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# THE FAST TRACK LAND REFORM PROGRAMME AND LIVELIHOODS IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY OF HOUSEHOLDS AT ATHLONE FARM IN MUREHWA DISTRICT

by

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

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Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own work. It is submitted for the Degree, Master of Arts in Development Sociology at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and it has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other University. Where I have used the work of other authors, I have properly acknowledged them and I have not copied any author or scholar's work with the intention of passing it off as my own. All the interviews and informal conversations that have been conducted for the purposes of this research report have also been cited correctly and I have not passed off any of my participants work, suggestions and quotes as my own.

Signed: ----------

On ---------- Day of----------, 2009

**ABSTRACT**

When Zimbabwe gained independence from white settler rule in 1980, it was faced with the challenge of addressing the colonial legacy of disparities in access to production resources, including land. Land and other productive assets were controlled by a minority of white farmers engaged in large scale commercial production. In contrast, the majority of the Zimbabwean population in rural areas eked a subsistent life in overcrowded and infertile communal areas. Whilst the need for redistribution of land and other productive resources was obvious, the government had to face the policy challenges of how to implement large scale reforms that would address these discrepancies whilst maintaining earnings from crop production. The commercial farming sector contributed to the country's Gross Domestic Product earnings and also contributed to the total merchandise exports and inputs to manufacturing. It was also the single largest employer in the modern sector.

Government policy was informed by global and national debates about the efficiency, effectiveness and economic rationale of promoting large scale commercial production, compared to redistributive programmes that would provide smaller farming land to a larger number of beneficiaries for small holder production. The issue of the scope and potential of providing land to the poor to ensure household food self-provisioning had only been dealt with marginally until the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) in 2000 to 20002. This was despite global and national debates and empirical evidence that pointed to the potential that lay in land redistribution to improve the livelihoods of the majority of the Zimbabwean poor. The FTLRP, which led to the redistribution of large scale commercial land, resulted in a lot of negative impacts that have been well documented. It also, however, opened up debates and renewed academic interest to interrogate the role of smallholder agriculture to livelihoods enhancement and poverty alleviation.

The study used a case study of households that were settled in Athlone farm under the FTLRP to contribute to this debate. Its main aim was to explore how far, and, in what ways the beneficiaries' lives had changed since they had resettled in Athlone. Emphasis in the study was placed on capturing the livelihood activities of resettled households. Interrogation and analysis of livelihoods in Athlone was guided by the sustainable livelihoods framework and the basic assumptions of the concept of agrarian reform. The sustainable livelihoods framework was employed to evaluate how the provision of land, as one asset pertinent to the livelihoods of the poor, has improved the livelihood capabilities of Athlone farmers. It was also used to review the broad range of other provisions that agrarian reform should extend in order to improve livelihoods.

The study finds tentative results that point to improved livelihoods for Athlone households, particularly as far as household food self-sufficiency is concerned. It finds that beneficiary households have been able to meet their own food, grain needs and extending to the needs of families and friends amidst the poverty and grain shortage that Zimbabwe has experienced since the FTLRP started. However, Athlone households' livelihoods are considerably vulnerable as they have only managed to survive a subsistence levels. The study concludes that whilst the FTLRP, provided land, land, on its own cannot be sufficient as a livelihood resource without access to other capital assets. The redistribution of land has not been integrated into a wider agrarian and development strategy in a way that would reflect the full potential for livelihoods enhancement.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.2 AIM AND RATIONALE

Regional debates on land reform have centred on the social and political rationale of land redistribution as a way of addressing colonial disparities in access to and ownership of land and other productive resources. According to Kepe and Cousins (2002), development in Southern Africa can only be achieved through reducing the inequality in the ownership and effective control of both productive assets and the benefit streams derived from them. Land reform thus has been framed not only in its role in achieving social equity but also in delivering on social justice in the background of colonial land expropriation and alienation in the region (Sachikonye, 2005).

Debates in Zimbabwe, in the 20 years before the FTLRP on land and agrarian reform, in addition to justice and equity concerns, were concerned also about agriculture's contribution to overall national economic development (Kinsey, 1982; Whitsun, 1983; World bank, 1983). The role and potential of smallholder production, however, remained marginal, both at academic and political levels. This was despite global evidence of such potential as highlighted in the successes of smallholder agriculture in China, Japan, Taiwan, Columbia and Mexico (Rosset, 1999) as well as regional experiences of smallholder production in Kenya (Leo, 1978) and, in Zimbabwe, the success of maize and cotton farmers in the early years after Independence (Kinsey, 1992; Rukuni and Eicher, 1997; Anderson, 2007). The FTLRP that started in 2000 renewed academic interest to interrogate the role of smallholder agriculture to livelihoods enhancement and poverty alleviation.

Studies on the FTLRP have indicated that the programme has led to decreased aggregate national production. According to Richardson (2004) agricultural production has plummeted since the programme was initiated in 2000 that by 2004 it had dropped by 30 percent. Due to the backward and forward linkages that had established between agricultural and the manufacturing industry, this contraction of the agricultural sector also saw the manufacturing sector and the whole economy shrinking by 15 percent by 2003 (Richardson, 2004). The FTLRP was also accompanied by lack of support for resettled farmers, victimisation of white farmers and loss of livelihoods for former farm workers among others (Sachikonye, 2003, Waeterloos & Rutherford, 2004; Marongwe, 2007).

Some scholars have contended that despite these negative impacts, some positive impacts on livelihoods for a broader majority of beneficiaries can be ascertained. There is need for more empirical evidence on the resettled farmers to evaluate the implications of the FTLRP on households' livelihoods (Moyo, 2005; Marongwe, 2007). Topical studies that have challenged some of the conventional wisdom in media and academic circles within and beyond Zimbabwe on the FTLRP include Ian Scoones of Sussex University's Institute of Development Studies (IDS), in collaboration with the Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) at the University of the Western Cape.

They contend that whilst there were highly destructive aspects of this programme that included coercion, destruction of property, corruption, cronyism and incompetence; a whole range of worthy and needy beneficiaries gained better livelihoods through the FTLRP. Small scale farmers have notably managed to be productive amidst harsh economic and political conditions (Scoones, 2008). Research done at the African Institute for Agrarian Studies (AIAS) has also pointed that small farmers have lacked agricultural support to produce sufficiently enough. With necessary support and conducive, secure tenure systems, AIAS studies argue that these farmers are likely to be as productive to support the economy. All these studies, whilst showing potential can only be taken tentatively since the sustainability of these positive outcomes are still heavily debated.

This study contributes to empirical evidence for the potential and prospects that land reform has for poverty reduction as Moyo pointed out that "…current analysis… have tended to be politically embedded, empirically weak and inadequate in terms of land policy making… leading to limited dialogue over improving land reforms' poverty reduction benefits" (2005;12[1] . The study is also premised on the recognition that there is a lack of good empirical studies on the newly resettled farms and what is available are general statements based upon national and often unreliable statistics, and the accounts provided by different individuals (Derman, 2003). Whilst critical reviews of the FTLRP have focused on analysing its impact on aggregate economic indicators such as GDP per capita (Richardson, 2004), this research is based on the premise that there is also a need to consider its impact and potential at the household level.

[1] See Moyo 2005 for a detailed critique of the limitations of current research and discourse on the relationship between land reforms and poverty reduction within the background of the Fast Track Resettlement Programme

The broad aim of this research was to explore and capture the livelihood experiences of households resettled under the FTLRP. The research was specifically designed the impact of the resettlement programme on households' livelihood. The study investigated the production assets that the newly resettled farmers have acquired and gained access to and the type and level of support they have had in pursuing their livelihoods in Athlone.

## 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main question that guided this study was:

- What has been the impact of the FTRP on livelihoods for resettled households on Athlone Farm?

Other secondary questions dealt with are:

1. What livelihood activities do newly resettled farmers pursue in Athlone?
2. What changes have there been in household livelihoods after resettlement?
3. What factors affect livelihood activities for newly resettled households?
4. What impact has the provision of land had on households' livelihoods capabilities?
5. What kind of assistance has resettled households received to pursue their livelihood activities and what impact has this support had?

The next section discusses the methodology that was used to answer these questions.

## 1.4 METHODOLOGY

### 1.4.1 Research design

In order to investigate the central questions of the study, a qualitative research methodology was employed to capture the myriad of activities and the complexities of livelihoods in Athlone. A qualitative methodology is a broad approach in social research which is aimed at understanding a particular social situation, event, role, group or interaction (Creswell, 1994). Creswell (1994) further contends that it is an investigative process entailing that the researcher gradually makes sense of social phenomena by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing and classifying the object of study.

I used the qualitative methodology based upon the need to understand human and social interaction from the perspectives of insiders and participants (Maxwell, 1998:49) and also on the strength of the methodology in allowing the collection and analysis of in-depth information on smaller groups. Qualitative research, according to Marshall and Rossman (1989, cited in

Creswell, 1994), entails that the researcher immerses himself or herself in the everyday life of the setting chosen, entering the informants' world and through ongoing interaction, seek the informant's perspectives and meanings. This is the broad approach that guided this study.

### 1.4.2 Case study

A case study approach was also used in this study to give detailed information on the livelihoods of households in Athlone. This method was employed due to its strength and appropriateness in capturing context specific detail (Yin, 1994). Yin also asserts that the case study is "an empirical enquiry that investigates contemporary phenomena within its real life context, addresses a situation in which boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident and uses multiple sources of evidence" (p.59). Athlone Farm was used as the case study for this project. A full discussion of the study area will be done in Chapter 3.

The main limitation of the case study method, however, is that control is minimal. The extent to which the researcher can determine and influence activities in the field is very low. Jones (1985) has also pointed to the weakness of this methodology as a source of evidence for a theory. She contends that it is limited in its ability to contribute positive support to a theory. This study was however not aimed at generating theory but at adding to empirical evidence for theoretical debates.

### 1.4.2 Sampling

All households that had household heads available were interviewed for the semi-structured interviews. Depending on availability, interviews were carried out with either the wife or the husband. Interviews for life histories were done based on availability of respondents from households that would have seemed interesting during the interviews. It must be noted that the sample was used, not necessarily to be statistically representative. It was employed to only represent what Chattopadhyay & Seddon (2002) call authentic experiences of individuals and households in order to suggest more general patterns, trends and tendencies and, in order to complement data from the first interviews.

