred by failing to come up with a more inclusive project that would involve more people than the few beneficiaries of the goat and heifer projects (Interview, Local teacher, 20/12/2016).

It was only Gogo Mbudzi’s group, where at least all the three beneficiaries benefitted from the doe project. In the additional cases we studied, we noted that the goats never benefited the other intended beneficiaries. This was contrary to what Caritas had planned.

In most development projects, there are often some unforeseen challenges that at times negatively impact on a development intervention and, worse still, if the project is imposed from above or is top-down. The goat project faced various challenges as highlighted by these extracts from interviews with community members:

Mai Bhandeji told us that the goat had died of natural causes when it was time for her to hand the doe over to my nephews, who are orphans. We knew that she was lying since we had heard from her neighbour as well as from her close relative who was also privy to the whereabouts of the goat that it was actually alive but, had been relocated to her daughter's place in another village (Interview, Mai Matwins, 05/12/2016).

Emily, a former student at a local secondary school, said that '[w]e know of a beneficiary who kept both the doe and the kid goats without handing the doe to the next beneficiary. As we speak, she now has almost twenty to twenty-three goats in all.' (Interview, Emily, 16/12/2016). Gogo Mavis had this to say:

We were very unlucky. Our goat succumbed to disease and it died. When these goats were brought to us, Caritas never checked whether some of them were diseased. I had to call Sekuru Mwedzi, Mrs. Mhepo and the other beneficiaries to see for themselves that the goat had died (Interview, Gogo Mavis, 16/12/2016).

In addition, Sekuru Mwedzi stressed that:

The goat project created tension between some beneficiaries especially when the goat bred a buck. With a doe, one was assured of many other goats in a few years' time. If you were lucky, you would exchange the buck with someone who had does but, in most cases, the villagers were not quite comfortable with such swaps (Interview, Sekuru Mwedzi, 05/12/2016).

The above responses are a clear indication that NGOs are in most cases supposed to thoroughly monitor their projects. While Caritas' idea of leaving the locals in total control was quite noble, the NGO was also supposed to have monitored the projects in the first few months of project commencement in order to see if there were any challenges that the beneficiaries were facing. To merely 'dump' the animals and just disappear was viewed as unprofessional by some of the Caritas volunteers. Sekuru Mwedzi pointed out that:

There was no follow up. We sent a report that some goats were dying. Caritas was supposed to have assisted us in that regard. You need to come back and monitor your projects. A meeting with the beneficiaries was also needed in order to help them on how to look after the goats.

For Mrs. Mhepo:

We told them that the goats were dying and no action was ever taken. Not a single field officer came to assess what was really going on. We had thought that by communicating such information to them, they would quickly provide us with the necessary drugs. Remember, these beneficiaries are very poor and in all fairness, how could they afford to buy such drugs? (Interview, Mrs. Mhepo, 08/12/2016).

Caritas did not carry out any kind monitoring nor did it conduct an external evaluation in these villages. A monitoring and evaluation exercise was needed to find out, from the beneficiaries, the successes and challenges they had encountered in implementing the projects. As mentioned elsewhere, in the goat project, some goats were already diseased when they were given to the beneficiaries and these soon died.

Caritas has been accused by some volunteers of failing to do what they claim to do. Those we interviewed, in focus groups A (5 males), B (8 females) and C (8 females), the 4 volunteers (including the 2 who were assisting us), 2 youths and 3 teachers, all acknowledged that Caritas' projects in Zvimba never came from community members. A female volunteer said:

We used to write reports on what people in the community wanted. In this village, there is hardly any water. We need more boreholes. To tell you the truth, none of the projects we gave them was ever taken into consideration. What I know is that Caritas projects are initiated from the top, that is, from the Diocese. Our local priest at the parish only follows orders from the diocese in Chinhoyi (Interview, one female volunteer, 05/12/2016).

A teacher who showed some knowledge about the origins of the goat and heifer projects explained that:

Caritas' goat and heifer projects initially started in Mutoko District where they were said to have been a success. However, the underlying challenge of such projects is that, what one beneficiary considers best, might not be so for another. Imposing a development project on the grassroots may not always bring out favourable results or outcomes. One should keep in mind that any successful project is one that comes from the development priorities of the local communities themselves (Interview, Local teacher, 20/12/2016).

When the theme of 'community consultations' was raised in focus groups A, B and C, the general view from the participants was that no consultations ever took place. Beneficiaries of the goat project indicated that they only came to know about the project when Catholic volunteers picked them up to collect the goats. The views were quite varied and these included: criticisms of Caritas' alleged arrogance towards communities; perceptions that village people were ignorant, illiterate and shallow minded; opinions that the NGO was taking advantage of them because of poverty in the villages; and a view that the NGO thought it knew better about the communities' problems than the communities themselves. In focus group B, one participant made the discussion very lively as she mockingly said:

Caritas does not want to burden our tiny minds about thinking on which project can best serve our needs as a community. They just do that on our behalf. You see, they peel and chew the banana for us. All we have to do is to swallow it. I think if they had the means they would also even help us to swallow it (Focus Group B, Interview 08/12/2016).

Such responses are clear testimony to the fact that there are many potential discrepancies between the actions taken by Caritas and the interests of those that are supposed to be served. Under the circumstances, community members in villages in Zvimba lose their ability to decide independently on projects which really address their needs. It is therefore evident from the foregoing that the communities under study were participating in pre-determined projects. All they had to do was to implement pre-planned development projects and, to make matters worse, these development interventions lacked any monitoring and evaluation.

### **8.5.2 Caritas' baseline surveys**

In Chapter 7, it was claimed that Caritas carries out baseline surveys which help to capture community members' development concerns and requirements. It is during such surveys that local communities are said to have a chance to select development projects of their choice. Regarding the participation of the local communities in Caritas' baseline surveys, Mr. Mweembe said that:

We discuss with those priests. Otherwise, they are the ones who give us the projects on the ground because they get a lot of information from the people who are coming from the communities. These issues do not only affect Catholics but they affect the entire community. After getting such reports, that's when we then conduct the needs assessments or the baseline surveys and these of course involve a number of stakeholders including the government itself, the extension workers will be part of the needs assessment teams. A need assessment is done, data is gleaned, analysed and reports are made, then we have a clear project. There may be a main project coming out but, we go back to the community to say the results of the needs assessments are these, then, together we do the writing of which project they would want to do first, that is prioritization of projects. After identifying the projects, maybe choosing one, that's where now as technocrats or project officers from Caritas, they sit down to come up with a project proposal and also to engage the funding partners if need be. Before even the finalization of funding, we can as well involve the funding partners on the needs assessment process (Interview, Mr Mweembe, 24/10/2016).

Father Chenyika also detailed the procedures for baseline surveys as Mr. Mweembe, when he pointed out that:

The project should be the brain-child of the community. Before we can send our proposals to the funding partners, we come back to them (the community), to find out if we have captured the proper information that they need; and then we submit our proposals to our funding partners. I wouldn't want to speak for other dioceses but here in Chinhoyi, we believe that communities should maintain their own projects (Interview, Fr Chenyika, 15/11/2016).

He further added that:

So, what we have realised is when you want these projects to happen, they should come from the communities. This is the approach that we are now using that let's look for projects that are needed by the communities and then we try to tweak them a bit. Even before we send our

proposals to our funding partners, we go back to them and say this is what we think we can do together with you; have we captured enough information or the proper information of which you think that is what you need? When I came here, this is what I said should be done (Interview, Fr Chenyika, 15/11/2016).

Ms. Mudiwa simply highlighted that '[w]e carry out needs assessments and we also engage the local leadership and local authority.' The three Caritas officials raise very important issues which echo the thinking of most participatory development advocates (and PRA, PAR and PLA practitioners) by emphasising that projects need to be sustainable by wholly involving the local communities in the development initiative, especially through baseline surveys or needs assessments. However, there is little evidence on the ground in Zvimba to suggest that Caritas' development interventions were indeed guided by such noble thinking.

In response to the above claims made by the three senior Caritas officials, Agrippa, a former Caritas intern, argued that:

When Caritas carries out some baseline surveys in the communities, the questions they use are designed in such a way that they guide the respondents to focus on a specific line of thinking which is usually biased towards their pre-planned project document (Interview, Agrippa, 15/12/2016).

In addition, another former Caritas intern Tafanenyasha also stressed that:

What I found disturbing about Caritas' baseline survey was that the survey was conducted after the proposals had been accepted by the donors, meaning that they were opposed to the grassroots' real needs. I think Caritas is supposed to be honest enough by carrying out these surveys before writing a proposal [so] as to assemble the real needs of the people first, then write the proposal (Interview, Tafanenyasha, 10/01/2017).

The above responses show mixed reactions to the issue of baseline surveys. While all respondents do acknowledge that Caritas sometimes does carry out baseline surveys to access people's needs, as highlighted by Father Chenyika, the weakness of the surveys has been that they are pre-determined before they are carried out.

The views of the two former Caritas interns echo the concerns of Mrs. Chingwaru, who suggested that:

They must first start with community mobilization so that they will hear what the people want. It is not good at all to just impose development projects on the grassroots. They need to carry out surveys in order to capture the real needs of the community. The surveys will help them assess whether a project they want implemented in a community is what the people wanted in the first place. The people know what exactly they want in terms of development interventions. In order to empower the community, the people are supposed to be also given a platform to decide on their development needs (Interview, Mrs. Chingwaru, 06/12/2016).



In Caritas' focus groups A and B, there was a general consensus among the respondents that the NGO had not carried out any baseline surveys for various projects, which included the heifer and goat projects (issues which were discussed above in greater detail). A respondent in focus group A said that 'Caritas simply comes with its own projects. They never ask us what we also want in our area' (Interview, Focus Group A, 07/12/2016).

Father Chenyika in a veiled statement seems to also suggest that, in most cases, field officers have no option but to select development interventions they think are relevant to community members' needs. He mentions that:

So far I wouldn't want to say we are at the best. I think we are around 60%. There are dynamics in the communities which are sometimes very difficult to circumvent. At the end of the day, you end up making a decision, but you know it is not the right thing to do, but simply because you want things to move forward. But we try to involve them like even be it we are doing the baseline we try to involve them in the inception of the project. We try also to involve all the stakeholders who matter (Interview, Fr Chenyika, 15/11/2016).

This suggests that the elites at the Diocese, just like the donors mentioned elsewhere, have a tendency of coming up with development interventions which they believe are most suitable for community members.

Agrippa and Tafanenyasha's narratives show that there is some dishonesty in the way baseline surveys are carried out by Caritas project officers. In the end, such projects do not address the real needs of community members and so it may then well be that, once the NGO leaves the area, this will mark the 'death' of the project. It is through genuine baseline surveys that the real needs of community members can be addressed. A manipulation of such research instruments undermines Caritas' claims that their projects highly consider the real desires and major concerns of community members especially those of the communities in Zvimba and elsewhere.

### **8.5.3 Examining Caritas' herbal remedies workshop in Zvimba**

As laid out in Chapter 7, Caritas among many other development interventions also embarks on HIV and AIDS projects as well as on other public health programmes. Due to lack of access to medical drugs by many rural communities in Zvimba District, Caritas decided to train local women with knowledge and skills on how best to assist community members through the use of herbal remedies for the treatment of some ailments. This would help improve the health of community members as well as cut on hospital costs. Twenty-five women were selected from

various wards in the District to attend a workshop on herbal remedies at St Kizito Parish, Murombedzi Business Centre. These women were chosen through the help of Catholic volunteers and they comprised of both Catholics and non-Catholics. Interestingly, no consultations were made in the District on whether such a workshop would be worthwhile. Caritas merely assumed that local women would support the programme because of the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other ailments within the District. Caritas came up with a programme which it thought was suitable for the District without, of course, consulting community members on whether they were in support of such an intervention. I focus on the herbal remedies workshop as I try to determine whether predetermined development interventions can really be sustainable in the long run. The most important aspect of any development intervention is that it remains sustainable long after the NGO has left the area.

A particular problem is that, in practice, a project in which top-down decisions are made is unsustainable. Father Chenyika stressed that:

I strongly believe that the grassroots should choose their own projects. You will help them but, they will have to choose their own project. They will own that project and they will make sure it will not die. So, it will be a plus for that community, for donors only come for a particular period then they move out. But do we want to have a situation when we move out, we move out with the project? [What we are] trying to achieve now by engaging the community [is] sustainable development. Interview, Fr Chenyika, 15/11/2016).

Out of the twenty-five women who attended the Caritas workshop on herbal remedies held at St Kizito Parish, only one of them had managed to sustain her project. Even before the Caritas intervention, she had a passion (through local knowledge) for growing seedlings for sale to local community members. She was one of the Catholic women selected by Caritas volunteers in her village to undergo an intensive two-day Caritas workshop on herbal remedies. Mrs. Mureza said:

I am indebted to Caritas for imparting such invaluable knowledge to me. What I gained from that workshop helped me to diversify on the types of saplings I was growing at that time. I now have vast experience of herbs that I can grow to help local community members who have minor ailments. I have never looked back since that time (Interview, Mrs. Mureza, 05/12/2016).

For another participant, Mrs. Hamadzashe, the only evidence that remained to confirm that she had indeed once grown the herbs at her homestead was the certificate that hung on her wall. Other than that she had since entirely abandoned the herbal project. There was no sign whatsoever that she had once been a Catholic woman assigned with a very important task of assisting her village with simple herbs for minor ailments and also for assisting those HIV positive. Herbs such as Moringa are known to partially suppress or control some ailments linked

to HIV and AIDS though in no way do they cure the illness. During my interview with her, she could not remember much of what she had learnt at the workshop. She stressed that:

If you look at the herbs project, those of us who were selected to initiate the programme were supposed to be given incentives as well as to be taken for refresher courses. Rural women, especially when considering our level of education, easily forget some of the things they are taught. As such, refresher courses were needed to find out if we still remembered what we were taught. New ideas would then also be imparted in these courses. Caritas was supposed to monitor the progress of the herb project after two or three months of project commencement. They only taught us and then immediately disappeared (Interview, Mrs. Hamadzashe, 05/12/2016).

The above view contrasted that of Mrs. Mureza who showed easy mastery of what they had been taught over the years. She managed to give very detailed descriptions of the various herbs which she said were quite helpful to some local community members' health needs. While Mrs. Hamadzashe highlighted that she had abandoned the programme due to lack of incentives, refresher courses and a follow-up from Caritas, Mrs. Mureza simply said she had sustained her project owing to her passion in growing saplings. She pointed out that: 'The challenge that I face today is of extra cash to buy some seeds and polythene pockets for planting the seedlings. However, I have of late been collecting some empty plastic beer containers to improvise for the polythene pockets' (Interview, Mrs. Mureza, 05/12/2016).