## 1.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

A range of multiple data collection methods were used in this research. These included structured interviews with key–informants and household members, life histories, secondary documents and personal observations. The use of multiple methods is pertinent in social

research in order to capture the discourses and practices of different actors. Participation by the researcher as a resident in the community aided the data gathering process. This made it easier to establish rapport with community members and helped in developing social networks that opened up different sources of information. The following are the methods that were used to gather data:

### 1.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

In-depth interviews were used in order to gather the households' livelihood activities. An in-depth interview is described as a conversation with an individual conducted by an interviewer that usually collects specific information about a phenomenon or a person (Giddens, 2006). Giddens also points out that because in-depth interviews allow for greater flexibility in questioning the respondent, the researcher is able to examine issues in greater detail during the interview.

For the purpose of this research, in-depth interviews were important because they allowed me to uncover the dynamics and full range of livelihood strategies within the household as will be highlighted in ensuing discussions of the findings. I was able to ask questions that require detailed information. It also enabled me to ask for clarification in cases where issues were not clear, or in those that enough information was not given. In-depth household interviews provided detailed data on the complexity of household livelihood strategies as well as their performance in agricultural production.

The strength of in-depth interviews lies in that they can be conducted in private. They are appropriate for inquiries into the household's experience or a more detailed exploration of the respondent's opinions and attitudes particularly, since the "resettlement' subject is politically sensitive. Since the aim of the study was to explore and capture lived realities and experiences, in-depth interviews were invaluable to allow interpretation of data to be based on more completely articulated personal viewpoints of respondents or behavioural accounts, and thus provide more information, on which to form judgments as to their meaning. In-depth and unstructured interviews were used in discussions with household heads in order to get mini life histories as well as with key informants as discussed next:

### 1.5.2 Mini life histories

Life histories have been an important research methodology for social anthropologists and social historians for a long time. It is a tool helpful in providing the basis for understanding and

analyzing rural livelihoods (Chattopadhyay & Seddon, 2002). Life histories also help to enable the identification of patterns and issues of greater generality. Life histories are also invaluable in allowing an understanding of socio-economic changes of households in a more qualitative and in-depth manner.

Employing the term "life history" could be misleading in that it could give the impression of the comprehensive, vigorous, longitudinal approach employed by social anthropologists and social historians. A special note is in line here to acknowledge, where it is used, that it is used in a very loose way to indicate the level of how respondents were allowed to tell the stories of their lives, to provide what would actually just pass more appropriately as mini life histories.

Chattopadhyay & Seddon employ the term "brief histories" contending, in the same way as I use "mini-histories", that they are "revealing and allow us to understand better the ways in which the lives of individuals both affect and are conditioned by the wider social context and processes of social change" (2002; 4936). This was in consideration that not only do life histories provide insights into the complexity and variety of individual lives and social relationships; they enable us to identify patterns and issues of greater generality. Capturing changes over time and change processes in the lives of household heads helped in this research to gain an in-depth evaluation of livelihood options and opportunities for the households in Athlone. Respondents were allowed to talk freely about their lives though I was guided by a checklist that pointed to important information on:

- past employment history,
- past agricultural activity,
- past livelihood activity/ sources of income, which could also include the activities and contributions of other family members; either the wives or the children,
- how families came to be at Athlone,
- what their expectations were,
- what they brought to Athlone,
- broadly, how they have been surviving,
- what they have acquired, and;
- a brief review of their lives in Athlone.

Analysing the 'life histories' collected in the course of fieldwork in Athlone village sought to understand the complexities of the lives of the resettled families and also hoped to complement other qualitative data. Analysis of the mini life histories of the 10 households in Athlone reflect a variation and complexity of individual lives and circumstances that highlight how each family came to be at Athlone, past livelihoods and how the situation of each household determines, to an extent, their current activities. Whilst these mini histories are not as comprehensive as they are employed in anthropological studies, they nevertheless proved valuable for my analysis of household livelihoods in Athlone.

### 1.5.3 Key informant interviews

Key informant interviews were supposed to be held with officials from the government departments of Agricultural Research and Extension (AREX), Agricultural Bank of Zimbabwe (AGRIBANK), the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) and the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture. These were very difficult sources of information to gain access to. The main reason for this was the sensitivity of the land question, especially that it entailed making enquiries about livelihoods and productivity in the context of a state-driven reform programme that was highly unpopular. As such, only one interview was held with an AREX official and with a junior loans officer at AGRIBANK. The GMB could only respond to questions submitted by the researcher which were then answered in written form. These were considered sufficient sources of information for the analysis in this research.

### 1.5.4 Secondary sources of data

Whilst no interview could be held with the RBZ and Ministry of Lands, documents that are in the public domain from both institutions were used as sources of data. The RBZ had documents on the various support facilities that it offers to resettled farmers through its partner implementing partners, the GMB and AGRIBANK. These were used as reference points for the analysis of government support services received by Athlone residents.

### 1.5.5 Personal observations

Whilst four weeks may not have been long enough in the field, staying in the community for whole days during the course of the research proved valuable for the researcher. I had the opportunity to record a range of data that would otherwise have been inaccessible to me from the interviews with household members and key informants. I was also able to record information about the physical conditions of the farm, the infrastructure, everyday events in the area and other data that was important to my analysis. Being in the field brought me close to

other respondents that were not necessarily within my sample, and gave me access to informal discussions, gossips and rumours that reflected a lot on the community and life in the area.

## 1.6 FIELD PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES

Field work was carried out initially for one and a half weeks from the 29th of June to the 10th of July 2008. This was in the days soon after the election re-run in Zimbabwe. I had initially planned to do the field work earlier and to spend longer times in the field for this phase. Due to the volatility of the political environment, I decided carry the research work after elections, both in consideration of my own safety and the safety of my respondents. Whilst initial clearance had been sought and granted in the beginning of the year to conduct field work in the area, the political environment was still volatile. Political "security" had also been tightened up in this period that extra consideration of procedures for entering the field was required. I talked to the area ruling party structure leadership who cleared the research and helped with explanations to a very anxious and suspicious community.

The community committee structure was helpful in making sure that I was introduced to each household in which I wanted to carry out research. Since there was a national ban on gatherings, it was also considered problematic to gather people to announce and explain my research to the community. Gathering people was also considered to have the potential of exciting people and getting people more apprehensive. Personal introductions to each household was a welcome intervention for me since any different understanding would have affected and compromised my research, even to the extent of not being able to go through with it.

In these circumstances, I spent the first five days just walking around the community with the different members of the leadership, being introduced to the household heads, and sometimes just being shown around the farm. This was in order to gain the confidence of the community members as well as establishing some rapport with them. Being seen in the company of the various leaders also legitimated the research and made it easier to carry out subsequent visits to households for the actual data gathering.

## 1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:520) ethical issues arise out of our interaction with other people, other beings, and the environment especially where there is potential for, or where there is a conflict of interest. In research, he defines the word "ethical" as conforming to the standards of conduct of a given group. Creswell (1994) points out that first and foremost, the researcher

has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informants. He also reiterates that ethnographic research is always obtrusive, invading the personal spaces of informants, and sensitive information is frequently revealed. This was of particular concern in this study which was potentially politically sensitive. I took certain safeguards to protect the informants' rights and desires.

I tried to assure the respondents that I would maintain confidentiality by not revealing their identity in the research report. In introducing myself, I also took special attention to convey the fact that the research was being conducted in partial fulfilment of a degree, giving full information on the degree that I was pursuing and the institution. I also had an introduction letter from my supervisor which was used to confirm my status as a student. I made sure that respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary and that there would not be any victimisation or rewards for participating or choosing not to participate in the study. I explained that they were free to refuse to answer any questions they were not comfortable to do so.

Initial interviews with the leaders revealed that tape recording would be viewed suspiciously and they recommended that I did not use tape recorders during interviews. I also requested recording interviews with key informants, all of whom, except one, refused. With ethical considerations in mind, I followed their wishes and I did not tape record the interviews.

## 1.8 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Methodologically, the study was of a qualitative nature and as a result the findings may not be generalized due to the limited number of participants that were used. However, this study provides in-depth empirical data from the respondents' point of view to contribute to the literature on land reform and livelihoods. The subject under research is a highly political issue. The main limitation in this respect thus was that due to fear for possible victimization, respondents could have weighed up their responses in terms of how they thought the answer would be interpreted. I however tried to point out responses that need to be taken cautiously in the presentation of the data.

## 1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter Two is the literature review section which focuses on the land question in Zimbabwe from the time the country gained its Independence in 1980 to the beginning of the FTLRP in 2000 to 2002. The chapter reviews the literature on land reform in Zimbabwe paying attention

to the analysis of previous reform programmes and how they performed as far as pursuing the goal of livelihoods enhancement.

Chapter Three gives some background to the case study, Athlone. This is an outline of Athlone farm's geographical location and topography. The Chapter also discusses aspects of Athlone's infrastructure including roads, water, communication networks as well as education facilities. It also gives an introduction to the residents of Athlone outlining the demographic characteristics of the study site and giving some historical background of the households in Athlone. This is aimed at situating the discussion on the impact of land redistribution to household livelihoods.

Chapter Four is a presentation and discussion of the livelihood activities and strategies employed by the sample population. These are discussed according to the main themes that guided the research. These include detailed description of the range of activities Athlone beneficiaries pursue for their livelihoods, the support and assets they have at their disposal to pursue these livelihoods and the challenges and limitations that affect them.

Chapter Five presents the conclusion to the study. It constitutes a summary of the findings and provides recommendations on landform and livelihoods.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview

This Chapter is aimed at situating the FTLR within the background of the discourse in Zimbabwe around land and livelihoods. It will also draw attention to the global debates that influenced Zimbabwe's land reform policy through- out the phases that are reviewed. It will highlight the interconnectedness of Zimbabwean livelihoods to land since pre-colonial years through to colonialism and post Independence. This chapter will also highlight how this interdependence has changed through the years and how livelihoods have shifted or been transformed as a consequence. This review will put into context the main rationale of the thesis which sought to highlight how the land redistribution programme would inevitably bring to the fore a discussion about livelihoods in Zimbabwe.