**Figure 7: Mrs. Mureza's flourishing herbal garden**



Basing on the above two cases, it is important to note that the value of a development project is usually determined by the beneficiaries. A development project that seeks to retain some significance among community members or one that community members can attach some importance to, is one that they decide on for themselves. Such an intervention is more likely to be sustainable, as alluded to by Father Chenyika. However, as noted by Vivian and Maseko

(1993), most NGOs have seen the process of consulting communities on development interventions as time consuming, especially when the project is supposed to be completed within a specific time frame. NGOs often try by all means possible to come up with ‘suitable’ development interventions that they think community members might appreciate. In most cases, the NGO officials predetermine the development projects or they carry out development interventions which were once successful in other villages or districts. However, the underlying challenge of such projects is that what one beneficiary considers best, as is the case with Mrs. Mureza’s herbal project, might not be so for another, as is also the case with Mrs. Hamadzashe. Imposing a development project on community members may not always bring out favourable results or outcomes. Caritas should keep in mind that any successful project is one that the local communities can value deeply themselves.

What appears to be interesting about Mrs. Mureza’s case is that the project was imposed from the top, but she has kept it going on over the years while those of others (who attended the same workshop) abandoned the project years ago. The reason she persisted seems to be that she already had a passion for planting saplings and the workshop came as an opportunity to give her more ideas in an area she had always had an interest in. In Chapter 2, we noted that both local and outside knowledge can empower community members through a partnership between community and outsiders’ knowledge (Gaventa and Cornwall, 2006; Berman, 2017). However, in Mrs. Hamadzashe’s case as well as those of the rest of the women who had also undergone the same training with Mrs. Mureza, their projects crumbled over the years. This echoes the arguments raised in Chapter 2 by scholars such as Kumar (2006) and many others. These scholars’ argument was that if community members are not involved in designing a project, they lack the motivation to continue with the programme once the NGO leaves the area. The end result of such interventions would be that a few months or years down the line, there would be little evidence that such a project ever took place. This is exactly what happened to Mrs. Hamadzashe and the other Catholic and non-Catholic women’s herbal projects.

While claims by Caritas that the local communities are in control of their own development cannot be completely refuted, what tends to be missing in such claims is that one can only have total control and ownership of a development intervention if he/she is also involved in the selection of that development project. In Chapter 1, the introductory quote by Uphoff (1998) stated that:

Who participates and how they participate, are as important to consider as whether there is participation and what kind of participation it is. Just saying that there was participation tells us little. We need to know who participated and how (Uphoff, 1998:443).

This suggests that it will be naïve to say that community members participated in a development intervention without specifically highlighting what exactly they participated in and how.

#### **8.5.4 Impacts of community members' dependency on NGO projects in Zvimba**

It is important to acknowledge that even though a project might have been imposed from above, a beneficiary may also highly cherish it, provided it addresses a particular need. In the case of Gogo (Granny) Mbudzi, she had never owned a goat all her life until the Caritas project gave her one. This goat came at the right time and, indeed, it contributed immensely to her inner need. When further probed if she would have chosen something else had she been given the chance to select a project of her choice, she very quietly said that 'A beggar is not a chooser.' The goats we saw were like 'gold' to her and there was no way you could convince her that they were not. Gogo Mbudzi was content with the goat that the NGO had given her; a goat which, when her chance to keep it had come, had bred three goats for her and, then, over the years, the goats had increased in number to twenty-one. She remained ever indebted to the NGO that 'had given her a new life.' According to her, 'this was an immeasurable gift she would cherish all her life'. To show her gratitude, she shed some tears of joy. When one looked at her frail body, one felt pity for her. However, the goats clearly gave her satisfaction. Her twinkling small brown eyes told the whole story, revealing the depth of her gratitude to Caritas and Mai Mhepo, the Caritas volunteer, who had in the first place, selected her, as a beneficiary for the goat project.

Basing on Gogo Mbudzi's case, it can also be pointed out that top-down participation may also bring benefits to local communities, but not normally the socially transformative benefits which are usually a characteristic of genuine participation.

**Figure 8: Gogo Mbudzi admiring some of her goats**



Despite the happiness that was brought to Gogo's life, it is also imperative to argue that too much dependency on NGOs can make individuals tolerate unfavourable development interventions which are set against their own interests or needs. Gogo says 'A beggar is not a chooser', meaning that rural communities are still not able to overcome the standing problem of dependency on donors and NGOs. Ncube (2010) notes that donor-driven development projects not only perpetuate an unhealthy donor dependency cycle, but they also undermine the participation of poor communities in the development process. In most cases, communities are so poor that they have become over dependent on NGO funding, to the extent that they are more of 'beggars' than 'choosers' as is the case in Gogo Mbudzi's narrative. Normally, local communities are at a disadvantaged position and are unlikely to refuse NGO development projects as they lack the resources which NGOs have.

Victoria Michener (1998) offers an insightful look at how development NGOs can manipulate participation to suit their own interests or goals. Michener asserts that an undertone of 'planner-centred participation' (Michener, 1998:2109) can be found especially in the emphasis on the responsibilities of beneficiaries. Typically, villagers cannot afford to repudiate the NGO as they know that they may benefit from the assistance, as Gogo Mbudzi did, and because they lack the resources to continue a project on their own. In such circumstances, community

members lose forever their ability to think independently, to analyse and to see the world with their own individual set of eyes. In the end, they are dis-empowered (Kumar, 2002), reduced to 'objects' and not 'subjects' (Freire, 1972) of their own development initiatives.

Local communities remain dependent on the aid provided by NGOs. Their role in development projects is therefore pre-determined by priority areas and exigencies set up by NGOs. They remain as 'passive participants' in development projects formulated according to ideas and designs imposed upon them by the NGO, as was the case with the Caritas goat project. Due to dependency, community members are unable to actively participate in deciding on how best they can develop their localities. For PD to be effective, community members are expected to have the power to make decisions on issues that affect their general welfare. Participatory development ought not to entail an NGO deciding on behalf of the community what the community's needs are. Only the members of the community themselves can express these needs.

## **8.6 Participatory development and the politicization of Caritas projects**

In Chapter 6, I looked at the issue of political interference regarding CSOTs and the findings indicated that, indeed, ZANU PF politics has in a big way, impacted negatively on how community members participate in Zvimba CSOT development interventions. In this section, I interrogate how national politics influences community members' participation in Caritas' development initiatives in Zvimba. When questioned on the influence of national politics on Caritas's work, Mr. Mweembe was a bit hesitant owing to the unfavourable political environment when this interview was carried out in late 2016, but he noted that:

Maybe depending on that NGO, if it has a clear mandate, whether it has a clear strategy, whether it's focused on the poor; because there is no way that as Caritas, we are the Church, we are the servants of the people and therefore, we implement what the people would have told us and, as I said earlier on, it might be different from one community to the other or from one RDC to the other, but such cases happen when maybe the leaders at the local authority maybe the RDCs or DA's offices are political figures who then would want to use NGO projects as political mileage to garner support from the electorate (Interview, Mr.Mweembe,24/10/2016).

For Father Chenyika:

But, working for an NGO in Zimbabwe, you also understand what it means, especially if you are a faith based organization as the chances that you might be misinterpreted are very high. So, you need to play your cards well. But, make sure if you are going to implement a project on WASH, [you] implement a project on WASH, and leave politics to politicians or leave politics to those who are doing politics in their projects. We are doing livelihoods. We are doing education,



WASH and so on, and that is what we are supposed to stick to (Interview, Fr Chenyika, 15/11/2016).

Mr. Mweembe and Father Chenyika are indirectly referring to some of the cases raised in Chapter 4, of advocacy NGOs which focus on political issues concerning elections, good governance, democracy, and human rights. These have in some cases clashed with the Zimbabwean government and some officials have been arrested in the process. It was similarly noted that political intimidations are not only confined to NGOs in advocacy, as even those in development work have been targeted. A study carried out by Kayla Knight (2013) on World Vision Zimbabwe shows that well-organized NGO development interventions can lead community members to question the competency of the state in social service delivery. The argument is that the state sees itself as the only legitimate authority that can bring about genuine rural development. If the state fails to provide such services, it might perceive NGOs as a threat to its rural support base. Knight (2013) notes that the state's major concern is in maintaining its political hegemony in rural areas and it prioritises this, above even trying to enable NGOs to improve socio-economic development. Knight's arguments echo Father Chenyika's observations regarding state officials' attitudes towards some of Caritas' development interventions. He stresses that:

It is very challenging, I can assure you that, sometimes you go there, thinking you are going to talk about the issue of development then all of a sudden, somebody twists the whole thing and then it becomes political. We work in political provinces of Zimbabwe and sometimes you go there with the intention of carrying out participatory approaches then it ends up more of a political interrogation process (Interview, Fr Chenyika, 15/11/2016).

Father Chenyika's views are in line with Knight's argument that some development NGOs fear being targeted by government. She observes that both development and advocacy NGOs are quite cautious in avoiding direct confrontation with the state. As regards the manipulation of Caritas' development interventions by politicians, Father Chenyika added that:

When we implement projects, we implement them and leave them in the communities. Whatever happens after that ... [is] open to abuse. Why? I implement a project, maybe the one to do with the food distribution; and then, we are back here at the offices in Chinhoyi. The politician will say when he goes there for his rallies 'We sent Caritas here with the food. Did you get the food?' So, the chances of politicians abusing the system is so high (Interview, Fr Chenyika, 15/11/2016).

In the same vein, while avoiding mentioning the names of Zimbabwe's two major political parties, that is ZANU PF and MDC T, Mr. Mweembe (sounding very cautious in his statement) also stressed that:



Yes, I have heard of political interference, but, I haven't seen that under Caritas. But, I have heard as I monitored the work of dioceses across the country that there were other gatekeepers within their communities who could claim that it's the government which is doing ABCD and even some NGOs claiming that they are doing ABCD so you should support this candidate (Interview, Mr. Mweembe, 24/10/2016).

In an informal interview, a female respondent clearly captured Father Chenyika and Mr. Mweembe's concerns by commenting that, '[w]e are quite grateful to our ZANU PF government for sourcing food aid from Caritas and other NGOs'. (Informal interview, Anna, 13/01/2017). In addition, Cleopas, a ZANU PF youth, said that 'Caritas assisted us with various projects but we also have to thank our councillor and MP who directed them to our area'. Such thinking is influenced or shaped by what is discussed during village and ward meetings where ZANU PF discourse usually dominates the agendas of these gatherings. It is at these meetings, as noted by Father Chenyika and Mr. Mweembe, that community members are made to believe that it is because of ZANU PF's strong concern for the welfare of the masses that it seeks to engage NGOs to assist in various development interventions. This narrative was also quite dominant in two focus group interviews (Caritas Focus Groups A and B) where there was agreement during the discussions that the ZANU PF government was working around the clock to see to it that NGOs in the area would assist vulnerable communities.

Because politicians are connected to the very societies in which NGOs operate, they usually engage and cooperate with them in order to boost their legitimacy. Tensions between Caritas and the local political elites in Zvimba have been avoided because the NGO has indirectly boosted the political support of some politicians. DA Tizora stressed that:

In Zvimba, we have never turned away an NGO. So far, as Zvimba is concerned, we are in short supply of NGOs. We are actually inviting them to come. Currently, most NGOs are operating in Makonde District and our wish is for them to also come to our area. We have 35 wards in Zvimba District and the few NGOs we have are failing to cover the whole district. As long as they are doing projects in line with government procedures then they are welcome (Interview, DA Tizora, 28/11/2016).

The Zimbabwean government's relations with NGOs have over the years been cooperative as the economic crisis and unfavourable climatic conditions have persisted. The government has realised the important complementary role NGOs play in cushioning the poor in the prohibitive economic situation it finds itself in. NGOs have at times taken over this responsibility by complementing government efforts in meeting the basic needs of vulnerable rural communities. In order to enhance their local legitimacy, local politicians and government officials often

present NGO assistance as coming from them. This has been particularly evident when it comes to international food aid.

## **8.7 Conclusion**

The study showed that Caritas projects implemented in most villages in Zvimba were mainly top-down pre-planned development initiatives. An underlying weakness was that community members were insufficiently consulted in choosing the development intervention they wanted implemented in their area. While the NGO officials as well as various Caritas documents claimed that their initiatives were participatory, observations on the ground suggest otherwise. The participatory rhetoric was there, but it did not match what was found on the ground.

There were four key areas of concern. Firstly, Caritas did not carry out baseline surveys in the Zvimba cases studied. In Districts where these were done, Caritas field officers came up with questions which had a bias towards development choices of the faith-based NGO. Secondly, Caritas came up with predetermined projects which it imposed on community members. Pre-determined projects are tricky on a number of fronts. Without a clear commitment by Caritas to consult community members on their development needs and project priority areas, there is always a danger that the projects cannot be sustainable especially as soon as the NGO leaves the area. This was noted in various projects under study. In Chapter 2, we noted that advocates of participatory development believe that, if community members are made to select their own project, this contributes greatly to the success of the development intervention. Pre-planned projects do not entirely address the intrinsic needs of a whole community. Community members' deep-rooted needs can only be known of, if extensive consultations are carried out with the concerned communities. As well, imposed projects can also create tension between the beneficiaries themselves and also between or among the beneficiaries and the non-beneficiaries. This could be seen in the responses coming from various villagers as concerning the goat and heifer projects. Third, no monitoring and evaluation of the Zvimba projects was ever carried out. And, finally, the selection of the beneficiaries was done in a haphazard way, thus excluding some deserving beneficiaries who could have been chosen more effectively through the use of PRA, PAR and PLA techniques or methods.

This chapter and the previous one have looked at whether Caritas practices participatory development. Having evaluated Caritas' participatory practices the result has been that the faith-

based NGO allows for limited participation. The study now concludes and, in particular, it assesses the participatory practices of both the indigenous Trust and the mainstream NGO.

## **CHAPTER 9: COMPARING PARTICIPATION IN THE ZVIMBA CSOT AND CARITAS (ZVIMBA)**

*I think we are lucky, and that this is a brilliantly exciting time to be alive and working as development professionals. So much is changing, and changing so fast, and new potentials are continually opening up. If we are to do well this means massive and radical learning and unlearning. It means personal, professional and institutional change as a way of life. For some this is a threat; for others a wonderful and exhilarating challenge opening up new worlds of experience (Robert Chambers, 2008: xv).*

### **9.1 Introduction**

The aim of this thesis has been to describe, analyse and compare the extent to which participatory approaches have been used by a mainstream NGO and an indigenous Trust in Zvimba District, Zimbabwe. To achieve this goal, this thesis had three subsidiary objectives. Firstly, I examined the participatory discourses and practices of the Trust and the NGO. Secondly, I asked what effect the ZvCSOT and Caritas organizational structures have on the adoption of either a top-down or bottom-up model; and, thirdly, I asked what influence government and donors have on CSOT and NGO participatory development interventions. In this concluding chapter, I give a detailed discussion of the study's research objectives by answering these objectives directly and by answering questions related to them. In so doing, this chapter provides a summary of the participatory discourses and practices used by a mainstream NGO and an indigenous Trust in present day Zimbabwe. I then analyse the organizational structure of the Trust and NGO in order to see how they impact on the adoption of either the top-down or bottom-up models. The influence of government and donors on Trusts and NGOs is also discussed. The chapter further analyses some limitations of the popular concept of PD as well as the difficulties in putting in place participatory practices.