### 2.1 AN OVERVIEW OF LAND AND LIVELIHOODS IN ZIMBABWE

#### 2.1.1 Land and rural livelihoods in colonial Zimbabwe: A brief history

Livelihoods in pre- colonial Zimbabwe have been documented to have been largely land based (Beach, 1977). According to Beach the establishment of the capitalist economy based on agriculture, mining and manufacturing led to great changes in the 'traditional' economy but did not essentially destroy it. This analysis is important by way of background to situate a discussion of how rural Zimbabwean livelihoods have changed over time and what particular developments have necessitated or effected such changes.

#### Agricultural Livelihood Activities

According to Anderson (2002), the early colonial years were characterized by immense peasant prosperity, as African societies actively responded to new market opportunities in the emerging white mining industry. Phimister (1993), Iliffe, 1983; Weiner, *et al.,* (1985) Arrighi (1973) and Anderson (2002) highlight that African livelihoods were built upon a vibrant agricultural industry as African farmers supplied crops and livestock to the new mining industries. The opening up of mining industry had a stimulating effect on the African economy. Beach highlights the 'extraordinarily rapid response' of African farmers to the new opportunities that came with settler occupation:

*'From 1890 to 1894... the Shona rapidly expanded their acreages and diversified into growing maize as a staple food for sale to the mines.... Most of the income from early peasant sales and migrant labour... went into*

*purchasing trade goods, some of which could be exchanged against stocks as the traditional bulwark against shangwa (droughts) (Beach, 1977; 17).*

The mining industry led to an expansion of markets for both labour and agricultural products such as grain and cattle. African agricultural and stock sales were very high that they could generate income to sustain the tax needs and accumulation patterns of Africans (Ranger, 1993). According to Palmer (1977:72), sale of agricultural goods constituted 70 percent of all peasants' cash earnings in the early 1900s. When the colonial government enacted tax policies to push Africans into waged labour in the mining industry, African farmers' agricultural and livestock market production managed to easily generate the cash required for the payment of tax as they tried to resist waged employment (Ranger, 1993; Phimister, 1993; Arrighi, 1973).

This period of African agricultural prosperity was, however, curtailed by the colonial government's need to promote the state-subsidized expansion of European agriculture and by extension, curtailing the profitability and income generation of African agriculture (Ranger, 1993; Phimister, 1993). Colonial state policies in the 1920s and 1930s witnessed a growing interest in African agriculture (Anderson, 2002). Labour mobilization policies, unable to curb independent African farming in the early colonial period, were increasingly supplemented by attacks on African land holdings and participation in produce markets (Phimister, 1993). These `attacks' were closely linked to the emergence of a heavily state-subsidized white farming sector which felt increasingly threatened by African producers' competitiveness.

Whilst Ranger (1993) points to how African agriculture was resilient and survived the policies of the colonial government, the 1930s did witness an increased state control over Africans' participation in both the labour and produce markets. Various state policies that were enacted began to affect Africans' land based livelihoods. High rentals and dipping fees and various segregationist policies enacted sought to deliberately undercut African competitiveness in agricultural produce markets in an attempt to protect the interests of white settler farmers through state regulation of cattle and maize markets (Arrighi, 1973; Anderson, 2002). These limitations added to what had been and remained the main discriminatory aspects of Africans' geographical location; their distance from the markets and lines of communication (Anderson, 2002).

The trend in falling of African agricultural production has been attributed to the long-term effects of the institutional framework that was established in the early 1900s (Arrighi 1973). Stringent labour clauses demanded of Africans on more fertile "unalienated" European land pushed Africans into less fertile lands of the reserves (Phimister, 1988). The enforcement of the 1930 Land Apportionment Act led to a further removal of Africans from alienated land and squeezed them together in the reserves.

Increased population pressure on land in these areas undercut individual farmers' productive capacity. As the development of capitalist agriculture pushed peasants into reserves, not only were the land resources available to Africans reduced, but their ability to compete on the grain market was progressively curtailed (Arrighi, 1973). In other areas, state policies and interventions leading to the demarcation of indigenous forests further excluded local people from land and resources, which they had previously depended on as a safety net in times of drought and resource shortages (Phimister; 1993). As such, it has been concluded that state policies led to the collapse of independent African peasant farming in the 1930s (Phimister, 1993; Arrighi, 1973, Anderson, 2002).

According to Shopo (1988), the parameters for the traditional communal sectors agricultural growth in colonial Zimbabwe was largely defined by the state. At different stages in the colonial period, state support vacillated between encouraging and suppressing communal farmers' maize production, for example through the Maize Control Act, to curtail African maize surpluses and, following WW II, and consequent food shortages, Africans were encouraged to produce for the market and Grain Marketing Boards and agents were established to accept deliveries from African farmers with cash payments as an incentive (Shopo, 1988)[2]. In the same light, Campbell *et al.*, (1997) strongly contend that peasant systems are politically-guided management systems; whose boundaries are the state, not the field or the farm. The history of Rhodesia colonial administration and peasants attests to this and highlights how the colonial state was instrumental in affecting and determining African productivity.

[2] Refer to Shopo for a more detailed account of the enactments passed to control maize marketing both in a way to increase African maize production as well as affording maximum protection and encouraging white commercial production of grains compared to tobacco production.

As the state enacted policies to undermine African production, it also embarked on "vigorous encouragement of European agriculture" (Arrighi, 1973; 204) through a number of projects aimed at encouraging, supporting and strengthening European farmers' competitive position and capitalist agricultural production. There was an increased budget allocation to settler faming. The Department of Agriculture was set up to provide technical support, advice on the cultivation of certain new crops, distribution of improved seeds and plant varieties, assisting in water boring works by providing equipment and expert advice at cost price and the provision of financial assistance at subsidized rates (Pazvakavambwa and Hakutangwi, 2006; Arrighi, 1973). The greatest form of subsidy was cheap loans to commercial farmers that were considered the cheapest agricultural credit in the world in 1974 (Mkandawire, 1988). The first experimental farm was set up at Gwebi where in settlers would acquire a knowledge of local farming before taking up their own holdings (Arrighi, 19734)[3]. At another level, government engaged in interventions aimed at particularly protecting and insulating the internal market from international markets.

**Wage employment**

Africans also derived livelihoods from waged labour at the advent of colonial rule. They however reverted to waged labour due to constraints that pushed them. Literature on how the colonial government enacted policies to ensure constant supply of cheap African labour for the mining industry through taxes highlight that African farmers' market production could easily generate the cash required for the payment of tax (Palmer, 1977; Ranger, 1993; Phimister, 1993; Arrighi, 1973). Natives were forced into waged labour employment during drought years or when their accumulated wealth (grain stock), diminished (Beach, 1977; Palmer; 1977) or as a deliberate strategy of accumulating wealth for the able-bodied male population (Anderson, 2002). Recurrent droughts would regularly deplete Africans of their wealth, turning (temporal) wage labour into another option to sustain their livelihood. Africans broadly continued to base their livelihoods on agriculture, and waged employment at different time periods even though they preferred to stay away from waged labour.

As Africans moved into already congested areas, sale of surplus would no longer be possible and many would be forced to seek wage labour as an alternative source of income. Typically the African countryside was turned into labour reserves through the use of political instruments -

[3] Refer to Arrighi for a more detailed analysis of how the Africans came to depend on wage labor employment and participation in the money economy

taxation, forced labour and collusion with pre-capitalist elites -to force young men to migrate to work for a pittance (Ranger, 1993; Phimister, 1993; Arrighi, 1973). Women were turned into subsistence producers in rural households producing the labour-power of these migrant men, subsidising the wage that made rapid accumulation of mining capital possible (O'Laughlin; 2002).

**Research and extension services**

According to Eicher (2002), agricultural extension is the process whereby agricultural information and technology is transferred to farmers for used in production and marketing decisions (cited in Pazvakavambwa and Hakutangwi, 2006). Extension services before independent Zimbabwe started in 1926 with a coercive, prescriptive approach dominating its early phase amongst the African farmers. Commercial farmers received intensive extension facilities with a farmer to extension ratio of one to five (Eicher, 2002, cited in Pazvakavambwa and Hakutangwi, 2006). The Department that housed research and extension services had specialists in areas of crop production, livestock production, farm management, irrigation, conservation and monitoring and evaluation. Pazvakavambwa and Hakutangwi (2006) contend that the level of performance in commercial farming areas could have been high due to the superior extension services commercial farmers received.

Small scale commercial farmers did not receive the same services as the commercial farmers due to transport challenges. Besides the coercive approach to extension service in communal areas, the farmer to extension worker in communal areas ranged from one as to 1000 or 1500 (Pazvakavambwa and Hakutangwi, 2006). In these reserves, the level of state intervention in peasant agriculture was concerned with implementation of soil conservation measures, centralization and the agricultural demonstration programme (Ranger, 1993). State's development efforts in the 1930s, and a large part of the colonial period, was motivated partly by the need to increase the carrying capacity of the reserves for planned influxes of Africans evicted from alienated lands elsewhere and the effort to enhance African farmers' food production in the increasingly crowded reserves (Arrighi, 1973; Ranger, 1993). In conjunction with this policy, the government subsequently introduced other measures meant to check the degeneration of agricultural practices through extension services, irrigation schemes, culling of cattle and destocking.

Extension services during the colonial period were unpopular even though according to Pazvakavambwa and Hakutangwi (2006), they would prove critical in sustaining agricultural

productivity in the communal lands after independence. Arrighi (1973) points out that these policies failed mostly due to the smallness of the budget allocated by the government to African agriculture and, according to Ranger (1993), also due to African suspicions of government's intentions which led them to resist government interventions. The failure of extension services during the colonial period was also a reflection of the bimodal nature of the agricultural set up that manifested in inequitable allocation of both the land and financial resources to sustain white and black production systems.

**Conclusion**

This section has highlighted livelihoods in colonial Zimbabwe. The discussion has centred on highlighting how agricultural production changed due to government intervention. This analysis is important to highlight how state intervention is crucial in the support of or demise of a production system. White commercial agriculture flourished in this period under the watchful protection and support of the Southern Rhodesia colonial government. Whilst African production systems showed signs of responding positively to new market opportunities, it was deliberately curtailed by the colonial government in order to suppress competition for white commercial agriculture. Whilst Africans were pushed into waged employment, it was not sufficient to draw them out of agriculture altogether. Livelihoods in this period were thus based precariously on agriculture production and inadequate waged employment.

### 2.1.2 Land reform and livelihoods in post- colonial Zimbabwe

In its First Five Year National Development Plan 1986-1990, the Government of Zimbabwe pointed agriculture as the backbone of the economy. Due to the fact that 70 percent of the country's population lived in rural areas and derived their main source of livelihood from agriculture, land redistribution would be pivotal not only for national economic gains, but also to ensure national level and regional food security. According to Drinkwater (1991), the agricultural sector provided about a third of Zimbabwe exports and also provided inputs for the other sectors. More than 90 percent of Zimbabwe's food requirements came from agriculture. At the inauguration of the formation of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference in 1980, Zimbabwe was considered to have both the structural and environmental capacity to ensure regional food security. The growth of the economy was also seen to be premised on the performance of the agricultural sector. Such is the background within which the new government embarked on its land reform programme.

This section traces the land reform phases of the post- independence Zimbabwe government. It looks at the phases in terms of the targets that the government set for itself, the discourses that influenced government policies and the achievements or lack thereof of these phases. It also looks at the impact that the phases had on livelihoods of resettled households as this is the central theme of the research.

### 2.1.3 Land reform in post- colonial Zimbabwe (1980-1990)

The new Zimbabwean government started an "agricultural" resettlement programme in September 1980 that was to run up to 1983 (Moyo, 2000). "Resettlement" according to Kinsey was defined as the relocation, with official support, of populations from the communal areas to former white owned, commercial farms and ranches (1982). This phase of resettlement was also by and large rehabilitative, targeting returning refugees and families displaced by war and largely benefiting the poorest of the poor (Chatora, 2004). It had the financial support of the British Government and had the overall objective of resettling 162 000 families from the crowded communal areas onto 9 million hectares of formerly commercial farming land (Moyo, 1985; Munslow, 1985; Sachikonye, 2003).

Its impact agenda aimed at relieving population pressure on overcrowded communal land, expanding and improving the base for productive agriculture in the peasant sector, improving the levels of living of the largest and poorest sector of the population, providing opportunities to the landless, unemployed and those adversely affected by the war and maximizing production on abandoned or underutilized farm land (Moyo, 1985; Munslow, 1985). The estimated cost of Z$60 million of implementing the programme would be shared equally between Zimbabwe and Britain though United States of America was alleged to have renegade on a promise to contribute to the process (Sachikonye, 2003).

Land was acquired on a willing buyer willing seller basis and Kinsey notes that whilst there was no uncompensated seizure of private land, in few instances, owners were pressurized to sell farmland that lay in locations particularly deemed favourable for settlement (Kinsey, 1982). Selection criteria targeted land that was suitable for agriculture and was near or adjacent to communal areas particularly those with high population pressures, land that was not under use or already on offer to government, land in a block large enough to permit economic provision of services and infrastructure, land that was in an area already adequately served with basic

infrastructure like roads, water and land in an area where basic planning information was already available to facilitate implementation (Moyo 2000; Moyo and Yeros, 2005).

The developments in the land reform programmes of Zimbabwe this far, as well as the Fast Track Land Resettlement programme, are in line with global discourse on land reform. It is important to highlight how global discourse has also debated whether land reform should be market-led or state led. Central to these debates are the arguments raised by proponents of market led agrarian reform (MLAR) that the land size ceiling imposed by state policies and prohibitions on land sales lead to informal land markets transactions that breed corruption thereby bringing further distortions on the land market whilst at the same time affecting productivity (Binswanger & Deininger, 1999; World Bank, 2003). The MLAR on the other hand is deemed a more efficient and equity enhancing mechanism for the distribution of assets. MLAR is also supported on the grounds that it cuts down on state bureaucracies that are huge and expensive and that it lowers land prices and does away with welfarism as beneficiaries shoulder the expense of the land cost and co-share the risk (Borras, 2003; World Bank, 2003; Binswanger & Deininger, 1996). This approach, thus directed the Zimbabwean government's policies in these early phases of its land reform efforts.

In 1982, targets set in 1980 were increased nine-fold by the addition of a parallel programme, the accelerated resettlement phase (1982-1985), which essentially made resettlement at that time and in the foreseeable future, the major rural development activity in Zimbabwe (Moyo, 2000). Kinsey analysis at that time was that the resettlement programme was then the only sustained public sector programme that had the most potential to affect "immediately and significantly the economic welfare of large numbers of rural dwellers" (Kinsey 1982; p92). This accelerated phase was aimed at tackling quickly some of the most serious problems of squatting and some of the severe cases of over-population.

The premise and objective of this phase was to settle as many people as possible in the shortest time at the least cost by minimizing planning and postponing indefinitely the building of infrastructure (Kinsey, 1982; Munslow, 1985). Settlers were expected to make use of infrastructure developed in the adjacent communal areas. At this point the Government conceived agrarian reform as a staged process that first aimed at simply redistributing land to the landless peasants while in the second stage they would pursue "a more rigorous socialist policy

of co-operativisation, collectivization and state farming to counter the present power and monopoly of capitalist agriculture" (Kinsey, 1982: 94).

The land reform discourse at the time centred on arguments from interest parties, particularly the strong lobby group of the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) and the British government, that radical land reform would affect the country's economic development. Resettlement was considered a less desirable way to proceed with land reform as the redistribution of productive large scale commercial farms would lead to overall decline in agricultural output, lead to food insecurity and loss of employment (Kinsey, 1982; Whitsun, 1983; World Bank, 1983). Land reform was supposed to be approached cautiously as it would affect the commercial sector which was considered more efficient than the peasant sector (Weiner, 1988). It was also argued that land reform would not benefit the land poor but lead to land transfers to an alternative privileged group (Thomas, 2003).

Counter arguments raised by other scholars demonstrated that peasant farmers were not any less efficient, in fact, were more efficient than commercial farmers (Moyo, 1995; Thomas, 2003). The arguments that redistribution would affect productivity and the economy were refuted as scholars pointed out that this claim was faulty as redistribution in this phase was targeting derelict, and underutilized land, which had also been shown to be highly mismanaged and underutilize (Riddell, 1978 cited in Weiner *et al*., 1985) that would not in any way affect production or employment (Cliffe, 1988). It would instead actually lead to more productivity from peasants settled on underutilized land and more employment for the resettled households (Cliffe, 1988; Munslow, 1985; Stoneman, 1981). Comparison of productivity on large-scale commercial farms with marginal communal areas was also dismissed due to the difference in quality of land in the different areas (Weiner *et al*, 1985). Notwithstanding the polarized discourse, "some" resettlement took place. The following discusses the achievements of this phase of Zimbabwe's Land Reform Programme.

**The impact of land reform**

A review of the performance of land redistribution in the phase 1980-1990 have reflected that not only was the pace of the market led reform strategy slow, it also delivered marginal, low productivity land and led to the overburdening of an already financially constrained state (Moyo, 1995; Moyo and Yeros, 2005). Farmers in this period were selling off their worst land at high prices, about 75 percent of resettlement schemes were on poor or marginal land with low

rainfall, and investing to increase returns on the remaining land through irrigation (Munslow, 1985). Farms that were fertile were those that lay abandoned after the liberation war.

Some scholars have argued that the Lancaster Agreement placed restrictions on the government and the difficulties associated with the resettlement programme were a product of the agreement (Munslow, 1985; Moyo, 2000). Critics cite that the Agreement placed financial constraints on the government to acquire land on a willing buyer willing seller. According to Palmer (1977) far too much of the resources allocated to the programme were spent on buying the land, rather than on the 'follow-through' costs of resettling people.

Between 1980 and 1983, 35 000 families had been settled (Munslow, 1985). The majority were from reserves and some were former farm-labourers though the range of beneficiaries was wide (Munslow, 1985). Due to lack of funds and the imperative of just settling people, families resettled suffered through lack of infrastructure-clinics, dip tanks, bus services, schools, staff housing and the provision of water. According to Munslow (1985), some families resettled by 1983 had started moving back to their old areas where there was infrastructure.

In this phase, that has been typically beamed the smallholder production revolution (Rukuni and Eicher, 1997; Anderson, 2007), productivity amongst the smallholder farmer was increased due to a combination of hybrid maize varieties, mineral fertilizer, agricultural extension, agricultural credit systems, and subsidized producer prices. An ODA evaluation of this phase of the reform programme was very positive. The programme had resettled an impressive number of people in a short time achieving its principle objective, and the political imperative of post war reconstruction and stability.

The evaluation also pointed that beneficiary families had increased opportunities for income generation. Other studies have also highlighted the same. The most cited is Kinsey's study which highlighted that resettled families were considerably better off than the communities in the former reserves. Kinsey *et al.*, (1998), in a panel survey of resettlement households started in 1983, found that resettled households' well-being had improved dramatically. Their livestock wealth had almost tripled, their productivity had increased significantly. According to Moyo (1995) even accounting for agro-ecological endowment, the income of resettled households was more than five times as high as that of communal households in similar areas and their agricultural income more than six times as high. Moyo (1995) also contended that the 70 000

households which had benefited from land redistribution, represented about 5 percent of the peasant farmer population, but produced between 15 percent and 20 percent of the marketed output of maize and cotton, while also largely satisfying their own food consumption needs.

A review of this early phase of the land reform programme indicated increased production of cotton and maize from the small-scale sector as well as improved standards of living amongst the resettled households who were the poorest beneficiaries due to increased incomes (Sachikonye, 2003). Weiner; *et al.*, in a study of the same period came to the conclusion that given the right conditions, "like large scale farmers" (1985; 282), "peasants will respond with increased production and marketed surpluses" (1985; 256). Such indications of potential questioned the dominant thinking that supported large scale commercial production and led to conclusions that "peasant farming is not inherently unproductive" but could be more productive, efficient and lead to improved living standards for the poor (Cliffe, 1988; 5).