### **9.2 Examination of the participatory discourses and practices of the Trust and the NGO**

Chapters 6 and 8 of the thesis reveal that neither Caritas nor the ZvCSOT live up to their rhetorical claims to be participatory. Neither the indigenous Trust nor the mainstream NGO has walked the talk, in terms of allowing community members to choose their own development needs and priorities. Participation is clearly paternalistic and top-down in the indigenous Trust,

and donor-controlled and elite-influenced in the mainstream NGO. In introducing Chapter 1, I quote Uphoff who highlights that:

Who participates and how they participate, are as important to consider as whether there is participation and what kind of participation it is. Just saying that there was participation tells us little. We need to know who participated and how' (Uphoff, 1998:443).

In terms of people-centred participation, there has remained a big contradiction between the participatory claims made by both Caritas and the architects of CSOTs. What is needed, is what Robert Chambers (2008: xv) in the opening quote terms '... massive and radical learning and unlearning. It means personal, professional and institutional change as a way of life.' This quote applies equally well in reference to both the NGO and the Trust.

The participatory rhetoric of both the indigenous Trust and the mainstream NGO do not match the situation on the ground on two fronts. First, the participatory declarations made in various official documents and statements have not been fulfilled. Second, community members' development needs and priorities have not been truthfully honoured. These inconsistencies have not arisen from a lack of rhetorical support for participatory development. As shown in Chapters 5 and 7, the documents of both Caritas and those of CSOTs in general speak very positively of participation. The need for local people to be the drivers of their own development is frequently expressed in black and white in Caritas and CSOT documents. However, the participatory statements, though perhaps well-intentioned, have not been translated into reality. Community members have little say in terms of development initiative input regarding both Caritas and ZvCSOT's development projects. Their participation has remained very limited and elusive. Community members in Zvimba, have continued to be generally outside the whole decision-making processes mainly because they have been subordinated to the ZvCSOT Board of Trustees' whims, and because Caritas' pre-planned development interventions have taken precedence over their own preferences. It is therefore difficult to say whether the Trust or the NGO is more participatory as neither appears to be living up to the participatory ideals held up in their official documentation. The major thrust of these arguments will be discussed in detail, in the ensuing paragraphs.

Since its inception in 2011, the ZvCSOT has generally used a top-down approach in its day to day operations. Evidence from documentary sources, interviews, focus group discussions and fieldwork observations showed that the Trust has mainly taken an elitist approach in terms of decision-making. This was despite claims made by Government officials who had a direct link to

CSOTs as well as from reports in the public media that ZvCSOT had carried out development interventions after comprehensive consultations with the concerned beneficiaries. Evidence gathered shows that the participation of local people in the decision-making processes as regards CSOT development projects has remained elusive. It also shows that the Zvimba community still remains out of the broader picture in terms of the Trust's development trajectory.

The majority community members have remained mere bystanders in the whole development process and this has been in total contrast to the goals of the indigenisation and economic empowerment policy as well as the participatory claims made by some ZvCSOT officials. The local communities have little say and lack a platform to articulate their development needs. It is the CSOT's Trustees who in most cases have decided on behalf of the local communities which development projects are viable for specific wards or villages. The Trustees also compromised the decision-making processes by implementing development interventions that served both their interests and those of their institutions, yet camouflaged as community interests (for example purchasing of road equipment, drilling of boreholes at the residence of the chiefs in Zvimba, the renovation and construction of mostly RDC owned schools and clinics).

Active participation in the Trust only seemed to be enjoyed by a few very active ZANU PF supporters as well as a few well-connected individuals who through political patronage links had been incorporated into some of the Trust's income generating projects. It is also clear from discussions with the interviewees that their lack of enthusiasm and a sense of ownership of the ZvCSOT was because of the Trustees' failure to meaningfully engage them in development interventions. Without clear commitment from the ZvCSOT to consolidate community input and respect community decisions through transparent public meetings it is difficult for local community members to either influence the Trust's plans, to participate in decision-making processes, and or to negotiate how they can benefit from the Trust's programmes.

Regarding Caritas, it has mainly come up with pre-determined development projects with a specific bias towards donor development preferences. According to Girei (2016:204) 'the funding available to NGOs ... in sub-Saharan Africa, be it through tenders or unsolicited proposal mechanisms, is in other words largely based on priorities and expected results as defined and assessed by donors and their experts.' Caritas is no different from this assertion. Evidence from fieldwork (which is further elaborated in sub-section 9.4.2) shows that Caritas'

development interventions largely adhere to donor demands. Pellegrini (2012:189) perceives this as ‘rhetorical participation’ and he argues that such ‘participation is used to legitimize outcomes favoured by powerful agents’ which makes participation more of a ‘window dressing exercise’.

This has generally undermined the NGO’s ability to come up with needs assessments that truly address the development priorities or preferences of local communities (an area discussed in detail in section 9.5). Similarly, in section 9.5 it will also be noted that Caritas has not addressed development challenges needing urgent attention as brought to its attention by its community volunteers. The reason for such inaction (as further discussed in sub-section 9.3.2) and also observed through evidence from fieldwork as well as from case studies of other NGOs by scholars such as Helliker (2006), Knight (2013), Girei (2016) and Osei (2017) among many others has been that NGOs normally adhere to the agendas of donors because they seek organizational survival or even some monetary gains.’ The major focus of these arguments will be discussed in detail, in the ensuing sections and sub-sections.

### **9.3 Examination of the organizational structure of the Trust and the NGO**

In order to better understand whether communities really participate in the Trust and NGO development work it is imperative to examine how these organizations are structured and how decisions concerning development interventions are reached. What is important is to assess if these organizations consult with grassroots communities and whether they follow the phases of participatory project planning when engaging with local communities. The above section indicated that both the Trust and NGO practice limited participation so this section examines in what way community participation is said to be limited. In this section, I highlight some areas which have been overlooked in PD literature as well as consolidate some issues which have been topical in PD literature. First, I examine the Trust followed by the NGO under study.

#### **9.3.1 Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust**

CSOTs were established under the Indigenization Act which specified that they were to be managed by Trustees. The ZvCSOT Board of Trustees is characterized by a traditional leadership structure, a central government structure of line ministries, a Rural District Council structure and a specifically selected structure of local community functionaries. The Trust’s community representation is limited because there are only five interest group representatives (a youth, a woman, a disabled person, a war veteran and a member of the business community) who

are supposed to consult with their respective groups in a District with a population of almost 260 615 people. This makes the CSOT underrepresented in terms of thorough consultations with community members. This is unlike Caritas discussed below which is more representative.

The CSOT Policy and Procedure Manual requires Trustees to consult communities to give their input in all development projects/initiatives. As a result, central government crafted a policy that was informed by both a decision to introduce a participatory empowering rural programme through ‘devolution’ of power as well as simultaneously opposing it through the transferring of administrative, financial and political power in the management of CSOTs to a specific group of local leaders and political party representatives.

When central government transferred financial and administrative power to local elites found within various local government structures it was with the hope that the local structures would consult communities about development projects. Mainstream literature has largely focused on central government’s recentralization of power within sub-national government units and how this has undermined community-based participation at the local level (Madhekeni and Zhou, 2012; Kurebwa 2015; Wekwete, 2016; Nyathi and Ncube, 2017; Chigwata *et al*, 2017, Makunde *et al.*, 2018; Muchadenyika and Williams, 2018; Awortwi, 2011; Wunsch, 2014; Dickovick and Riedl, 2014; Green, 2015; Cheeseman *et al.*, 2016; Basiru and Adepoju, 2018). What has been overlooked by the above scholars is that local elites found at various sub-national government levels are just as bad or sometimes worse than central government leadership in terms of the extent to which they weaken participatory processes within the lower levels (Agomor and Obayashi, 2008; Koelble and Siddle, 2014). Decentralization reforms have a high possibility of increasing disparity in the way local government elites distribute resources (Englebert and Mungongo, 2016; Kessy, 2018).

An impediment to PD in Zvimba district lies in unresolved power asymmetries which are deeply-rooted within the district. Chiefs, the DA, RDC and government officials are highly respected individuals among rural communities and this has helped create asymmetrical power relations between these local elites and the grassroots communities. As a result, community members’ development needs have remained subordinated to the development interests of local elites within the ZvCSOT Board of Trustees. Power devolved by central government to local authorities (Board of Trustees) has not trickled down to the local community. It has remained trapped within the Trust never flowing out to the communities. This echoes the views of Cooke



and Kothari (2001:6-7) who have perceived PD as a ‘tyranny of the group’ where local group dynamics may result in participatory decisions which entrench the interests of the local elites. They note that PD advocates argue that participatory approaches enable rural communities to exercise decision-making power as well as control over their own actions, yet rarely in mainstream development discourse have PD practices directly challenged power structures ingrained in society (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). In case of the ZvCSOT there is similarly very little evidence to suggest that the local elites created any effective avenues to transfer power to community members in terms of project conceptualization, planning, implementation and evaluation.

Hickey and Mohan acknowledge the problems with PD but also ultimately defend PD as potentially transformative (Hickey and Mohan (2004) - *Participation: from Tyranny to Transformation?*). Hickey and Mohan (2004) and the other contributors to *Participation: from Tyranny to Transformation?*, attempt to address the problems of power and politics which have beset some approaches to participation. They describe and analyse new experiments in participation from a wide diversity of social contexts. While the contributors to *Participation: from Tyranny to Transformation?*, show that participation is far from being a redundant and depoliticizing concept and that it can be linked to genuinely transformative processes and outcomes for marginalized communities and people I argue that some of the issues they raise are hard to replicate elsewhere especially in communities like the one under study where the power imbalances are so deeply entrenched in society that they have become the norm. The ZvCSOT Board demonstrates the deep inequalities in society where the local elites have not been willing to lower themselves to the level of the community in order to discuss as equals the best projects that can drive genuine development in villages, wards and the district.

While I do acknowledge that the contributors to *Participation: from Tyranny to Transformation?*, have helped to move the debate forward in a very positive way, more still need to be done in truthfully addressing cases where deep-rooted power inequalities are found, mainly in rural communities. In this sense, this research suggests that PD practitioners need to come up with more practical approaches to PD than merely theorizing on how to overcome power inequalities in society. Practical participatory approaches are supposed to build from the diverse literature on PD while also experimenting on other new approaches in order to genuinely address deeply-rooted power differences found in society which has given some an advantage over

others in terms of PD. However, it is beyond this study to come up with such an approach. PD practitioners still need to carry out extensive research to come up with more applicable approaches that can genuinely help to transfer power to those who do not have it. In the case of ZvCSOT, power has remained in the hands of a few elites thus limiting meaningful community participation in the development processes.

### **9.3.2 Caritas**

In Chapter 8, it was noted that it was next to impossible for those operating at the diocese level to challenge donors' development interests. Father Chenyika was quite open that since it was not easy to get funders who could give them money to carry out projects as determined by community needs and priorities, the only option was to rely on what donors offered even though the donors' preferences may not be in line with what communities would have requested. This shows the limitations mentioned in section 9.1 above.

According to Father Chenyika, 'sometimes you are forced to implement some of the projects not because you really want to do this, but [because] you don't have an option because you rely 100% on donor funds'. From what is being said above, Caritas is never in a position to turn down donor funds even if they are not in line with grassroots communities' development priorities and needs. The concern here is about their survival. In this sense, this study resonates with others which criticize NGOs for prioritizing donor projects that guarantee their survival and not necessarily those which address development priorities of grassroots communities (Helliker, 2006; Knight, 2013; Osei, 2017). Todaro and Smith (2012) argue that NGO personnel owe their livelihoods to development work and so they are not interested in working themselves out of a job. Helliker (2006) succinctly explains why NGOs sometimes undermine the genuine concerns of the grassroots in favour of their own organizational agendas. He emphasizes that in some cases when NGOs carry out their development work they tend to follow what keeps them in business or sustains their operations (largely projects determined by donors) often at the expense of the development needs of local communities. According to Helliker (2006:324), this situation:

... is the product of the existing balance of forces within the development industry that allows NGOs to make problematic but not privilege the rural underclasses while simultaneously remaining 'in business' as organizational forms.

Bebbington *et al.* (2008:4) add that NGOs in the South are faced with the continuous struggles of trying to 'secure the financial bases of organizational survival'. In this sense, this research

suggests that what is important in PD is not only the availability of funds but equally important is whether the funds are meeting the development priorities of local communities who are supposed to be the owners of the projects. While it is understandable that Caritas wants to survive bearing in mind the competition for funding in the over-crowded space of NGOs discussed in Chapter 4, this desire for survival should not completely undermine the real development needs of community members. Caritas should come up with more pragmatic ways of meeting both donor interests and community needs. Furthermore, Caritas should bear in mind that development projects need not rely only on donor funding. The PD literature suggests that development projects can largely be sustainable if community members feel a sense of ownership of the project (Girei, 2016; Osei, 2017; Aga *et al.* 2018).

#### **9.4 Examination of the influence of the donors and government on the participatory practices of the Trust and the NGO**

In the two cases under consideration here, central government or donors determine the development interventions which sub-national government units or NGOs undertake. This is because central governments or donors wield a lot of authority, influence and control over local government structures or NGOs. Cooke and Kothari (2001) perceive PD as a political process that involves issues of power, authority, influence and control. Central government largely wields political power over local government units while donors exercise financial or resource power over NGOs. This has tended to undermine rural communities' development needs and priorities. In this section I also highlight some areas which have been overlooked in PD literature as well as consolidate some issues which have been topical in PD literature. First, I examine the Trust followed by the NGO under study.

##### **9.4.1 Zvimba Community Share Ownership Trust**

In relation to ZvCSOT, the Zimbabwean central government demonstrated willingness to devolve financial and administrative power to local authorities managing the CSOT Board. However, the local authorities to whom power was devolved acted in ways that undermined participatory development. Scholars such as Mahumuza (2008) and Erk (2015) emphasize the often ignored politics at play in decentralization processes. Other scholars such as Mezgebe (2015), Maschietto (2016), Wunsch (2014), Green (2015), and Kessy (2018) have examined how ruling political parties have maintained their control of local government structures to the extent

of determining rural development projects. My own research supports the findings of these scholars and provides detail about how these local government actors significantly undermine participatory development initiatives at the grassroots level. Regarding my study, in order for the ZANU PF political elites to have political influence and authority over CSOTs, the centre subtly captured and took control of some CSOT functions through the delegation of senior civil servants, the traditional leadership and specially selected political party functionaries to manage the CSOT Board.

#### ***9.4.1.1 Inclusion of the DA, Ministry of Indigenization official and RDC officials***

I begin by looking at the inclusion of the District Administrator (DA), the Ministry of Indigenization representative and RDC senior officers. Both the DA and ministry official are central government officials who are Board members of the Trust while the senior RDC officers are answerable to the Ministry of Local Government. The District Administrator (DA) is a central government employee who heads the District Councils (Kurebwa, 2015). The local council administrators and the officer from the Ministry of Indigenization are all accountable to the centre through their line ministries. Therefore, they all serve as the ‘eyes’ and ‘ears’ of the centre. In other words, their allegiance is upwards towards the centre than downwards towards local communities.

The above officials are able to use their influence in the Board to ‘whip’ the others into line concerning the centre’s rural development blueprints. Evidence from minutes of board meetings and a brochure depicting all projects carried out by the Trust shows that the above officials ensured that there was some form of coordination and synchronization of district projects with those found in central government’s development blueprints. The development interventions introduced by the Trust were not the result of broad-based stakeholder consultation involving the local communities. The development plans are clearly stated in the Indigenization Act as well as other central government rural development documents. Mainstream Zimbabwean (local government) literature acknowledges that the centre has a strong influence over what its delegated officers do on the ground (Madhekeni and Zhou, 2012; Kurebwa 2015; Wekwete, 2016; Nyathi and Ncube, 2017; Chigwata *et al*, 2017, Makunde *et al.*, 2018). These development blueprints undermine local communities’ real development needs and priorities. Thus, accountability is upward towards party bosses rather than down-wards towards the local communities (Mezgebe, 2015; Maschietto, 2016).

#### 9.4.1.2 Inclusion of chiefs

The centre's appointment of chiefs to chair the CSOT Board while sidelining councillors and other traditional leaders (village heads and headmen) gave them an unfair advantage over the other local leaders. The centre's divide and rule tactics can clearly be observed. This has brought chiefs closer to the (political) elites at the centre thus undermining their downward accountability towards the grassroots communities whom they are supposed to consult in terms of community development projects. The appointment of chiefs to chair CSOTs can be viewed as a new strategy by political elites to indirectly incorporate the traditional leaders within their well-controlled local government structures and politically coordinated line ministries. Thus, Shumba (2016:36) rightly argues that in Zimbabwe:

Pronouncements of policy goals are usually screens for the pursuit of self-interests and those of powerful groups that are important for the regime's electoral support. The ruling elite take advantage of control over state resources to dispense patronage for political support.

In addition to sponsoring the purchasing of cars and construction of modern houses for chiefs (Mandondo, 2000; Makahamadze *et al.*, 2009; Chigwata, 2015), the centre also saw it fit to give them more responsibilities in administering development projects within their areas of jurisdiction. However, in undertaking these development interventions the chiefs have focused more on upward than downward accountability. For instance, when the Trust bought the road equipment mentioned in Chapter 6, the chiefs invited former President Mugabe to the event without even first informing local communities about the road equipment.

Therefore, this transfer of great responsibility to chiefs came with the expectation that they would show loyalty towards the political elites. Chigwata (2016:90) rightly argues that 'most traditional leaders openly align themselves with the ruling ZANU-PF in contradiction of the Constitution which requires their non-involvement in politically related activities' while Govo *et al.*, (2015:43) add that 'traditional leaders have been manipulated by the ZANU-PF government for political expediency'. While most Zimbabwean literature has focused much on the politicization of chiefs (Makahamadze *et al.*, 2009; Makumbe, 2010; Chigwata, 2015, 2016; Govo *et al.*, 2015), it has overlooked how such political manipulation has also greatly undermined people-centred development initiatives in rural communities as chiefs are now accountable upwards (towards political elites) rather than downwards (towards grassroots communities) in terms of rural development interventions.

#### ***9.4.1.3 Inclusion of representatives of interest groups***

Regarding the selection of members who represent various interest groups in the district (that is; youths, women, the disabled, war veterans and the business community), the study found out that these were no ordinary community members, but specially chosen party functionaries. Evidence from the ZvCSOT Board meetings, key informants and community members interviewed show that members of special interest groups within the CSOT Board were selected through an internal Board recruitment process where ZANU PF loyalists were chosen after the recommendations made by other Board members. Studies by Kurebwa (2015), Feltoe (2012), Jonga (2014), Govo *et al.*, (2015), the Centre for Conflict Management and Transformation (CCMT, 2014) and many others have shown that ZANU PF uses both unofficial and parallel structures to maintain its grip on the operations of local government and this can be done through the use of political party structures and prominent party supporters to control and monitor rural development interventions.

#### **9.4.2 Caritas**

This study shows that Caritas' development interventions are greatly influenced by donor interests or priorities. Thus, the FBO cannot wholly claim that its development interventions are directly influenced by the grassroots when in most cases it is the donors who pre-determine or pre-plan most of these development initiatives. In this sense, the findings of this study resonate with the observations made by David Mosse on the power donors wield over NGOs. The work of David Mosse (2005) throws interesting light on the way donors dictate the pace in development projects. Mosse worked as an anthropological consultant on a UK sponsored participatory project in India and later published a book on his experiences. Amongst his findings were that project commitments to participatory targets were compromised in the face of political and other constraints in the field and that a technically oriented language was used to hide such apparent failures. Mosse (2005) points out that long before they meet the livelihoods of poor people, aid projects satisfy the political needs of development agencies. In other words, a new project usually conveys 'a donor's organizational identity, its favoured policy, ideas, and is a site in which internal battles are fought' (Mosse, 2005:22).

Despite the noble vision and good intentions Caritas might have in creating participatory spaces for local communities, the limitation will always be that its participatory interventions are skewed in favour of the funder/donor since it does not own or control the resources. The power

relations between Caritas and its donors are in most cases asymmetrical, thus depriving the grassroots communities in Zimbabwe of the opportunity to select development interventions of their choice. The herbal, goat and heifer projects are a clear indication of the underlying weaknesses of donor-imposed development interventions. Caritas' goat project can further be seen as an attempt by the FBO to merely concentrate on technical solutions to poverty instead of addressing the underlying issues that caused the poverty in the first place. This resonates with the views of Banks and Hulme (2012), Banks *et al.* (2015), Matthews (2017) and Osei (2017) among many others. Communities' memories of radicalism are thus obliterated in these NGO donor-imposed predetermined projects (Shivji, 2004; Abdul-Raheem, 2007; Manji, 2017). Gogo Mbudzi, a beneficiary of the donor-imposed Caritas goat project was so thrilled of her newly acquired 'wealth' that it blurred the radicalness in her for genuine liberating and empowering social and economic change.

In Chapter 8, Father Chenyika indicated that donors are in the habit of giving directives on how their funds should be used, such as indicating that it should go towards supporting women, orphans, garden projects, drilling boreholes in remote villages, and poultry projects among many other projects. Similarly, Ms. Mudiwa admitted that donors have lots of rules and regulations and expectations on the operations of Caritas. There is a huge volume of PD literature that stresses on how donors' self-interests determine how funds are to be used. As a result, some PD literature has criticized NGOs of being answerable to the donors (upward accountability) than being answerable to the beneficiaries or local communities (downward accountability). The more radical views have criticized NGOs as 'agents of imperialism' because of how they largely focus on donor interests (political, economic, cultural, and social).

In the case of Caritas, all three senior officials of the FBO indicated that Caritas largely depends on donor funds for its operations. There is also abundant PD literature which highlights the over-dependence of African NGOs on donor funds (Hearn, 2007; Bradley, 2008; Lewis and Kanji, 2009; Fowler, 1992, 2016; Bawole and Langnel, 2016; Helliker, 2017; Osei, 2017; Makuwira, 2018). Fowler (2016) and other scholars have doubts on whether African NGOs can find any other alternative sources of funding other than that coming from donors. Without donor funds there will be very few or no African NGOs at all. African NGOs are donor funded and this is a trap they are caught up in and cannot escape or avoid. Unlike other African organizations

which rely on membership fees to survive, NGOs do not. PD literature states that African governments do not or rarely fund NGOs (Wright, 2012; Arhin, 2016; Fowler, 2016).

Father Chenyika suggested that Caritas is 100% donor funded. The finding resonates with other PD scholars views that most African NGOs are ‘implementers or contractors of donor policy’ (Banks and Hulme, 2012:13). This seems to imply that African NGOs largely cannot think outside the donor box. However, this research suggests that the arguments should not be about merely critiquing the projects imposed on NGOs by donors, but it should be about how these donor-foisted NGO projects can bring out the same successes as those in which communities are made to choose development projects on their own. Father Chenyika’s brief explanation of a ‘data base’ in Chapter 8 can be one useful way where donor foisted projects can still make a meaningful impact on communities. To quote him briefly:

But, since we don’t get a funder to give us money to help these people we then have to rely on what the donors offer us. For example, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) money from UNICEF; we usually search our data base to see if there is a community that once requested for such assistance. After that we then channel the resources to the community which we would have identified in the data base (Interview, Fr Chenyika, 15/11/2016).

To consolidate Father Chenyika’s views, this research suggests that NGOs can create an extensive data base that stores the development needs of various communities at the district, provincial or national level. Once donors start funding new thematic areas the NGO can easily select similar projects from the thousands and thousands of community needs and priorities in its data base. Since the development preferences or interests of donors are unpredictable and always changing, it is therefore wise that the NGO data base captures almost every development priority of communities no matter how diverse they might be. In other words, the data base should include each and every development need suggested by community members for one doesn’t know which one will be a donor favourite or priority area in months or years to come. It is also important to keep the data base well updated for some projects in the data base will definitely become dated. In the PD field of study there is also a need as highlighted by Chambers in an opening quote to this Chapter that things are ‘changing so fast and new potentials are continually opening up’ and ‘this means massive and radical learning and unlearning’ (Robert Chambers, 2008: xv). This then brings us to a comparison between ZvCSOT and Caritas.



## **9.5 Comparison of the ways in which the Trust and NGO practice participatory development**

Both ZvCSOT and Caritas are involved in some community development projects in the Zvimba district. Their involvement can be partly attributed to central government's decentralization initiatives which have ostensibly been aimed at improving the livelihoods of rural communities in the Zvimba district (as well as other districts). Sub-national government units such as the DA's office, the RDC and the traditional leadership are directly involved in the operations of ZvCSOT. Decentralization also opened up space for non-state actors such as NGOs (Caritas included) which carry out various development initiatives carried out in communities. Thus, the DA's office, RDC and the traditional leadership (specifically chiefs) have been mandated by central government to be responsible for the direct management of ZvCSOT in carrying out its development interventions in the district while the DA's office, RDC and the traditional leadership (chiefs, village heads and headmen) have been equally authorized by central government to indirectly monitor the operations of Caritas in carrying out its development projects in the district.

Both the Trust and the NGO claim that they involve local communities in the selection of development projects that have had a direct impact on the livelihoods of community members. However, as highlighted earlier, both Caritas and ZvCSOT have failed to genuinely consider the development needs of rural community members. Rather, both have used a top-down approach, with little evidence whatsoever of being bottom-up, by giving community members a voice, in development interventions that concern their daily lives. The only participation that the locals have undertaken (as pointed out in Chapters 6 and 8) has been in the implementation of a pre-planned development interventions where community members have supplied their labour and have benefitted from handouts. Participation in this sense was reduced to a mere 'pretext for getting local people to contribute to development projects which have been planned and decided on without their being consulted' (Chambers, 1997:23).

Kapoor (2005:1203) rightly observes that 'PD has become development's new orthodoxy, so much so that you would be hard-pressed to find any NGO, donor agency or development institution that has not integrated it into programming'. The irony has been that very few of these participatory claims have been genuinely put into practice by a majority of development agencies (Osei, 2017; Girei, 2016). Similarly, despite the fact that both the Trust

and NGO under study have come up with reports as evidence of the success of their participatory work, evidence from fieldwork raises questions about such participatory claims. Whereas such documents can be used as proof of the two's claims to be participatory or to show how participatory discourse is being used by both (as shown in Chapters 5 and 7); these documents alone cannot be used as evidence that the Trust and the NGO actually do act in a participatory way on the ground.

The major differences between the Trust and the NGO have been in the way they carry out their participatory practices. An important participatory approach discussed in Chapter 2 has been the need for organizations involved in development interventions to carry out baseline surveys/needs assessments during the project conceptualization phase. The importance of project conceptualization was seen to be a central component of the project cycle as it enabled communities on their own to prioritize problems and basic needs in their area (Grant-Writing-Training-Manual, n.d; Khang and Moe, 2008).

In the case of Caritas, it carries out baseline surveys in order to capture the development needs, priorities and preferences of rural communities. However, a weakness of Caritas' surveys is that they have tended to be pre-determined thus limiting people's choices in selecting projects that really concern them. Interns privy to how the surveys were carried out argued that the NGO manipulated the process by deciding on the development intervention which they thought would best suit a specific community. As such, the surveys were a mere formality since the NGO officials had already decided on, or pre-planned the type of development intervention to be implemented in a given rural community. Where Caritas carried out the interviews with the grassroots, the questionnaires and interview guides were said to be biased since they directed the respondents to answer questions in a closely guided way thus, undermining the grassroots' ability to decide or choose which project they really desired for their area. This is tantamount to what Kapoor (2005) in Chapter 6 termed 'obscuring their own participation in participation' where in this case, Caritas claims to encourage community participation in decision-making processes yet it is solely responsible for coming up with such decisions.

Regarding the ZvCSOT, it did not carry out any baseline surveys/needs assessments. The relationship between ZvCSOT Trustees and community members showed some contradictions in the way the Trust has been shaped, designed and implemented. ZvCSOT has had a double and conflicting function of both allowing and preventing community participation.

That is, whereas central government ‘devolved’ power to ZvCSOT Board of Trustees as mainly driven by a need to provide rural communities with the necessary finances (realized from the exploitation of resources exploited within their localities) to manage their own affairs and further their own development; the way the programme has been implemented by the local elites within the Board of Trustees has undermined participatory development initiatives. One is therefore bound to agree with Jütting *et al.* (2004:12) who wrote that ‘transfer of responsibilities to the local level may lead elites to capture the decision-making process, with limited or even negative impacts on poverty’.

Instead of carrying out needs assessments/baseline surveys, the Trust largely relied on development preferences of central and local government officials. Similarly, the CSOT depended on RDC ‘project banks’ which in most cases did not meet the contemporary development needs of rural community members. Decentralization may also mean that corrupt individuals are given power and then end up mismanaging scarce resources (Barrett *et al.*, 2007, Koelble and Siddle, 2014; Mezgebe, 2015). The Trust failed to engage community members in project conceptualization (needs assessments/identification), planning, and evaluation. It was only at the implementation phase where the inclusion of some community members became quite visible and well pronounced. Community members provided their labour in development projects and communities received building material (though they had not requested for it in the first place). This shows the limitations mentioned earlier in sections 9.1 and 9.2.