### 2.1.4 Reform phase: 1990-1999

It took the government three years after the expiry of the Lancaster House restrictions to legislate and effect any changes that would allow them to speed up the pace of land reform (Moyo, 1995). As it was, a new legislation, the Land Acquisition Act, purported to this effect was only passed in 1992. It allowed for compulsory acquisition of land and it was the legal instrument by which the state could intervene decisively in the dualist underpinnings of the agrarian economy, thereby potentially achieving massive redistribution (Moyo, 2000). Farms targeted for acquisition were those that were judged to be substantially underutilized or that belonged to absentee owners or to people who had more than one farm. Compensation would be in local currency at a price that was considered fair and would be paid within a "reasonable" time (Moyo, 1995).

The key trend during this phase, however, was the gradual revision of the strategy and provisions for compulsory land acquisition and beneficiary selection (Moyo, 2000). The land resettlement programme reoriented itself to tilt the resettlement initiative in favour of the technically capable as opposed to the merely needy (Moyo, 1995, Moyo, 2000). The agenda moved from redistribution between unequally advantaged, historically racialised, agrarian classes to indigenization of agrarian capital and land ownership (Waeterloos & Rutherford, 2002). Less than 200 000 new settlers received land between 1990 and 1997 amid official explanations from government that the slowdown in land acquisition was due to the land prices that were too high,

and that the government could not afford to acquire available land, despite the new legislation that should have provided government with mechanisms to acquire land. This signified, to critics, government's lack of political will and momentum for land reform (Sachikonye, 2003).

In the land reform phase 1990 to 1997, debates were invoked on the likely political and economic consequences of acquiring the 1471 farms listed for compulsory acquisition in 1997. According to Moyo, questionable quantitative methods were used to predict potential commodity output loss and weak evidence and assessments were used to focus on the 'psychological effects' that tampering with the land market would have on markets in general and investors (2000;13). In his analysis, Moyo (2000) points out those proponents of such arguments never assessed the economic, social and political benefits that could be realized from the new farmers who gained access to land.

Any strong inclination to follow up on the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act was complicated by the adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in accordance with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) policy and the significant entry by black businessmen, senior army officials, civil servants and politicians into the market for large-scale farms (Sachikonye, 2003). This saw the de facto end of translocation resettlement as government concentrated with the process of embourgeoisement through state-facilitated access to land for the better off who did not necessarily have any farming experience (Sachikonye, 2003). The following presents the impacts of this phase of the land reform programme, and also introduces the conditions that led to the FTLRP in 2000.

**The impact of land reform**

Analysis of the impact of this phase of reform should be done within the context of the broader economic environment Zimbabwe was operating in. Adoption of neo-liberal structural adjustment programmes in this time had negative impacts not only on the pace of land redistribution but also on the support to households resettled during this time. It also affected the livelihoods of those resettled in the previous phase essentially eroding all the benefit of the previous decade (Moyo, 1995; Kinsey, 1992). From the late 1980s, agricultural credit for smallholders dried up, and, following Zimbabwe's adoption of structural adjustment policies in 1990, producer price support also decreased. To finance inputs and sustain production, smallholders became increasingly dependent on their own non-farm income sources, such as remittances originating from the country's wage labour sector (Bryceson, 2004). With increased

unemployment in the 1990s[4] and a crisis in the wage labour sector smallholders' production capacity and rural families' resilience against adverse weather conditions became increasingly compromised (Anderson, 2007; Bryceson, 2000).

One of the major impacts of this phase was what Bryceson (2000) termed "deagrarianisation" of rural populations. This is defined as "a long-term process of occupational adjustment, income-earning reorientation, social identification and spatial relocation of rural dwellers away from strictly agricultural-based modes of livelihood (Bryceson, 1996 in Bryceson, 2000; 1). In the phase of 1990 to 1999, many farmers that had been beneficiaries of the resettlement programme in the first phase went through this process. The process of deagrarianisation was also accompanied by deapeasantisation, a process in which peasantries lose their economic capacity and social coherence, and demographically shrink in size (Bryceson, 2000).

The significant levels of peasant commodity production that had been achieved between 1980 and 1990 were adversely affected by agricultural subsidy cutbacks. Bryceson (2000) contends that under structural adjustment, private traders largely displaced African parastatal marketing boards, which had serviced peasants' input requirements, enforced commodity standards, provided single-channel marketing facilities and controlled prices. Increasing input costs and poor market prospects led to adjustments through the reallocation of land and labour away from commercial agriculture essentially pushing peasants away from cash crop production thereby affecting their income source. Mamdani (2008) contends that peasant production, which had only been a meagre 8 percent of marketed output at independence in 1980, and had shot up to 45 per cent by 1985, declined as a result of the ESAP.

According to Kinsey's (1992) studies, these resettled communities were least able to cope with natural droughts and the effects of structural adjustment programmes since most of them were not employed in the formal sector. The criteria for access to resettlement land in the early phase had been that beneficiaries should engage in full time farming and not have any other form of employment. As such they did not have alternative livelihood means in the event of droughts affecting their crop production. Whilst SAPs affected agricultural productivity and land based livelihoods, the social impact of this phase cannot be understated. Education and health

[4] According to Anderson (2007) 3,000 new jobs were created annually, whereas 300,000 new job-seekers entered the labour market each year

subsidies were removed amidst overall commodity price inflation leading to precarious livelihoods particularly for resettled communities (Kinsey, 1992). Patterns of differentiation that alienated the poor in this structural adjustment periods were made even worse by the major droughts of the same period (Scoones, 1996; Moyo, 2000).

The ESAP scenario also brought forth reorganizations of the politics of land holders and land seekers especially in their relations to the state, reflecting "renewed struggles among various constituencies for historical and normative land rights against those seeking to preserve existing land rights in the context of an increasingly market-based land policy framework" (Moyo, 2000; 11). Moyo further argues that the economic impacts of ESAP also led to massive urban to rural migrations as retrenched workers went back to their rural homes creating new demands for land.

By the end of 1996, the time when the first structural adjustment programme was coming to an end, a number of events began to highlight the challenges that the government of Zimbabwe was about to face. Industrial strike actions intensified under the leadership of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. In 1997, particularly, several industries were affected by these strike actions including construction, commercial, hotel and catering, clothing, cement, railways, farm-workers and even public service sectors (Moyo and Yeros, 2005). The ruling party, ZANU PF, also faced the threat of dissent within its structures as war veterans demanded support from the government after the collapse of the War Veterans Compensation Fund. According to Moyo and Yeros (2005), this indicated a class split within ZANU PF between the elite and those in the lower echelons of the party. The demands from the war veterans also took radicalized nationalist undertones forcing the government to disburse large compensation packages which some have attributed for the beginning of the spiralling down of the economy (Moyo and Yeros, 2005). The year 1997 was also the beginning of reiteration from the war veterans of the promise of a more meaningful land reform agenda.

Compulsory land acquisition and the designation of 1 472 white commercial farms were activities the government put on the agenda in response to renewed clamours from land redistribution from the war veterans. These developments would put the land question in Zimbabwe to the fore, nationally and internationally, leading to the 1998 Donor Conference. The Conference did not yield much positive results and tense promises were made and conditions for support were laid out. The conditions as outlined by the UNDP in 2000 and 2001, reflecting views shared by the wider international donor community, called for a slower land redistribution and transfer

process without any clear funding processes at the same time demanding immediate improved macro-economic and governance practises.

The other considerations from the donor community were that the period 1990 to 1999 had sidelined the poor in the land reform programme. In any next phase of redistribution, more emphasis would need to be placed on poverty reduction and a more systematic selection of beneficiaries from among the poor, those with farming aptitude as well as vulnerable groups such as farm workers (Sachikonye, 2005). Women as beneficiaries came into the discourse as recommendations were also made that land reform should also pay adequate attention to gender aspects relating to issues of access and ownership of land and the involvement of women in the planning and implementation processes. These were the discussions that shaped what was proposed to have been the 'Land Reform and Resettlement Programme, Phase 2' conceptualized and designed in 1998 after the Donors' Conference.

There was, however, no progress made on the land question between 1998 and 2000. Instead, thereof, national politics took a dramatic turn with the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and its successful lobbying, in alliance with the National Constitution Assembly, against the referendum which was going to legitimate massive land redistribution. Moyo and Yeros (2005) have attributed the euphoria surrounding the formation of the new party and impending elections in 2000 for governments' support of widespread land occupations and the formalisation of the process into the FTLRP 2000 and 2002. The referendum was also taken by popular sentiments as a proxy for Mugabe and ZANU (PF)'s popularity amongst the electorate. The defeat as such signified an extension of the defeat of the ruling party.

According to Bond (2008), the situation prevailing at the launch of the FTLRP in 2000, was such that land transfers to the majority were necessary and long overdue. This was because of the experience of 20 years of reform programmes that followed the free market model, which had not succeeded in elevating the lives of the peasants (cited in van der Merwe, 2008). This was contrasted to the vast gains that the white commercial farming sector was enjoying, exporting mostly tobacco and horticultural products. Resentment towards this sector and the socio-economic conditions for the majority of the poor spurred on by the neo- liberal policies of the 1990's, among other things, have largely been attributed for the land occupations in 1997 and 1998 that culminated into the FTLRP (2000-2002).

### 2.1.5 The Fast Track Land Reform Phase (2000-2002)

As highlighted earlier, global discourse has debated whether land reform should be market- led or stated led. At this stage in Zimbabwe's land reform history, land reform became a state-led affair even though it had its origins from the disgruntled populations[5]. Again, it is important to highlight the main arguments of state- led agrarian reform protagonists. They argue that the role of the state in land reform is crucial since the state comprises the institutionalized political organization of society (Barraclough, 1999). It articulates and implements public policy, and adjudicates conflicts. SLAR is purportedly redistributive, concerned with equity and creating egalitarian societies to spur on economic growth. Land reform is conceptualised as a transforming political event, a redistribution of wealth (assets), effected only by political means (Griffin, *et al*., 2002). It is a process by which egalitarian agrarian structures of small family farms are established with appropriate measures of support (Barraclough, 1999).