Another important component of participatory development approaches is community representation in the various stages of the project cycle which also includes project planning, implementation and evaluation stages. In Caritas’ case, on the ground it has well-established participatory structures as reflected by parishes, village churches and the thousands of volunteers spread across villages and wards. As regards local communities’ participation in development projects; Caritas pins its hope on community volunteers whom it sees as an extended hand of the organization and are in constant touch with the grassroots in undertaking the NGO’s work. They are the organization’s ‘eyes’ and ‘ears’ in various communities. Community volunteers easily communicate and consult with other community members regarding their development needs and priorities. Another advantage is that since they are part of the community, they have a better understanding of which issues need urgent NGO attention.

This participatory approach is quite an effective tool in assisting other NGOs in general, especially when capturing diverse community needs and priorities in rural communities. This exercise can be very time consuming and also expensive to undertake considering the poor road infrastructure found in some rural communities. Community volunteers, if well-organized, can assist in capturing information concerning people's development needs. In the case of Caritas, volunteers have been underutilized thus limiting one of the NGO's broad PD initiatives. An underlying weakness and limitation that has undermined such a very noble initiative has been that in most cases, Caritas did not fully consider the important information on community development preferences and needs captured by the volunteers in their daily interactions with other community members. They did not make good use of the information from volunteers mainly because of their over-dependence on donor funding which made them listen more attentively to donors.

Regarding ZvCSOT, its community representation is limited. The CSOT has only five interest group representatives (a youth, woman, war veteran, disabled person and business community member) who are supposed to consult with their respective groups in a district with a population of almost 260 615 people. This makes the CSOT under-representative in terms of thorough consultations with community members. Another weakness is that the five community representatives are specifically aligned to ZANU PF as discussed earlier. Kurebwa (2015:105) notes that in each WADCO there are two reserved positions for ZANU PF functionaries within the women and youth leagues. The selection of party functionaries in the CSOT Board gives credence to the observation that ZANU PF uses its influence to maintain its hegemony in rural communities.

The intention has been to make the Board appear as if it is inclusive, participatory and a genuine representation of CSOT beneficiaries (community members) yet in actual fact these are party members who merely rubber stamp the development perceptions of the appointed government officials. Evidence from the ZvCSOT minutes of Board meetings showed that chiefs, RDC officials and the DA had more input in terms of rural development interventions. Very little came from the community representatives as they appeared to be more like 'back benchers' than anything else. It appears the centre needed the presence of the community representatives to justify its rhetoric of CSOTs being vehicles that bring about inclusive participation of local communities in the decision-making processes for rural development.

In both the Trust and NGO, real community participation in the project cycle has largely been observed to be at the implementation phase. In Chapter 2, the centrality of consulting community members at every stage of the project cycle was emphasized and yet in both the ZvCSOT and Caritas cases, genuine community participation was only really in evidence at the implementation stage. In Caritas' case, the implementation of the heifer and goat projects led to some incidences where there were feelings of resentment towards the lucky beneficiaries especially from those who also thought they also deserved to have benefitted from the two projects. Their argument was that they were also poor and some even poorer than those who had benefitted. In the ZvCSOT case, this led some community members to lack an appreciation and a sense of ownership of the various socio-economic development projects carried out by ZvCSOT in the district.

PD literature is replete with cases where scholars have emphasized that 'community ownership' is vital in order to ensure the 'sustainability' of development interventions (Girei, 2016; Osei, 2017; Aga *et al.* 2018). Ownership and sustainability have both been closely linked to empowerment, self-reliance, self-strength, control, own decision making among many other phraseology (Oakley, 1991; Narayan, 2002; Mansuri and Rao, 2013). Just about 49 years since PD approaches came to the limelight, institutions, organizations and entities have not seriously walked the talk regarding people-centred approaches to development. Thus, participatory approaches have remained limited to project implementation while undermining the other very important stages of the project cycle.

## **9.6 Contribution to the theorization of participatory development**

Below I highlight some of the insights my study brings to the broader question of whether and how participatory development can be implemented effectively. In this way, I contribute to the broader theorization of the idea of participatory development.

### **9.6.1 Imperfections of decentralization processes**

In Chapters 6 and 8 there were claims from both the ZvCSOT Board and Caritas officials that decentralized lower levels of local government structures (VIDCOs and WADCOs) were an avenue for facilitating participatory development initiatives as they allowed community members to also have an input, concerning their development needs and priorities. The argument was that what was deliberated in VIDCO and WADCO meetings was said to go straight up (following a

bottom-up process) to the District development planners (RDC and DA) who would add community members' development preferences in the District development plans. However, a weakness identified was that membership to the district development body was made up of government officials, technocrats, members of the security sector; civil society groups (NGOs). There was hardly any representative from community development structures (VIDCOs and WADCOs) in the RDDC (Makumbe 2010, Kurebwa, 2015). Community members ended up being grossly sidelined in the important District deliberations on development projects where they were also expected to decide on important decisions that concerned their development needs and priorities (Chakaipa, 2010).

A second weakness of decentralization processes was that CSOT Boards of Trustees were made up of appointed government officials and traditional leadership rather than those elected by community members during national elections. In Chapter 3 it is argued that elected officials (councilors) should be answerable and responsive to the needs of community members who had elected them into office. In case of CSOTs, elected members were kept out of the management Board making it difficult for community members to engage the central and local government officials on project prioritization. This would have been easier had elected officials been also members of the Board of Trustees. These problems with decentralization demonstrate that it cannot be assumed that decentralization will necessarily result in greater community participation. While it makes sense for advocates of participatory development to promote decentralization, it is important to be aware that simply introducing decentralization will not necessarily on its own increase community participation.

### **9.6.2 Over-privileging of organizational agendas**

Of particular interest in the literature on PD is a tendency to underestimate the effects of NGO and government strategic development plans on participatory development practices. The question to be asked is on whether the community members' development needs can fit well into the strategic development plans and visions of both government and NGOs. Organizations exist for a purpose which is mainly articulated in their mission statements. In reference to projects carried out by ZvCSOT, DA Tizora says that 'our bias by then [in the Board of Trustees] was towards health and education'. This implies that the Board of Trustees decided to embark on health and education projects without any community consultations.

The reason why NGOs and governments do not usually consult local people is well argued by Bentley (1994:140) who points out that ‘development professionals often feel they need results - often counted in terms of structures built or technologies adopted - after a finite (and generally relatively short) period of time in the field’. DA Tizora made it clear in Chapter 6 that their main focus was in seeing to it that 35 boreholes were drilled in selected areas with high concentrations of people in need of water. However, the drilling of boreholes also needed thorough community consultations in identifying communities which needed water most. This community consultation did not occur. In the Caritas goat case, volunteers were simply given a directive to come and collect goats at the parish which were to be given to beneficiaries selected by the volunteers themselves. If this intervention had followed the guidelines given in participatory development theory, Caritas would first have consulted with communities before imposing projects on them. The selection of vulnerable beneficiaries for the heifer and goat projects was very poorly done; thorough community consultations were needed, but did not occur.

Governments’ core mandates mainly focus on large rural development projects while NGOs tend to provide services such as relief, welfare, and smaller development interventions. My study suggests that governments or NGOs often simply offer services that are in line with their own development vision or mission than digress from such strategic development plans even when the community’s development priorities are outside the NGO or government’s core mandates or strategic plans. However, community members’ participation in NGO or government programmes or projects is necessary for it helps to instill a sense of project ownership among community members as well as to guarantee the sustainability of the project in the long run (Girei, 2016; Osei, 2017; Ntuli *et al.*, 2018).

If an NGO’s core mandate is in carrying out water, sanitation and hygiene projects (WASH), its development interventions will focus on the provision of boreholes, irrigation schemes, toilets, weirs and so on. When NGOs register to operate in an area (as some laws require them to do) they specify the exact intervention they will be focusing on. Under such circumstances, it can be argued that, despite the noble vision and good intentions of both NGOs and government in creating participatory spaces for local communities, the limitation will always be that they can only come up with participatory interventions that relate to their own core mandates, organizational goals, agendas, missions and visions. The above implies limitations on

the types of development interventions community members can select from both NGO and government 'development baskets'. NGOs or government can best 'fit' rural communities to projects which are within their strategic development plans and goals. In Chapters 6 and 8 it was noted that limited community participation started at the implementation phase. The conceptualization and planning phases were done by the Board of Trustees in the case of ZvCSOT and by officials at the Chinhoyi Diocese in the case of Caritas. Nonetheless, meaningful participation entails that rural communities are involved in various stages of the project that include planning, designing, decision-making and implementation among many others.

Government or NGOs are more concerned in achieving a specific goal rather than in involving a lot of people in the decision making process which according to Kumar (2002:28) tends to be a 'more costly method of executing development interventions'. Thus, governments and NGOs usually have administrative structures that are control-oriented and are operated by a set of guidelines which adopt a blue print approach. This is no longer about people's preferred development interventions but more about the types of development projects that the NGO/government can offer or afford to carry out. For example, there was little evidence that the ZvCSOT Board of Trustees consulted local communities in any stage of the project cycle when they purchased a front-end loader, water bowser, tractor - complete with mower, tipper truck (TATA) and a motorized grader. However, I argue that participation should be a compulsory aspect of any rural development intervention. It does not matter whether it concerns major or minor development projects. The main reason for community participation is to promote local empowerment and community ownership of the development project. In this regard, any rural development intervention (as highlighted in Chapter 2) should seek local community involvement at every stage of participatory project planning that is; project conceptualization, planning, implementation and the monitoring and evaluation.

### **9.6.3 Rhetoric and elusiveness of PD**

The translation of participatory practices into development initiatives and projects that allow rural communities to get involved in designing development interventions still remain quite elusive. The evidence from most PD literature acknowledges that efforts to involve local communities in bottom-up planning have been elusive. In this study, both the Trust and NGO had inscribed people-centred participation as one of their main goals in their development



programmes. The interest in participation was endorsed in several documents, but real progress remained limited. In both cases, these purported participatory projects did not fully accomplish their participatory objectives as intentioned and promised. This ‘participation problem’ (where community members hardly participate meaningfully in the development intervention yet participatory claims will be inscribed in organizational documents) was quite evident in both the work of Caritas and ZvCSOT. Thus, people-centred participation in both the NGO and Trust’s development projects has remained quite elusive and rhetorical. As critics of PD note (Michener, 1998; Mosse, 2005; Kapoor, 2005; Pellegrini, 2012; Mansuri and Rao, 2013; Girei, 2016; Osei, 2017), talk of the importance of participation has now become ubiquitous among governments, NGOs and other organisations involved in development. However, this study and others show that rhetorical support for PD does not necessarily translate into participatory practices on the ground. PD advocates need to pay more attention to this gap between rhetoric and practice.

#### **9.6.4 Centralization of decision-making processes**

Okwanga (2012) has observed that, in providing services such as relief, welfare, and development work, NGOs work in an environment characterized by complex relations and power imbalances. Local governments similarly work under such inhibitive environments where central government has remained very powerful. Both the NGO and Trust have had some projects determined by either donors (NGOs) or central government (Trust). As discussed earlier in Chapter 6, ZvCSOT’s infrastructural development projects were mainly guided by central government’s rural development blueprints. In the case of Caritas, as noted earlier in Chapter 8 as well as in section 9.4, donors were also seen to have an influence in determining some development projects carried out by the faith-based NGO. Some literature shows that the relationship between giver (donor) and receiver (NGO) has been asymmetrical, usually advantaging the giver at the expense of the receiver (Hearn, 2007; Manji and O’Coill, 2002). The same applies to decentralized central government development initiatives where local governments are controlled (by central government) on which development intervention to undertake. However, it is not to be underestimated that community participation in decision making processes is very important.

## **9.7 Conclusion**

The thesis was premised on a comparative analysis of the participatory approaches used by a mainstream NGO and an indigenous Trust where I used the participatory development framework to find appropriate answers to the research aim, objectives and questions. I have met my research questions but the study raises additional questions which could be addressed in further research.

### **9.7.1 Areas for further research**

Participatory development is a very broad field and it is not only peculiar to Zimbabwe, but the world over. It is therefore imperative that more is done in order to understand the current dynamics that NGOs in Africa in general, and Zimbabwe in particular face in their relations with Northern development donors. Can African countries wean themselves from overreliance on donor funds? Are there any alternative sources or ways where African NGOs can enjoy their ‘independence’ from ‘donor programmed’ interventions? Another question is; In what way can grassroots actors challenge NGO pre-planned interventions? Is it feasible for the local communities to take an NGO to court over inappropriate development interventions? Is the participation of local communities in development interventions always necessary?

An additional area for further research relates to political parties, patronage politics and cronyism and how these impacts on participatory development in state initiated development interventions. What is the relationship between patronage and underdevelopment? How do ruling parties undermine genuine participatory development in rural communities? Should Zimbabwean development interventions be politically-prejudiced or partisan towards ZANU PF? Finally, more research needs to be carried in regards to Zimbabwe’s ‘new’ political dispensation. How best can the ‘new’ leadership address some pertinent issues concerning the PVO Act? Can new legislation be introduced in Zimbabwe, which compels both NGOs and state officials (central and local government) to carry out thorough consultations with the grassroots, before any rural project is undertaken?

### **9.7.2 Gazing into the future**

The thesis has shown that the mainstream NGO and indigenous Trust have not fulfilled their claims of allowing the grassroots to choose projects that really concern their development aspirations. The evidence of what they ought to do, in terms of participatory development that

hinges on a bottom-up approach is there, and what both the NGO and Trust really have to do, is to walk the talk. The participatory claims made by both ZvCSOT and Caritas can be termed as an ongoing and incomplete process and like all other indigenous Trusts and mainstream NGO programmes; the claims remain as goals-in-progress or objectives yet to be achieved.

There has been a withholding of vital information on whose interests CSOTs and NGOs are really supposed to serve. Informed communities are in a better position to exercise their rights, question the situation at hand, hold either NGO or CSOT officials accountable for their actions and also participate effectively in any development programme being undertaken in their area. Without relevant information and consultations, it remains quite an uphill task for marginalized rural communities to make sound decisions as well as take effective action on development issues that affect them. To give true expression of a bottom-up approach in ZvCSOT and Caritas' development projects, there should be a genuine recognition of the importance of local communities participating in the decision-making processes (through consultative meetings) and awareness campaigns should also be raised in conscientizing community members on their role as the true beneficiaries of these projects.

In the participatory approaches mentioned in Chapters 6 and 8; there has been a tendency to monopolize the participatory processes by unilaterally selecting projects that do not genuinely address the needs of the local communities but those of individuals or the ZANU PF party (in the case of the Trust) or those that best serve the interests of the organization (in the case of Caritas). PD is specifically about development interventions that best serve the interests of community members.