According to Wegerif (2004), it is largely acknowledged even by the World Bank that successful land reform cannot be achieved without massive political upheaval that forces government to transfer land. In the countries that successful land reform has been achieved (China, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea), it has not been through a market based approach. In these countries, economic growth was preceded by large reforms in land ownership and resource allocation. In Latin America, land reforms were instrumental in spurring a transition from *latifundia* to large scale capitalist farming. By end of 1999, similar forces seem to have played up signalling the beginning of state-led agrarian reform in Zimbabwe beginning in 2000 to 2002.

In this phase, ninety percent of the large-scale commercial farmland was expropriated for a wider range of beneficiaries that included the urban working class, black elites and the peasants (Marongwe, 2007; Moyo, 2005). By 2003, about 9 000 farms had been listed for designation. Performance of this phase of land reform shows mixed signals. By the end of 2003, 6.5 million hectares had been allocated to A1 farmers, about 130 641 families; new farmers allocated land on commercial A2 landholdings occupied about 2.5 million hectares and smallholders' control of land increased from 56 percent to 70 percent (Sachikonye, 2005). A1 plots were aimed at decongesting communal areas. They provide for farms that are relatively small (between 5-8

[5] There have been wide ranging debates on what forces can be attributed for the massive scale land occupations that led to the FTLP.

hectares depending on region) but adequate to sustain a family and produce a surplus. A2 landholdings were aimed at normal intensive resettlement providing small-scale commercial farms to beneficiaries with experience in agriculture, preferably those trained to be master farmers. Successful applicants were given 99-year leases with the option of purchase.

Land quality distributed varied across regions depending on agro-ecological potential and the distribution of water and irrigation resources. Irrigable land was allocated to resettled farmers with A1 farmers getting 7 618 hectares, 6 percent of the redistributed land and A2 beneficiaries receiving 12 448 hectares, 10 percent (Sachikonye, 2005). The rest (about 92 000 hectares, 74 percent remained operational on large-scale commercial farms that had not been occupied by 2003 (Moyo, 2000).

Beneficiaries in this phase reflected social patterns of differentiation in terms of wealth, gender, social status and class. Moyo's analysis pointed to urban households constituting about 13 percent of the beneficiaries even including in the A2 schemes earmarked for people with resources and the capability to undertake farming with minimum government support (Moyo, 2005). People from the urban areas gained access to 34 percent of resettlement land. Influential people and the rich; including rural based business people, teachers, civil servants, political leaders and chiefs, constituted about 10 percent of the beneficiaries in this group (Sachikonye 2005; Marongwe, 2007). The Buka Report came out with statistics that 400 individuals had been allocated more than one A2 plot, while 145 black and white farmers still owned multiple farms, which had been acquired on open markets (Buka, 2002).

According to the Buka Report (2002), the rural poor and a number of the urban poor settled on 66 percent of the land in A1 schemes constituted 87 percent of all beneficiaries. Women were also important beneficiaries since traditionally they had been marginalized in most development initiatives. They gained as individuals an average of between 12 percent and 24 percent of land allocated in the programme. In A2 schemes, they accessed between 5 percent and 21 percent of land across provinces.

War veterans were the major interest group in the land reallocation process, having been very instrumental in spurring the implementation of the process. They got between 2 percent and 22 percent of allocated land across provinces in A1 schemes and between 7 percent and 17 percent in A1 schemes. Farm workers were victims of the land reform programme as they lost their

homes and employment and received little land, as they were perceived to be sympathetic to white commercial farm owners (Sachikonye, 2005; Marongwe, 2007. Most workers found themselves displaced; others retained their employment in the remaining large-scale commercial farms and plantations or with new employers in the A1 and A2 schemes. Some relocated to communal areas or continued to stay in the former farm workers' compounds with informal rights (Sachikonye, 2005). Estimations are that close to 30,000 former farm-worker families were displaced or evicted into informal settlements (Moyo, 2004; Sachikonye, 2005).

**The impact of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme**

Since the land invasions and the formal operationalisation of the FTLRP started, drastic changes have been noted in terms of agricultural production (UNDP, 2002; CSO, 2004; Sachikonye, 2005; Scoones, 2008). Whilst figures may vary depending on the source, it is however indisputable these changes are real. According to Sachikonye (2005; 35), maize production declined from an average annual output of about 1.7 million tonnes in the mid-1990s to between 0.9 million and 1 million tonnes in 2000-2004 and wheat production fell by about 20 per cent from the average annual output in the mid-1990s.

Government sources have also cited the reductions in production. According to the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, the national maize consumption requirement totals 1.8 million tonnes of maize per annum, which is broken down as 1.55 million tonnes for human consumption and 250 000 tonnes for stock feed. Of this requirement, total maize production in 2007 was 953 000 tonnes leaving a deficit of about 900 000 tonnes, which needed to be met through imports (CSO, 2004). Soya beans, ground nuts, tobacco and cotton production also dropped. The production of sugar, tea and coffee has, however, generally remained steady (Sachikonye, 2005). The deficit of both maize and wheat production has over the years been met by imports through credit facilities sourced from various suppliers (Sachikonye, 2005).

What has varied in presentations of these productivity changes is different sources' attribution for the decrease in crop production and the misfortunes of Zimbabwe's economy. Central to this debate are counter arguments about how far these can be attributed to weather changes, droughts or government bureaucratic mismanagement, in this case, the unpopular FTLRP. Richardson (2007) argues that the effect of droughts to account for the economic regression of Zimbabwe has been overstated. His arguments are based on a comparison of production patterns in Zimbabwe during different drought years and also production comparison to the rest

of the region that reflect that government policies in Zimbabwe are more accountable for the economic state of Zimbabwe than weather patterns.

**Table 1: Production by large scale commercial sector (tonnes)**

| CROP | MARKETING YEAR | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2003 | 2004 |
| Maize | 810 000 | 384 800 | 185 400 | 80 000 |
| Sorghum | 18 000 | 18 500 | 15 000 | 12 000 |
| Soyabeans | 145 000 | 162 000 | 65 000 | 30 000 |
| Groundnuts | 4 200 | 5 000 | 1 800 | 250 |
| Sunflowers | 3 000 | 2 000 | 600 | 400 |
| Wheat | 225 000 | 282 600 | 115 000 | ? |
| Barley | 32 000 | 32 000 | 50 000 | ? |

Adapted from CSO (2004)

According to Anderson (2007), Richardson's view represents an economic and popular, but problematic perspective on Zimbabwe's economic crisis, and stems from little understanding of the historical dynamics of Zimbabwe's divided agricultural sector, in which not the commercial, but the smallholder farming sector became the foremost provider of food, producing nearly 60 percent of the country's main food crop, maize, since the mid 1980s. Anderson (2007) and Moyo (2004) contend that commercial farmers historically produced cash crops such as tobacco and paprika generated foreign currency, but were not major contributors to food security. They argue and question how the contribution of the sector to GDP reflects on food security needs of the country.

Scoones (2008) argues that the change of land tenure has also created five myths; that land reform has been a total failure; that the beneficiaries of land reform have largely been political cronies; that there is no investment in the new resettlements; agriculture is in complete ruins and that the rural economy has collapsed. He contends that whilst there are some truths to these popular reviews of the FTLRP, were it has been used there is little acknowledgement of the extension of land to some beneficiaries who were absolutely landless and to those ordinary people from towns and communal areas to whom the extension of access to land was a benefit to livelihoods that were at peril from unemployment.

In their study of Masvingo, the Livelihoods after Land Reform Programme, showed that 60 percent of beneficiaries in this district were "ordinary farmers"- poor rural people, not in any way politically connected, in need of land. Different studies have reflected various levels of success and failure in production. Scoones (2008) argues that to characterize the FTLRP as abject failure would be too premature in the new agrarian structure that has emerged without the old, colonial inherited dualistic agricultural economy. Whilst agricultural production has gone down, their studies in Masvingo show production in A1, small-holder plots reflecting productivity potential even in the absence of inputs and support as will be highlighted in the findings of this study.

**Government support programmes during the FTRP phase**

Ever since the launching of the Fast Track Resettlement Programme, government has initiated a number of programmes aimed at supporting beneficiaries of the land redistribution programme. The Reserve Bank has been central in making various provisions to this end. The following section is an outline of the various mechanisms the government, through its implementing partners has extended to beneficiaries of the programme between the years 2000-2008. This data will be used in the analysis of what Athlone households have accessed from the government in the background of the broad policy provisions of the various government departments.

**i.) The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ)**

*The Farm Mechanization Programme*

Through the RBZ, the government initiated the Farm Mechanisation Programme which was purported to cement the gains of the Land Reform Programme on the backdrop of declining productivity on farms due to dwindling and unreliable stock of equipment. The Bank, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agricultural Engineering and Mechanization, unveiled a five-phased Farm Mechanisation Programme on the 11th of June 2007. The mechanization program was aimed to be a supply-side intervention which would impact not just on yields, but would also bring about efficient land utilization and timeliness in the land preparation and production processes.

The thrust of the programme entailed the procurement of all inclusive farming equipment targeted at mechanizing both communal and commercial farmers. The equipment procured included combine harvesters, tractors, harrows, ploughs, vicons, planters and other animal drawn

farm implements. Phase I of the farm mechanization programme focused on equipping A2 and commercial farmers to enable them to optimize production and ensure food self sufficiency.

*Beneficiary selection criteria*

The 1st phase of the mechanization, according to the RBZ criteria, was to be handled with emphasis on transparency, fairness, proven productivity records, geographical spread, ability to pay, type of farm soils, historical product delivery records to GMB and other formal markets, one's record of previous debt or loan repayment, size of land, and type of national crops grown by each selected farmer.

A condition set for accepting the equipment being handed out was that beneficiaries would put or reserve a certain minimum size of land on their farms for producing such national crops as maize, wheat, small grains, cotton or tobacco, thereby contributing to either export generation or food import substitution over the duration of the 3 year loans that beneficiaries of the program would get. These implements were also given on hire-purchase loan basis and if no primary productivity at the beneficiary's farm took place, the RBZ reserved the right to repossess and reallocate the equipment to the next productive farmer. The Reserve Bank would also check on deliveries to GMB, Tobacco Merchant Boards, Seed Houses and other formal markets and publish the output per farmer, per district, per province and per beneficiary farmer of the equipment. This was purportedly to safeguard against beneficiaries making exorbitant sums of money through leasing implements out while not farming themselves or sidemarketing their produce.

**Support to Small-Holder Farmers**

In addition to the power-driven mechanization programmes, greater emphasis was also put on capacitating small holder farmers that is A1 and communal farmers, through availing animal drawn implements. Under the Animal Drawn Equipment Programme the ox drawn ploughs, planters, harrows, scotch carts, portable fumigation tanks and cultivators were distributed. According to RBZ records, as at 4 January 2008, a total of 36 230 ploughs, had been delivered to 54 districts countrywide. In addition, a total of 22 479 knapsack sprayers had been delivered to 30 districts.

**ii.) Agriculture Sector Productivity Enhancement Facility (ASPEF)**

Another scheme, the Agriculture Sector Productivity Enhancement Facility, was initiated in order to reinforce the Farm Mechanisation Programme. This was geared at ensuring a full impact of the farm mechanization programme and other agricultural facilities. The broad objectives of the facility are stated as follows: -

- To provide low cost of production to targeted primary producers in the agricultural sector;
- To enhance capacity utilization, infrastructure development and output from the agricultural sector;
- To ensure food security and enable import substitution; and
- To generate foreign currency.

In 2006 and 2007, under ASPEF, foreign exchange facilities were implemented in order to address the following setbacks from previous planting seasons:

- Limited availability of foreign exchange to meet farmers' requirements of inputs;
- Erratic fuel supplies which delayed timeous land preparations;
- Working capital constraints, accentuated by some delays in the processing of payments to farmers who would have delivered their crops to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB);
- Limited co-ordination on the procurement and distribution of key inputs, such as seeds, fertilizers and chemicals;

**ii.) Operation Maguta**

Operation Maguta/Inala, was launched in September 2005. 'Maguta' is a Shona expression, "Inala", the Ndebele translation, for being satisfied or being assuaged of any hunger, normally used after eating a meal. It was aptly named to restate government's objective of securing food security to farmers under the FTLRP. Operation Maguta/Inala is the channel through which government has been distributing inputs to farmers.

Operation Maguta was launched with the stated objective of boosting food security and consolidating national strategic grain reserves. It came from the premise that the nation's food security was threatened by "a combination of recurrent droughts, unwarranted economic sanctions and the transitory effects of the historic land reform programme" (Gono, 2005).

Boosting food security would reduce reliance on food imports and hence leverage more foreign currency to the productive sectors critical to the national economic turnaround programme. Operation Maguta has been spearheaded by the Zimbabwe Defence Forces in line with their constitutional obligation of providing assistance to Civil Ministries and Departments in times of crisis and need. The programme was stated to be an augmentation of on-going national agricultural activities. AREX has been largely responsible for disbursing and facilitating access to the fuel facility put in place by the government for the farmers.

Tillage services and inputs were provided on condition that the crop was to be sold to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB). Under Maguta, resources have been availed to the defence forces to plough the land, and supply the inputs. One other aspect of 'Operation Maguta' is the provision of fertilizer and seed for dry land farmers at subsidized prices.

**iii.) Grain Marketing Board (GMB)**

The role of the GMB is to provide a market for the produce of farmers, the storage and handling of the Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR), the selling of the maize to communities in need of food assistance; the distribution and selling of inputs to farmers in various categories i.e. A1, A2 small scale and large scale. This is done through its depot network which is "strategically" located countrywide. The GMB has a storage capacity of 5 million tonnes of which 750 000 metric tonnes is silo and 4.25 million metric tonnes is bagged. In terms of grain handling, the GMB sets out guidelines in terms of grain acceptance standards and provision of logistical support. These are in total 90 depots of which 13 are silo depots and 77 are bag depots.

Following the launch of the land reform exercise in 2000, the role of the GMB was to articulate the government's land reform programme through provision of inputs to farmers through its depot network. The support schemes that are facilitated by the GMB are the provision of inputs such as fertilizers at subsidized price on credit and repayment done upon delivery of produce. The issuance of the inputs is dependent on the size of the land. The other support that has been provided to new farmers includes the provision of extension services following the appointment of production officers at each depot to assist farmers with expertise on crop production.

Marketing mechanisms that have been put in place since 2000 include the setting up of grain collection points within each depot's environs. This was mainly as a result of the need to reduce the distance that the farmer would travel to market his or her produce. Each season the GMB

operates a total of about 300 permanent and 200 mobile collection points to facilitate grain collection from farmers. In order to increase deliveries, spot cash payment schemes were introduced. GMB was also given the monopoly to buy and sell maize and wheat and their by-products. What this meant was that all farmers were to sell all their produce through the GMB and any sales through other channels would be effectively illegal. However, other grains such as soy beans, sugar beans, sorghum, millet and ground nuts could be sold through any other channels.

**iv.) AREX**

In 2001, the Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services and the Department of Research and Specialist Services were merged to form the Department of Agricultural Research and Extension (AREX[6]). This was aimed at reducing administrative costs and in line with government's policy of reducing public service expenditure. The new AREX department was mandated with the responsibility for research and extension for crops, livestock research and extension, agronomy services and co-ordination of farmers' requirements (Pazvakavambwa and Hakutangwi, 2006). In terms of extension, AREX would lead to higher intensity of farmer to extension workers with an increase from one to six extension worker per ward in response to FTLRP drive and to support the new farmers.

**Conclusion**

This section has discussed Zimbabwe's Land Redistribution Programme in three phases. The first phase, 1980-1990 was characterised by better achievements in as far as redistributing land was concerned. It also had positive results in terms of impact on beneficiary households. Households showed increased productivity in new resettlement areas and better incomes than their communal areas counterparts. The analysis of its performance has varied with some critics pointing out that land that was distributed in this phase was marginal and unfertile. The pace of the programme was also considered very slow taking into consideration the social and political urgency that redistribution commanded. The programme was implemented within the constraints of the Lancaster House Agreement, constraints that scholars account for the poor performance of this phase both in terms of pace and quality of land redistributed.

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[6] Pazvakavambwa and Hakutangwi (2006) give a more detailed analysis of the complexities of the restructuring of the various government departments in agriculture

The second phase that came after the expiration of the Lancaster House Conference should have seen better performance. Instead, it did not do better than the initial phase as it faced new challenges of Zimbabwe's structural adjustment agenda. There were limited resources for public spending and for land reform. The few beneficiaries that were resettled during this phase suffered from lack of social infrastructure. Changes in the marketing of agricultural produce and support to farmers meant that land reform beneficiaries could not gain from redistribution and agricultural production. This phase is seen to have derailed all the progress of the earlier phase as far as livelihoods are concerned. Massive retrenchments also added up to the strain on the socio-economic fabric of the country which led to unrest and may account for the renewed clamours for land.

The third phase came in the background of failed negotiations between the British and Zimbabwean government. New voices of dissent from war veterans and an emerging opposition party spurred the government to endorse massive land occupations culminating into the Fast Track Land Resettlement Programme (2000-2002). This Phase of land reform was initially characterised by violence, lawlessness and haphazard land occupations. The government formalized it into the FTLRP in 2000. This phase was the most successful in terms of redistributing and changing land ownership patterns in Zimbabwe. It however was also accompanied by changes in agricultural productivity and loss of foreign currency earnings from agricultural exports. This phase renewed the discourse on the relationship between land redistribution and livelihood and poverty alleviation. The following section presents the findings of the study on the livelihoods of one beneficiary community, Athlone Farm in Murehwa District.

## CHAPTER 3: INTRODUCTION TO ATHLONE FARM AND ITS RESIDENTS

### Overview

This chapter gives the reader an introduction to Athlone farm, presenting its geographical location, topography and the general background of the residents of Athlone farm. The chapter presents the background of beneficiaries outlining were they came from before settling in Athlone and highlighting their previous livelihoods. This will contextualize the assessment of their livelihoods in Athlone, which will be done in Chapter 4.

### Geographical location

Athlone farm is situated in Mashonaland East District of Zimbabwe. It falls within Murehwa and Macheke but is serviced by the Murehwa District Council for infrastructural and development needs. Athlone is situated 70 km from Macheke and 90 km from Murehwa. Murehwa and Macheke are 160 km and 120 km respectively from Harare.

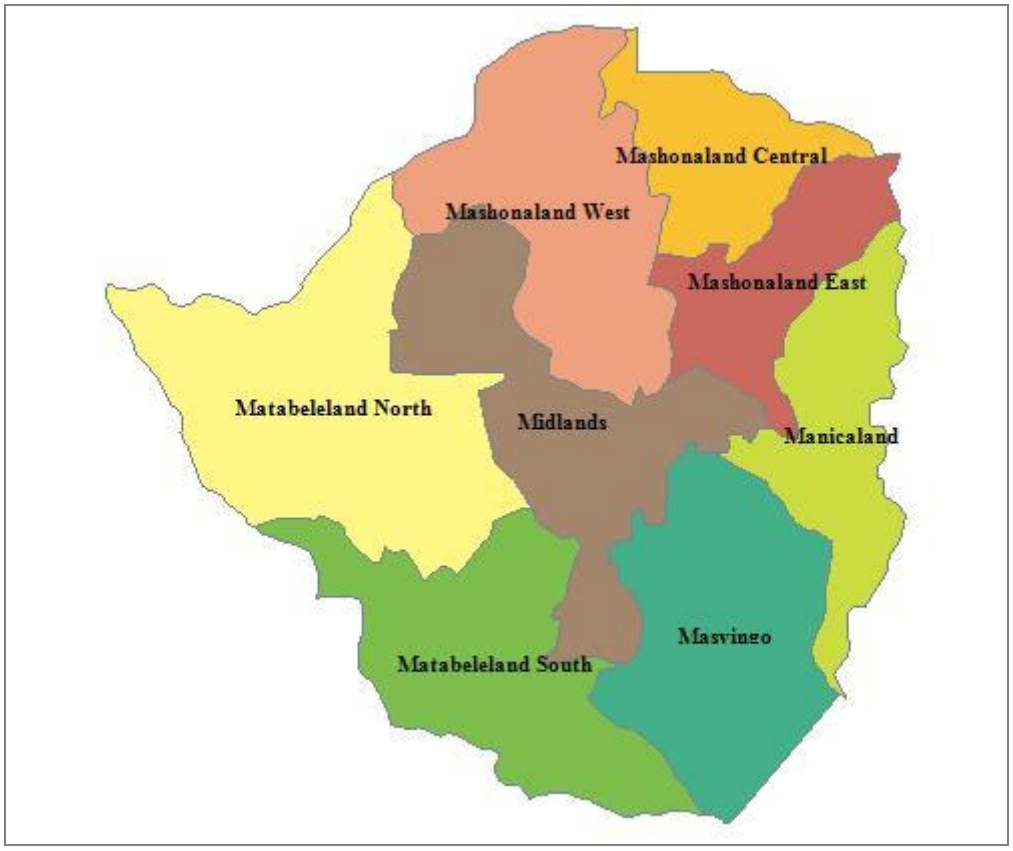


**Figure 1: Map showing Zimbabwe administrative districts**

Zimbabwe is divided into five agricultural regions. Agro-ecological Region 1 is the Eastern Highlands region with very low temperatures, high rainfall and high topography that allows for

the production of coffee, tea and horticulture produce. Region 2 is best suited for intensive crop production. It is characterized by high annual rainfall, in excess of 750 mm, and has been considered the "bread basket" of the country. Region 3 is suitable mainly for dry land farming and intensive cattle ranching. Low lying Regions 4 and 5 are suitable for cattle ranching and wildlife production. Mashonaland East District and Athlone farm is in Natural Region 2.