Both ZvCSOT and Caritas have not truthfully involved local communities in the selection of development projects. This has been despite the fact that the villagers (as evident in the interviews) have their own views on the types of development projects they want to see implemented in their localities. The villagers' divergent interests from those of the NGO and Trust need to be taken into consideration. Development projects are supposed to be beneficial to the majority of community members rather than serving individual interests or a few beneficiaries (as happened in cases where three chiefs and a board member had boreholes drilled at their homesteads or when worse vulnerable members did not also benefit from the Caritas goat and heifer projects). The end result for such biased interventions as argued in Chapters 2, 6 and 8

is that there can be no meaningful participation if the majority is excluded from selecting development projects that address their everyday needs.

There also needs to be fundamental change in the participatory structures and decision making processes of both ZvCSOT and Caritas. These must be wholly people-centred. Needs assessment meetings should be carried out in such a way that villagers are free to share their ideas in a conducive environment that allows for genuine dialogue to thrive. Differences in interests and opinions pertaining to development interventions are natural but of importance is how such differences are reconciled or compromised as to reach a consensus. A better understanding of communities' development needs can ensure that development interventions do not demoralize, disempower or demotivate local communities, but instead open and widen opportunities for genuine participation that leads to sustainable development. The ZvCSOT Trustees and Caritas officials should desist from thinking on behalf of the community.

Regarding participatory approaches, a lack of desire and determination to serve alongside and in identification with the local community has been shown by the Trust, the NGO, donor agencies and central government. Community members should be, and must know themselves to be, the rightful owners of any development intervention. PD cannot be imposed on local communities, but these communities can be guided, they can be led though, ultimately, they must be wholly involved since the development projects solely belong to the community as the term 'community/people-centred' implies.

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## APPENDIX 1

All communications should be  
Addressed to "The Secretary for  
Youth, Indigenisation and Economic  
Empowerment"  
**Telephone:** 707741/2 701983  
**E-mail:** myicee@zarnet.ac.zw



**Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation  
And Economic Empowerment  
P. Bag 7762  
Causeway  
Zimbabwe**

**Ref: B/14/1**

**23 November 2015**

Mr. Mbanje B. B. C.  
25 George Walker Road  
Hatfield  
Harare

**APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH ON  
COMMUNITY SHARE OWNERSHIP TRUSTS AND TO COLLECT RELEVANT  
DOCUMENTATION: MR. MBANJE BOWDEN B. C: RHODES UNIVERSITY  
SOUTH AFRICA**

Reference is made to your letter dated 09 November 2015.

Please be advised that I have approved your application to carry out your research within the Ministry on the topic "**A Comparative Analysis of the way in which Participatory Practices are used by Indigenous Trusts and Mainstream Development NGOS in Zvimba Rural Community, Zimbabwe.**"

You are to liaise with the Principal Director, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment for assistance and also to observe below listed ethics:

- Confidentiality and Privacy
- Integrity
- Anonymity

G. Magosvongwe  
**SECRETARY FOR YOUTH, INDIGENISATION  
AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

Cc: Principal Director Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment  
File



## APPENDIX 2

### Interview Schedule

#### Formal Interviews Conducted by Author

##### Real Names of Interviewees\*

1. Mr. Rangu Nyamurundira, Former Personal secretary to the Minister in the Ministry of Indigenization in Economic Empowerment, 11 October 2016.
2. Mr. Chris Mweembe, Caritas national coordinator, 24 October 2016.
3. Father (Fr), Walter Chenyika, Caritas coordinator Chinhoyi Diocese, 15 November 2016.
4. Ms. Mary Mudiwa, Caritas Chinhoyi Diocese Finance Officer, 15 November 2016.
5. Mr. Swede Phiri, Chief Executive officer, Zimplats Mhondoro-Ngezi Chegutu Zvimba Community Ownership Trust, 16 November 2016.
6. Mrs. Memory Mhonda, Senior Officer, Ministry of Youths, Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Chegutu Offices, 16 November 2016.
7. Mr. Sibanengi Mahobele, The National Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Board's Compliance Manager for CSOTs, 17 November, 2017.
8. Mr. Andrew Tizora, District Administrator for Zvimba District, 28 November 2016.

Name of interviewee (Pseudonym)	Date
Maxwell	28 September 2016.
Emmanuel	10 October 2016.
Norma	10 October 2016.
Darlington	11 October 2016.
Malvern	16 November 2016.
NIEEB Official	16 November 2016.
Lameck	28 November 2016.
Getrude	29 November 2016.
Paul	01 December 2016.
<i>Sabhuku KZ</i>	01 December 2016.

<i>Sabhuku</i> Tichaguta	01 December 2016.
Shamiso	01 December 2016.
Tanyaradzwa	01 December 2016.
ZANU PF Youths	01 December 2016.
Lucia	02 December 2016.
Chenai	02 December 2016.
Edward	03 December 2016.
Brian	05 December 2016.
Mai Matwins	05 December 2016.
Allan	05 December 2016.
Mrs. Hamadzashe	05 December 2016.
Mrs. Mureza	05 December 2016.
Female volunteer, Caritas	05 December 2016.
Sekuru Mwedzi, Caritas volunteer	05 December 2016.
Aaron	06 December 2016.
Mrs. Chigwaru	06 December 2016.
Pedzisai	06 December 2016.
Fundai,	06 December 2016.
Chiedza	07 December 2016.
Mary Jane	07 December 2016.
Mary	07 December 2016.
Ngoko	07 December 2016.
Pengai	07 December 2016.
Mrs. Chiutsi	08 December 2016.

Mrs. Mhepo	08 December 2016.
Rwizi	09 December 2016.
Lazarus	09 December 2016.
Ambrose	09 December 2016.
Peter	09 December 2016.
Rwizi	09 December 2016.
Andrew	09 December 2016.
Brighton	12 December 2016.
Agrippa	15 December 2016.
Gogo Mavis	20 December 2016.
Tafanenyasha	10 January 2017.
Christopher	13 February 2017.

#### **Informal interviews**

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Date</b>
Susan	27 November 2016.
Anna	13 January 2017.
Carlton	18 March 2017/27 July 2019.
Crispen	18 March 2017.
Blessing	18 March 2017/04 April 2018/17 January 2018
Follow up Interview, Christopher	13 August 2017.
Lamas	13 January 2018 /09 April 2018/ 27 July 2019

#### **Focus Group Interviews**

<b>Name of Focus Group</b>	<b>Date</b>
Caritas Group C	09 December 2016.
Caritas Group B	08 December 2016.
Caritas Group A	07 December 2016.
ZvCSOT Group C	29 November 2016.
ZvCSOT Group B	21 November 2016.
ZvCSOT Group A	09 January 2017.
ZvCSOT Group D	12 January 2017



## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Interview Guide**

#### **A. Interview Guide for Local Community (ZvCSOT)**

1. Can you tell me about ZvCSOT?
2. Can you name some of the development projects which have been undertaken by the CSOT in your community?
3. How are decisions on development projects arrived at?
4. Is there any link between ZANU PF and the CSOT Board of Trustees?
5. Explain how you have participated in CSOT projects?
6. What measures has the Trust put in place in order to promote the participation of ordinary citizens in development projects?
7. Is ZvCSOT inclusive, participatory, empowering and free from political biases?
8. The CSOT has a Board which is also made up of a woman, a youth, a war veteran and a member of the business community. Do you regularly interact with some of the Board members?
9. Are there any structures (in terms of local committees, groups) which help in the identification of development projects in the community?
10. Is there any constant communication between the Board and local communities on issues to do with development projects?
11. Was it the community's idea to purchase graders and front-end loaders? In what way has this road maintenance equipment benefitted Zvimba communities?
12. What is your assessment of the Rural District Council (RDC) in influencing CSOT development projects?
13. Is there any other project you would have preferred rather than the purchasing of the graders and front-end loaders?
14. In what way has ZvCSOT transformed the living conditions of your community?
15. Is there anything else you would like to share with me with regards to community participation in projects that were undertaken by ZvCSOT?

#### **B. Interview Guide for the Local Community (Caritas)**

1. Can you tell me about Caritas?
2. Name some of Caritas' development projects that are currently being implemented or have been implemented in your community
3. Explain how you benefitted from these projects?
4. Does Caritas sit to plan with local communities on development projects?
5. In what way has the NGO taken your development preferences/needs into consideration?
6. Some NGOs are known to come up with their own predetermined development projects for implementation in rural communities? What approach does Caritas use?
7. Do you think community participation in decision making is important? Explain why?
8. What is the work of Caritas Volunteers in relation to development projects?

9. Do volunteers have an influence on the type of development projects carried out in your community? Has Caritas transformed the living conditions of your community?
10. In what way has Caritas transformed the living conditions of your community?
11. Is there any other project you would have preferred rather than the ones introduced by Caritas in your area?
12. Is there anything else you would like to share with me with regards to community participation in projects that were undertaken by Caritas?

### **C. Interview Guide for NGO/Board Management**

#### **Participation**

1. Can you give me a brief history of Caritas?
2. Can you tell me about Caritas' organogram?
3. What are the duties and responsibilities of each member within the organogram?
4. Who makes the decisions on the types of projects to be undertaken in rural areas?
5. In what way if any does the Roman Catholic Church influence the selection of Caritas' development projects in rural areas?
6. Does Caritas support the participation of local communities in development projects?
7. What have been the benefits of letting local communities participate in development projects?
8. In what ways are you involved in strengthening the participation of local communities in development work?
9. Who is at the wheel in terms of development projects? Do rural communities decide on the type of projects to be undertaken in their own area or it is Caritas that identifies such projects on their behalf?
10. Do you consult local communities in choosing or when identifying a development project?
11. Is it not a negation of genuine participatory methodologies to side-line local communities in deciding on development initiatives/projects which are to be implemented in their communities?
12. In what way are your development projects participatory? Can you please elaborate?
13. In which participatory category do your projects fall under? Creating self-reliance among local communities; Empowering both men and women in the development of their own communities; Enabling people and communities to take up and advance the struggle for their own development; other.
14. There are many questions that can be asked about your work in rural communities but a primary one is whether you have gone beyond relief and welfare work?
15. Why is it that these years your work now tends to focus more on short term development initiatives (relief and welfare work) than the long term development projects of the 1980s?
16. Do you have a list of development projects to be implemented in rural communities?
17. Do you sit to plan with local communities on projects to be undertaken in their area?
18. Do local communities decide on the type of project they want you to carry out in their area?

19. Some NGOs are known to come up with their own predetermined development projects for implementation in rural communities? Do you use the same approach or you have a different one?
20. Why do some NGOs prefer coming up with their own development initiatives rather than letting the local communities choose their own development projects? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach?
21. What are the advantages of letting local communities choose or decide on the type of development project to be carried out in their locality/area?
22. Does Caritas have a participatory policy/plan in relation to its rural development goals?
23. Do you ever approach the RDC to provide you with a list of projects that you can carry out in a rural community?
24. At what stage does Caritas involve the local community in participating in development projects? Is it: At the planning stage?/ When deciding on project priority areas?/ During the implementation stage?/ At the evaluation phase?/ Others please specify

### **NGO Funding**

25. Do you have any formal relationships with donors? Can you elaborate?
26. Are some or your entire projects donor funded?
27. To what activities is donor funding directed?
28. How much independence do you have in relation to?
  - a) Your financial supporters (donors)?
  - b) The government under which you are working?
  - c) The Roman Catholic structures in which you operate?
  - d) The Rural District Councils in whose are you operate?
  - e) The local authorities (chiefs, headman and politicians) in the rural communities you are working?
  - f) The expectations of the community you serve?
29. Do you have an operational capital development fund for your projects?
30. What percentage of your development plans are wholly Catholic funded and what percentage is based on funding through partnerships with donors?
31. What percentage of your income for development projects do donor funds constitute?
32. Do you have any income generating projects to help in boosting funds for development projects?
33. What are your top five sources of funding for development projects? State them in order of contributions made with the first being the highest funder.
34. Do donors at times or always dictate on the type of projects which their funds should be used for? What bearing has this on participatory development?
35. Do donors have an influence on the type of projects to be undertaken in rural communities?
36. Do you have an influence in the selection of development projects for rural communities? / Do you have an influence in the way development projects are selected in rural areas?
37. Does the chief/headman have an influence on the selection of development projects in a rural community?

38. Is your role in development work innovative, catalytic, pioneering, or you just provide more of what the government already provides?

### **NGO-State Relations**

39. What procedures if any do you follow before you operate in a given District or community?
40. Are there any challenges in your interactions with Central/local Government as well as with local politicians?
41. Do you hold meetings with local government officials briefing them on the progress of your development initiatives in rural areas?
42. How do you rate your independence from Government interference in your development projects? Is it: Very independent? / Independent?/ Not Independent? Can you explain more?
43. What specific areas of the PVO Act do you feel require improvement? In what way should these areas be improved?
44. Do local politicians interfere in determining the types of development projects to be undertaken in their localities?
45. How is the working relationship and level of cooperation between your organization and the government?
46. How does your organization and other development NGOs relate with the Zimbabwean Government?
47. To what extent has your organization adhered to the PVO Act, POSA and other pieces of legislation which have a bearing towards the operations of NGOs in this country?
48. How conducive and enabling is the political and economic environment for the operations of your organization in this country?
49. What measures and course of action would you want the Zimbabwean government to take in order to encourage donors and other development partners to fund long term development projects?
50. Is there any other issue/information you would want to share with me that is pertinent and has a bearing towards what we were discussing today?
51. Does the Zimbabwean government directly/indirectly influence/interfere in some/all of your development interventions in rural areas?
52. Is there a possibility that the Government or politicians may manipulate your development projects to their own advantage?
53. I understand that at times the Zimbabwean government is very suspicious on the operations of some development NGOs. Does your organization also fall in this category? If yes; why is the Zimbabwean government suspicious of your operations?
54. What kind of relationship have you established with the government under which you operate?
55. In what way are your operations guided by the PVO Act?
56. What improvements if any should be made to the PVO Act?
57. Who authorizes your operations in any rural community?
58. Is there a possibility of manipulation of your work (development projects) by the government, RDCs or local politicians? Can you please elaborate?
59. Does national/local politics influence your operations in any way?
60. Is there anything else you would like to share with me with regards to community participation in projects that your organization is undertaking?

#### **D. Interview Guide for Caritas Field Officers and Volunteers**

1. How many years have you been working with Caritas?
2. How long has your organization been operating in Zvimba District?
3. How do you come up with development interventions for rural communities?
4. Do donors have an influence on the type of development projects you carry out in rural communities?
5. As an NGO that was wholly formed by the Catholic Church - does the church also decide on the types of development projects to be carried out in rural areas?
6. In what way if any does the Roman Catholic Church influence the selection of Caritas' development projects in rural areas?
7. Explain what is easier to choose a project on behalf of the rural communities or to let the rural communities choose their own development project?
8. Are there any advantages or disadvantages with both approaches?
9. How much independence do you have in relation to?
  - a) Your financial supporters (donors)?
  - b) The government under which you are working?
  - c) The Roman Catholic structures in which you operate?
  - d) The Rural District Councils in whose areas you operate?
  - e) The local authorities (chiefs, headman and politicians) in the rural communities you are working?
  - f) The expectations of the community you serve?
10. In terms of determining what type of project is to be carried out/undertaken in any rural community what percentage do you give to the following actors: donors; NGOs; local communities? Can you please explain on these percentages?
11. How effective are your development interventions in encouraging the participation of local communities?
12. In what ways does your work build and strengthen local communities in terms of empowerment, self-reliance and participation?
13. Is your work in rural communities serving the poorest sections of society? Can you please explain?
14. Do your development initiatives not side-line local communities from fully participating in the development projects?
15. In your own opinion which projects can easily get funded by donors – (a) those projects which the donors are interested in or (b) those you come up with after carrying out your own assessments on the development needs of the local communities or (b) those which the local communities decide on their own?
16. From the above approaches which one is most sustainable and empowering?
17. Which participatory approach do you use when you are engaging local communities in your development interventions?
18. How effective is/are these approaches in encouraging local communities in participating in your development projects?
19. Do donors have an influence on the type of projects to be undertaken in rural communities?
20. Do you have an influence in the selection of development projects for rural communities?/ Do you have an influence in the way development projects are selected in rural areas?

21. Does the chief/headman have an influence on the selection of development projects in a rural community?
22. In what ways are you involved in strengthening the participation of local communities in development work?
23. Who is at the wheel in terms of development projects? Do rural communities decide on the type of projects to be undertaken in their own area or it is Caritas that identifies such projects on their behalf?
24. Do you consult local communities in choosing or when identifying a development project?
25. Is it not a negation of genuine participatory methodologies to side-line local communities in deciding on development initiatives/projects which are to be implemented in their communities?
26. In what way are your development projects participatory? Can you please explain?
27. In which participatory category do your projects fall under? Creating self-reliance among local communities; Empowering both men and women in the development of their own communities; Enabling people and communities to take up and advance the struggle for their own development; other.
28. There are many questions that can be asked about your work in rural communities but a primary one is whether you have gone beyond relief and welfare work?
29. Why is it that these years your work now tends to focus more on short term development initiatives (relief and welfare work) than the long term development projects of the 1980s?
30. Have local communities ever resisted participating in some of your development projects?
31. What might have been the major reason for such resistance?
32. Are there any weaknesses in your organization which you feel if rectified would increase the levels of local people's participation in some of your development interventions?
33. Community participation has its own difficulties as a construct, since it has no implicit definition or clear statement of inclusion and exclusion. In your own view how can you define Community participation?
34. What are the participatory methodologies Caritas employs in engaging communities to participate in development projects?
35. What is your opinion on the benefits of Community Participation?
36. Is the Zvimba community involved in all the phases of these projects, that is from planning, decision making to implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages?
37. What other problems are you facing as an organization in implementing development projects?
38. How is your organization addressing the challenges faced in carrying out development projects in Zvimba District?
39. Do you ever hold any stakeholders meetings to discuss issues pertaining to community participation in development projects? If yes, how do they assist in attending to issues concerning community involvement?
40. What is being done about engaging more locals in these projects?
41. Is there anything else you would like to share with me with regards to community participation in projects that Caritas is undertaking in Zvimba?

## **E. Interview Guide for some CSOT Board Members (Women, Youth, War Veterans and Business Community)**

1. What are CSOTs?
2. I understand that you are a Board member of the Zvimba CSOT – What criteria were used in order to elect you as a Board Member?
3. In what way are your development projects participatory?
4. Do you involve local people in the decision making process?
5. Do communities really benefit from these Trusts?
6. In what way do they benefit?
7. In what way have you empowered rural communities?
8. Can you briefly explain on how a CSOT Board is structured?
9. What are the duties of each of those who are in the CSOT Board?
10. Why is the DA a member of the Board?
11. Does the Board make decisions on the types of development projects to be undertaken in a certain rural community?
12. What role do you play as a Board Member?
13. Who is in charge of the CSOT funds?
14. I have read articles on the various projects the Zvimba CSOT has carried out. Whose decision was it to come up with these projects?
15. Who decides on the type of development project to be undertaken in rural communities?
16. Do you consult local people in choosing development projects?
17. Do you have some influence in choosing the type of development project for a specific rural community?
18. Can we honestly say that people in Zvimba West are at the driving seat of their own development in terms of funds availed to the CSOT?
19. Who has the final say on the type of development project to be undertaken in a rural community?
20. In what way do local communities participate in CSOT development projects?
21. I understand that funds from the CSOT were used to buy an earth moving machine – Who came up with such an idea?
22. Did local people give you the go ahead to purchase the earth moving machine?
23. Have local communities directly benefited from this initiative?
24. Do local communities have a say on which type of project they want in their area?
25. Is there a set out list of development projects which the local communities have to choose from?
26. Can such a set-up be regarded as participatory?
27. Is there anything else you would like to share with me with regards to community participation in projects that your organization is undertaking?

## **F. Interview Guide for Local Government Officials**

**Caritas**



1. What procedures if any, do NGOs follow before they can operate in your District?
  2. Have you ever rejected an NGO from operating in your District? If yes, what was the reason for this rejection?
  3. Do you always relate well with NGOs operating in your area? What about with Caritas?
  4. Do you at times provide assistance to NGOs on the list of development projects they should carry out in specific rural communities within your District?/ Do NGOs come up with their own predetermined development projects?/ Do NGOs first consult rural communities on the type of development projects they want in their localities?
  5. Of the three approaches mentioned above, which one is commonly used by NGOs in your district when carrying out development projects? What about Caritas?
  6. In your own opinion, which approach would you recommend and why?
- Zvimba CSOT**
7. Has your Board ever disseminated information to local communities on the financial performance of the CSOT?
  8. Do local politicians have an influence on the types of development projects to be undertaken by the CSOT in various villages and wards?
  9. Do you carry out community development needs assessments? Is there a difference between the RDC and CSOT development needs assessments?
  10. Where you ever approached by the Trust to provide a list of your own development projects that they could also carry out as part of their development initiatives in Zvimba District?
  11. Can the community distinguish between RDC and CSOT projects?
  12. How independent are CSOTs from other statutory bodies?
  13. Are CSOTs merely there to complement central and local government development efforts? Are they there to fill in the development gaps of central and local government?
  14. What are your duties and responsibilities as a Board member?
  15. Where does the CSOT Board report to (NIEEB, Indigenization Ministry or Qualifying Business)?
  16. Why do you have to be involved in CSOT development work when you already have development projects of your own in council? Is there no danger of duplication of work in development initiatives?
  17. Is the Board not skewed in favour of the Ministry of Local Government and Urban Planning since it is also represented by the DA, the CEO and the chairman of the RDC?
  18. Will there be no danger that the three of you under the Ministry of Local Government might push forward a common development agenda at the expense of the real interests of the CSOT or community?
  19. Does that not also compromise CSOT projects in that the three of you might end up voting for the disbursement of CSOT funds to cover up for your own development projects which you have been unable to undertake due to the economic situation the country currently finds itself in?

20. Whose idea was it to purchase graders and front-end loaders?
21. Should there not be a separation of duties and responsibilities between RDCs and CSOTs in order to avoid duplication of work as well as to ensure that CSOTs provide for the meaningful participation of qualified and experienced members of the local community?
22. As Board members do you consult the local community in choosing development projects that best suit their development needs?
23. How do you rate your participatory approaches in empowering local communities in rural areas? Highly Effective/ Effective/ Not Effective/ Highly Ineffective
24. Is there anything else you would like to share with me with regards to community participation in projects that your organization is undertaking?

### **G. Interview Guide for Ministry of Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Officials**

1. Can you briefly explain on the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Policy?
2. What are CSOTs?
3. CSOTs have their genesis in the policy of one political party ZANU PF. Does this not make the Trusts political tools used by the ruling party to maintain its grip on power through the support of the rural communities who will be benefitting from such schemes?
4. To what activities are CSOT funds directed?
5. CSOTs have carried out various development initiatives in rural communities. These include borehole sinking, refurbishment of schools and clinics, construction of classroom blocks and clinics, rehabilitation of roads and so on. Why is it that to a large extent CSOTs seems to be taking over the responsibilities of other government bodies (Ministries of Local Government, Health and Education)?
6. Is there no danger that CSOTs are now discharging the mandate of statutory bodies simply because they have the resources?
7. Does this not undermine the community's own development needs?
8. Are there no incidences where the Ministry representative has overridden the CSOT Board in the selection of development projects?
9. Was there a criteria that was used in determining the qualifications and experience of some of the Board's representatives especially women, youth, war veterans and the business community?
10. Can you briefly tell me about the organogram of the CSOT Board?
11. What are the duties and responsibilities of CSOT Board members?
12. Is the Board not skewed in favour of the Ministry of Local Government and Urban Planning since it is also represented by the DA, the CEO and the chairman of the RDC?
13. Will there be no danger that the Board members falling under the above Ministry might push forward a common development agenda at the expense of the real interests of the CSOT?

14. Whose interests do some of these Board members represent (DA, CEO and Chairman of the RDC)? Is it the development interests of the CSOT, community at large or those of their employers?
15. Does this not compromise the independence of the Trust in coming up with people centred development projects?
16. Should there not be a separation of duties and responsibilities between RDCs and CSOTs in order to avoid duplication of work as well as to ensure that CSOTs provide for the meaningful participation of qualified and experienced members of the local community?
17. Whose idea was it to purchase graders and front-end loaders for the Zvimba CSOT?
18. Does it not also undermine the choices of people in selecting their own development projects?
19. Does the CSOT carry out community development needs assessments?
20. Do CSOTs have a provision for the meaningful participation of local communities in development projects?
21. As a Ministry, do you have a specific list of development projects where local communities can choose from? Are we then not falling into a trap of deciding for people what we think they want? Can that be regarded as genuine empowerment when we decide on what type of development projects these communities should undertake?
22. Does that not also undermine the participation of local communities in deciding on projects which best suit their areas/localities?
23. Is there anything else you would like to share with me with regards to community participation in projects that your organization is undertaking?

## APPENDIX 4

### Focus Group Guide

#### FOCUS GROUP - MODERATOR'S GUIDE

##### 1. Introduction and introductory activities

Thank you for agreeing to meet with us today. We have us scheduled for one and a half hours together.

Each participant gives an introduction that is easy and nonthreatening so that everyone has a turn speaking.

Research assistant distributes drinks, biscuits and potato crisps.

##### 1.1 What the Research is about?

The research is about having a deeper understanding on the participatory approaches used by ZvCSOT/Caritas in its development interventions.

##### 1.2 Why we wish to interview them?

Our intention is to find out whether as community members you were also involved in the decision-making processes on the development projects in your areas.

##### 1.3 What we will do with the information that we obtain

Your views, perspectives and opinions will be helpful in future CSOT/NGO development interventions since after the publication of the thesis I will provide a copy to Caritas head offices and the Ministry in charge of CSOTs. Your identities will never be revealed to anyone.

##### 2. Statement of the basic rules or guidelines for the interview

1. We expect an open, polite, and orderly environment where everyone in the group is encouraged to participate. An important thing that we value in these discussions is for everyone to participate.
2. The interview will proceed as follows: We will ask a question to be answered by anyone. After the individual answer, we then open it up for discussion by the group.
3. Everyone may have a different or the same opinion or answer to the questions and so we want to hear all those opinions and answers. No opinion or perspective is unacceptable and we expect a wide range of perspectives on the topic under discussion.
4. We will be recording these discussions because we want to capture in detail your invaluable contributions. While my assistant and I might jot down some notes, they are limited in capturing some very important things you will be saying. The major reason for these discussions is to hear everything you have to say about the topic under discussion.

##### 3. Discussions guided by open-ended questions developed from some themes

##### A. CSOT Themes

*Projects carried out by CSOT* – Which development projects were carried out by ZvCSOT in your area and in other areas in Zvimba District?

*Benefits to community* - In what way have the community/individuals benefitted from ZvCSOT development projects?

*Ownership of Trust* - Who owns the CSOT and why do you say so?

*Community consultations* – Where you ever consulted before the implementation of development projects in your area? Explain to us what really happened.

*Community's development needs and priorities as regards ZvCSOT's development interventions* – Personally or on behalf of your community, which development interventions do you prefer to be carried out in your area? Why do you think these interventions are important to you as an individual or to the community as a whole?

*Suggestions for improvements* –What do you think ZvCSOT is supposed to do, to improve on its future development interventions?

## **B. NGO Themes**

*Projects carried out by Caritas* - Which development projects were carried out by Caritas in your area and in other areas in Zvimba District?

*Benefits to community* - In what way have the community/individuals benefitted from Caritas development projects?

*Community consultations* - Where you ever consulted before the implementation of development projects in your area? Explain to us what really happened.

*Efficacy of volunteers in community development initiatives* – Can you tell us what Caritas volunteers really do in your locality?

*Community development needs and priorities as regards Caritas' development interventions* - Personally or on behalf of your community, which development interventions do you prefer to be carried out in your area? Why do you think these interventions are important to you as an individual or to the community as a whole?

*Suggestions for improvements* - What do you think Caritas is supposed to do, to improve on its future development interventions?

## APPENDIX 5

### Excerpt of Community Share Ownership Trusts Policies and Procedures Manual

#### Ministry of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment

20th Floor Mukwati Building

**HARARE**

EFFECTIVE DATE: 22 MAY 2014

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#### 1. PREAMBLE

##### 1.1 Community Share Ownership Trust Policy.

The majority of Zimbabwe's population, an estimated 70%, resides in rural communities. These are the same rural communities whose development has been historically neglected, while such communities were made reservoirs of cheap labour for the colonial economy. This discriminatory economy was inherited at independence in 1980.

The new Government inherited an economy depriving the indigenous majority, one monopolised by foreign companies and multinational conglomerates. These companies have carried out corporate social responsibility programmes which have seen no sustainable development of rural/local communities. In response Government's indigenization & economic empowerment programme seeks to facilitate the broad based participation of all Zimbabweans in the mainstream economy. Such broad based empowerment programme seeks to ensure that Zimbabwe's natural resources benefit the majority of indigenous Zimbabweans.

Companies exploiting such natural resources are bound to ensure that the local communities within which they exploit such resources benefit through a 10% shareholding and seed capital donation. The dividend and revenue accruing to community trusts from their share in their exploited resources shall be directed towards socioeconomic and enterprise development programmes within the community.

##### 1.2 Legal Background

Zimbabwe's Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act [Chapter 14:33] provides for the economic empowerment of indigenous Zimbabweans who must be guaranteed 'at least fifty-one *per centum* of the shares of businesses commercially exploiting their natural resources. The Minister assigned to administer indigenization and economic empowerment programme (currently being the Minister of Youth, Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment) is mandated with the administration of the indigenisation legislation. Section 21 of the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act empowers the Minister to pass regulations

which facilitate the manner in which indigenization and economic empowerment shall be undertaken.

The Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment (General) Regulations 2010, Statutory Instrument 21 of 2010 (as duly amended) provide in Section 14B for the establishment of ‘community share ownership trusts’, which are to benefit from natural resources being exploited by businesses operating within communities.

Community Share Ownerships Trusts are registered with the Registrar of Deeds, with the Founder of these trusts being the Minister responsible for Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment. In terms of the indigenisation regulations SI 21 of 2010, the Minister has the discretion to consider whether a community trust established by a “qualifying business” meets the standard set by Government so as to be considered in determining whether the business has achieved its minimum indigenization and empowerment quota. Community share ownership trusts, which operate within the framework of their deeds of trust have been mandated to fulfill various socio-economic development objectives.

### **1.3 Purpose of the policy and procedures**

The policy and procedures provide guidelines to Community Share Ownership Trust (CSOT) members in their day-to-day administration of the Trust. They also provide general rules and regulations that control the relations between the community and the Trust. These Policies and Procedures provide guidelines to the board, staff, Trust beneficiaries and the qualifying businesses. The policies and procedures should complement not replace the deed of trust; hence all has been done to ensure that they do not in any way conflict with the articles and spirit of the deed of trust. These policies and procedures attempt to cover as much ground as possible, but they should not be regarded as finite. The National Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Board shall ensure that the policy and procedures are reviewed and amended regularly to meet the CSOT’s changing needs.

## **2. Terminology/Definitions**

‘**CSOT**’ refers to the Trust in its totality, and includes all existing sub-structures or any others that may be established in the future.

‘**Board**’ refers to the CSOT Board as defined in the deed of trust.

‘**Board Member**’ means a male/female individual appointed to the Board, and other official members as defined by the deed of trust. ‘**Beneficiaries/community**’ refers to residents of the local community for which a CSOT is established, as defined in the deed of trust.

‘**CBO**’ means community based organisations ‘**Staff /Employees**’ refers to those individuals who are employed by the CSOT, be it on full-time or part-time basis, on permanent or contract, which draw a regular salary from the organization.

‘**Administrator**’ refers to the employee of a CSOT, and his office, providing expert advice to the board and the various aspects of development within the mandate of the trust. The Administrator will report directly to the Board of Trustees and its committees and is charged with responsibility of all other CSOT staff, and coordination of CSOT operations, management, marketing, and liaise closely with CSOT consultants and other stake holders to provide expert advice to the Board on the various aspects of development within the mandate of the trust.

‘**Accountant**’ is charged with maintaining proper records of all financial transactions of the trust.

‘**Other Staff**’ These are any other staff employed by CSOT and charged with various duties in the office of the CSOT. This entire staff will report directly to the Administrator.

‘**NIEEB**’ is the National Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Board among whose statutory obligations is to advise the Government on matters of indigenization and economic

empowerment. NIEEB shall be responsible for ensuring compliance of indigenization and economic empowerment objectives by all CSOTs.

**‘Ministry’** shall be the Ministry responsible for indigenization and economic empowerment.

**‘Minister’** shall be the Minister appointed to administer indigenization and economic empowerment, currently the Minister of Youth Development Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment.

**‘Qualifying Business’** shall be any company exploiting the natural resources within a district for which a CSOT has been established, which company has given or is expected give 10% shareholding to a CSOT in compliance with its indigenization obligation. **‘Financial Year’** for all CSOT shall run between 01 January and 31 December.

### **3. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**

#### **MINISTER OF YOUTH INDIGENISATION AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

#### **COMMUNITY SHARE OWNERSHIP TRUST BOARD**

#### **BOARD COMMITTEES**

Human Resources

Finance,

Planning and Projects

Audit & Risk

#### **NATIONAL INDIGENISATION & ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT BOARD**

#### **ADMINISTRATOR’S OFFICE**

### **4. DIRECT PARTICIPATION OF BENEFICIARIES.**

4.1 The beneficiaries of the Trust are all the female and male residents of the district for which a CSOT has been established. These shall include; vulnerable groups within the community, including children, youth, women, persons living with disability, orphans, the aged etc.

4.2 At all times the Board, its members, staff shall act in the best interest of all beneficiaries of the CSOT. 4.3 The board shall ensure that the beneficiaries, including women and youth, of the trust shall be consulted to give their input in all development projects/initiatives that the Trust shall pursue.

4.3.1 In the first month of every financial year or any period not exceeding three months before such financial year the Trust shall ensure that consultative ‘needs assessment’ meetings are undertaken by the Trust at which meetings the beneficiaries of the Trust shall be invited to attend and participate, to give their input on matters affecting the Trust and its objectives, including their development priorities;

4.3.2 In the eleventh month of the financial year the board shall undertake at least one ‘feedback’ meeting within each ward, at which meeting the beneficiaries shall be briefed and updated on all projects and matters, including financial, concerning the Trust;

4.3.3 The ‘need assessments’ meetings or ‘feed-back’ meetings shall be held at ward level. Such meetings shall be led by the Trustee, with at least one Chief being present. The Trust can engage an expert to facilitate such meetings.

4.4 At all times during the ‘needs assessment’ and ‘feed-back’ meetings highlighted above the trust shall ensure that the views and opinions of the beneficiaries are freely expressed.

4.5 A full and proper record shall be made and kept for every meeting, capturing all recommendations by the beneficiaries regarding their socio-economic development needs and priorities. Such a record must outline the following:



- 4.5.1 Date and venue of meeting;
- 4.5.2 Number of beneficiaries attending (male, females, youth);
- 4.5.3 All key contributions and recommendations by beneficiaries.
- 4.6 At any time during a financial year any beneficiary may present to the Administrator, in writing, any matter concerning the Trust. The Administrator shall as soon as possible notify the Chairman of any matter which he/she deems to be of a serious nature. The Chairman shall have the matter presented before the next board or relevant board committee meeting.
- 4.6.1 Where the matter is not of a serious nature warranting the attention of the Chairman or board meeting the Administrator may attend to the matter and must within two weeks of having been presented with the matter respond to the beneficiary concerned;
- 4.6.2 Where the matter is of a serious nature and has been presented to a board meeting, the board shall deliberate over the same and make its decision. The Administrator shall advise the concerned beneficiary, in writing, of the board's decision;
- 4.6.3 The board shall at all times endeavor to address the concerns of beneficiaries presented before them in a professional manner and as efficiently as possible, being no later than 14 working days;
- 4.6.4 A full record shall be kept of all concerns or matters presented by beneficiaries, whether dealt with by the board or Administrator.

## **5. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 The Trust shall at all times endeavor to fulfill the objectives of the Trust as set out in the deed of trust, which objectives are primarily to facilitate socio-economic and enterprise development, including:
  - 5.1.1 Infrastructural development;
  - 5.1.2 Improved socio-economic livelihoods;
  - 5.1.3 Enterprise development and growth of local economy;
  - 5.1.4 Increased income generation;
  - 5.1.5 Poverty alleviation;
  - 5.1.6 Job creation.
- 5.2 All development projects implemented by the trust must be undertaken after full consultation with the beneficiaries of the trust and having been adopted by a full resolution of the Board. See paragraph 4.3 below.
- 5.3 Before undertaking any development project, and having undertaken 'needs assessment', the Trust shall draw up a project plan. The plan must include the following:
  - 5.3.1 Name of the project;
  - 5.3.2 Location of project;
  - 5.3.2 Cost of undertaking the project,
  - 5.3.3 Timeframe for starting and completing the project
  - 5.3.4 Materials etc;
  - 5.3.2 Anticipated impact/benefits accruing to the community, including number of beneficiaries, gender etc;
  - 5.3.3 How the project shall be made operational and sustainable upon completion, e.g. the running of the school, clinic or drilling rig;
  - 5.3.4 Ensure that all relevant contractual documents are drawn up before any project is undertaken by a contractor.

5.4 The Trust shall present its project plan to NIEEB for assessment and approval before undertaking such project. NIEEB shall give its recommendation regarding the project plan as soon as possible following submission, no later than two weeks after presentation of plan.

5.5 Administrator shall ensure that all projects shall be inspected during their implementation and a progress report drawn up at least monthly. The Administrator may engage an independent expert (engineer, builder, electrician) to provide their professional opinion. The written report of every inspection shall be presented to the Projects Committee.

5.6 In implementing all projects and trust business, the trust shall be guided by the principle of broad based economic empowerment, including:

5.6.1 At least 60% of all contracts to undertake trust projects shall be granted to indigenous service providers/businesses, which businesses must have indigenization compliance certificates;

5.6.2 That indigenous entrepreneurs, suppliers, contractor, labour, etc, preferably within the local community, are engaged;

5.6.2 That at least 25% of all businesses contracted by the trust shall be to deserving and capable young entrepreneurs as outlined in the National Youth Policy. Any departure to such a quota shall be captured and explained in the Management, Discussion and Analysis section of the financial report of the

Trust which is tabled at the Annual General Meeting;

5.6.3 That other vulnerable groups such as women, war veterans and the disabled must be guaranteed equal opportunity and a specific quota reserved for them by the Trust in all business opportunities;

5.6.4 A special report on special interest groups shall be tabled at each Annual General Meeting by a committee on special interest groups or such other committee responsible for this group. The report will show the amount expended on such groups and the benefits of such programs;

5.6.5 That, as much as possible the Trust must endeavor to ensure that the local economy of the district is stimulated by the trust's business activities through capturing information on jobs created directly and indirectly and the total revenue and profit earned by entrepreneurs benefiting from the Trust to the extent of its involvement.

### **7.3 Obligation of Trustees.**

By accepting their appointment to the Board of a CSOT board members accept responsibility and accountability for managing the affairs of the trust. This responsibility carries with it certain obligations which include regular attendance at meetings, responsible, intelligent and constructive contribution at meetings, carrying out assigned tasks diligently and timeously, accepting joint responsibility for the committee's failures and successes, accountability to the community and transparency in conducting

Trust operations (covered). Furthermore, the decisions taken by the board should be seen to be transparent and as far as possible, not serving the personal interest of Board members.

## APPENDIX 6

### Consent Form

I consent to an interview conducted by Bowden Bolt Chengetai Mbanje for his research on a comparative analysis of the way in which participatory practices are used by Indigenous Trusts and Mainstream Development NGOs in Zvimba Rural Community, Zimbabwe. The Purpose and procedures of the interview have been explained to me. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from participating in the study at any time.

I understand that notes and recordings (if any) of the interview will be kept strictly confidential.

Identify by name?

I ☐ Agree / ☐ Do not agree to be identified in the thesis and related research

Audio recording?

I ☐ Agree / ☐ Do not agree to have the interview audio recorded.

Participant's name (or code, for anonymous interview):

.....

Signature

.....

Date

.....

## Participant Information Sheet 1

Dear potential participant,

My name is Bowden Bolt Chengetai Mbanje. I am a PhD student at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. My thesis is on a comparative analysis of the way in which participatory practices are used by Indigenous Trusts and Mainstream Development NGOs in Zvimba Rural Community, Zimbabwe. The research focuses on debate and issues concerning the participation of local communities in NGO and CSOT development projects. Input generated from this research is intended to further improve the livelihoods of ordinary rural Zimbabweans through engaging them in meaningful participation in development interventions.

I am inviting you to participate in the study on the basis of your knowledge on the operations of Caritas Zimbabwe. Participation is voluntary and will take the form of a personal interview lasting about 30 to 60 minutes, at a location convenient to you. You will be free to withdraw any time, or to decline to answer any question that you may be uncomfortable with.

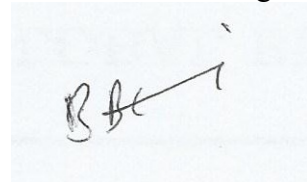
If you agree to participate, you may choose whether or not to be identified by name in my PhD thesis or in any other future related publications. You have the right of agreeing to an audio recorded interview or not. In any case, I will keep notes or recordings of the interview strictly confidential.

Please do not hesitate to contact me ([mbanjebowden@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mbanjebowden@yahoo.co.uk); +263 784620427/+263772730734) or my research supervisors, Dr Sally Matthews ([s.matthews@ru.ac.za](mailto:s.matthews@ru.ac.za) , +27 466 038806) or Prof Kirk Helliker ([K.Helliker@ru.ac.za](mailto:K.Helliker@ru.ac.za) , +27 793532819) if you have any questions concerning this research.

Thank you for taking time to consider participating in my research.

Sincerely,

Bowden Bolt Chengetai Mbanje



PhD Candidate, Politics and International Studies  
Rhodes University

## Participant Information Sheet 2

Dear potential participant,

My name is Bowden Bolt Chengetai Mbanje. I am a PhD student at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. My thesis is on a comparative analysis of the way in which participatory practices are used by Indigenous Trusts and Mainstream Development NGOs in Zvimba Rural Community, Zimbabwe. The research focuses on debate and issues concerning the participation of local communities in NGO and CSOT development projects. Input generated from this research is intended to further improve the livelihoods of ordinary rural Zimbabweans through engaging them in meaningful participation in development interventions.

I am inviting you to participate in the study on the basis of your knowledge on Community Share Ownership Trusts (CSOTs) in Zimbabwe. Participation is voluntary and will take the form of a personal interview lasting about 30 to 60 minutes, at a location convenient to you. You will be free to withdraw any time, or to decline to answer any question that you may be uncomfortable with.

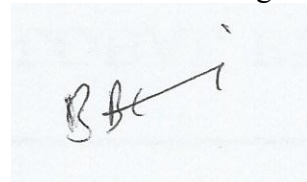
If you agree to participate, you may choose whether or not to be identified by name in my PhD thesis or in any other future related publications. You have the right of agreeing to an audio recorded interview or not. In any case, I will keep notes or recordings of the interview strictly confidential.

Please do not hesitate to contact me ([mbanjebowden@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mbanjebowden@yahoo.co.uk), +263 784620427/+263772730734) or my research supervisors, Dr Sally Matthews ([s.matthews@ru.ac.za](mailto:s.matthews@ru.ac.za), +27 466 038806) or Prof Kirk Helliker, ([K.Helliker@ru.ac.za](mailto:K.Helliker@ru.ac.za), +27 793532819) if you have any questions concerning this research.

Thank you for taking time to consider participating in my research.

Sincerely,

Bowden Bolt Chengetai Mbanje

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Bolt', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

PhD Candidate, Politics and International Studies  
Rhodes University