**Figure 2 Athlone lies between Nyamita Dam in the foreground and Bokoto Mountain in the background**

**History of Athlone settlement and administrative structures**

When the random land occupations started in Zimbabwe, a number of people also took up residence at Athlone farm in 1999. At first, only about 10 men, representing the war veteran leadership from Murehwa, Mutoko and Macheke, set up camps in the farm. According to Mr. Murehwa, these early days were characterized by running battles with the farm owner and his workers as they tried to drive the occupiers off the land. A total of 72 households was settled on the farm by the end of 2000.

In the initial period of the researcher requesting clearance to carry out research in the farm, 72 households fell under the jurisdiction of one headman, Headman Chadambuka, as a ward. At the time the study commenced, the wards had been split into two Village Development Committees (VIDCOs). The study was carried out in the ward falling under Headman Chadambuka. There are 32 households in this ward. A local government structure, called a village committee is the main administrative structure for the area. A war veteran village chairperson; who is a local government representative, heads the village committee. The village committee is made up of six

members who are elected by the community. The committee is made up of a secretary, a member responsible for publicity, a member responsible for security, the treasurer and three committee members.

**Residential structures**

Houses in Athlone are typically made of pole and mud. Other houses are made of farm bricks, grass thatched and in rare cases, some have asbestos roofing. Some have corrugated iron sheets roofing. A typical homestead would comprise two structures, a grass thatched hut which is the kitchen and a bedroom. The only variation was on the structures used as bedrooms which would be roofed with either grass, asbestos or corrugated iron sheets. Whether a bedroom was asbestos, corrugated or grass thatched could be an indication of the well-being of a family. Those families, who "have", relative to the others, would have an asbestos thatched "Boyskaya". A "boyskaya" typically has 2 or 3 rooms that have separate doors leading into the rooms from outside.



**Figure 3: A typical "boyskaya"**

Another distinguishing feature among homesteads is the presence or absence of a toilet which would typically be a "blair" toilet. The "blair" toilet was designed by Dr. Peter Morgan of Harare, Zimbabwe, in the 1970s as a result of large-scale projects to improve rural sanitation during the 1980s after Independence in Zimbabwe. It is designed to make use of air currents, and a septic tank like a pit, over which is built an upper structure with an open light-trap entrance and ventilation pipe from the bottom pit with a fine wire grate to keep out flies but more importantly to trap those entering the toilet hole and preventing them from flying out towards the light. The result is supposed to odorless and hygienic, as flies cannot escape from

the fecal matter to spread disease, and the gases produced by the decomposing waste are redirected outside.

Only four homesteads in Athlone had proper "blair" toilets. Others had pits that were dug to as far as the families could, supported by stones and covered by poles and grass. This structure is popularly considered very safe, though I was not convinced and was also doubtful of its hygienic standards. Otherwise, the majority of homesteads use the bush system, which is a concern for all residents, especially since the source of the water in the community is unprotected wells. Faecal matter is run- off into drinking waters sources during the rainy season.

**Education facilities**

Athlone farm is serviced by Nyamita Primary School which is located on neighboring farm or kids go to the schools in the nearby communal areas. Both options are very far for young children. Most families have thus left their children in their old areas (either old communal homes or in the towns) so they can attend school. They join their families during school holidays. According to families, children who go to communal areas next to the farm spend the day playing without attending school due to the distance. There are no crèches for younger kids that they ultimately stay on the farm without such services.

The nearest secondary school is Nhowe Mission School which is considered very expensive that very few farmers from Athlone, the communal areas and other resettled farms can afford to send their children there. Even that school is 7 km away from the farm. The distance between the farm and the communal areas schools is better for older children. The other option for farmers is to send their children to the communal areas where they lived before the resettlement programme. Families prefer secondary school children to stay on the farm to help with farm work. However, since most families do not have secondary school aged children, the issue of secondary schools was not cited as an immediate concern.

**Transport**

Transport is a major problem for residents of Athlone farm. The main road is about 7 km away at Nhowe Mission. Scotch carts and tractors are the major forms of transport. The nearest towns are Murehwa and Macheke. Whilst there are networks through the main roads to both centres, the bus transport system is reportedly unreliable due to bad road conditions as well as fuel shortages. There is one bus that services the Macheke to Murehwa route. However, it is very

difficult for Athlone residents to use this bus as departs very early in the morning around 6 o'clock from Nhowe Mission. For them to catch this bus, they need leave their homes at 3: 00 am to make the three hour journey to Nhowe Mission. The return journey is equally difficult as the bus drops them off around 9.00 pm. They will make the three hour journey to their homesteads and get home very late.

Walking to Murehwa is considered a better option as there are off-road routes that makes it a five hour walk to get to this centre. This transport scenario makes it challenging for residents to access transport for a variety of needs. Farmers contribute money to hire lorries from individuals to transport their farm produce. Where government supplies inputs, they are delivered to a central point at a nearby farm and from these collecting points, people use ox-drawn carts. Chapter 4 will discuss in more detail the marketing and trading challenges these infrastructural limitations impose on Athlone residents

**Water and sanitation**

There are no boreholes or tapped water in Athlone. Residents rely on unprotected wells for water for drinking, cooking and other household uses. A well is drilled along the river or dam bank from which the whole community gets water. The water thus comes directly from the dam, from which animals drink, and water runoff accumulates. The water is not safe for human consumption because most wells are open, and even animals (domestic and wild animals) drink from them. Only one homestead has a protected well and three families in the close neighborhood of the homestead also have access to the protected well. According to the health committee member, during rainy season, problems of diarrhea arise mostly because not all residents have toilets, and rely on the bush. Water runoff into the dam contaminates the water, leading to high incidence of water-borne diseases.

## ATHLONE RESIDENTS

Beneficiary selection to reform programmes has been central to debates around land redistribution. Scholars and critics have debated on what groups of people are worthy beneficiaries (Bernstein, 2004). Such debates have influenced the Zimbabwean government's implementation policy on beneficiary selection in the phases prior to the FTLRP. The following is a discussion of the background of the beneficiaries at Athlone Farm.

**Places of origin**

Most of the respondents came from neighboring Murehwa and Mutoko communal areas-(*kumarusevha*), the colonial "reserves". Others who moved from towns also came from other communal areas of the country. According to Mr. Gondo, initially when the resettlement programme started, there was insistence that only people from Murehwa would be allowed in Athlone, at the insistence of the local chief, Chief Mangwende. Later on, it was conceded that other people from different parts of the country could also be allocated land in Athlone. The other reason for the concession, according to him was that there were "*not enough takers*" from Murehwa. Most of the people didn't want to "*invade*" Athlone because of fear of intimidation by the farmers. Others, who also worked for the white farmer, were afraid of losing their jobs if the farmer was to be chased away.

**Motivations for resettling**

An analysis of why beneficiaries chose to move from their original homes showed variations from one household to another. Key among these motivations was landlessness both in quantity as well as land quality. The beneficiary narratives below highlight the circumstances leading to some of the households resettling in Athlone.

**Box 1: The Chadambuka narrative**

*Mr. Chadambuka is 68 years of age. His career has mainly been as a driver, starting first in his youth as a taxi driver and a bus driver in Bulawayo. Up to 1983, he worked for different bus companies including the Zimbabwe United Passenger Company (ZUPCO). He the worked for the United Nations as a driver for 13 years until he retired in 1996 on a retirement package. When he was working, he owned a house in Chitungwiza, Harare. He sold the house after getting a loan at work to purchase 5 acres of a 16 acre plot in Ruwa, at the outskirts of Harare. The family stayed for 4years in Ruwa and in these years engaged in poultry production and vegetable sales to markets in Harare. There was, however, a complication that he couldn't get the title deeds for his 5acres that he had purchased from the owner. In trying to secure the title deeds, he discovered that Ruwa fell within an Agricultural/Commercial Area, as such, it was not permitted by law to subdivide the land. He lost a lot of money engaging lawyers to get his money back from the owner of the property. The matter was eventually settled in court and he got his money. Unfortunately, Ruwa was re-demarcated as part of the Greater Harare area, exempting it from the subdivision restriction, a year after his issue had been settled. When he lost the plot, his family moved to the rural area where he could only get a residential stand since his father had allocated all land to his siblings. With his retirement package, he bought an 8 tonne truck which he used in Matututu Village of Chief Mangwende doing odd jobs like helping farmers carry their cotton produce to the market, carrying farm bricks, occasionally getting hired by local schools to transport school children to sporting events. He also used to farm maize and paprika on a 4ha piece of land given by the sabhuku. In 1999, the truck broke down and he went to Harare to have it repaired. After it was repaired, he stayed with an uncle and started hiring the truck at Beta Bricks to transport people's bricks to their building sites. In 2000 the truck broke down completely. It was old and spare parts for that old model were impossible to find. "Ndipo pakabva pangofira sarungano": that was the end of the story. He didn't have a choice but to go "home" and join the family. This was the time he also heard of jambanja so he took the opportunity to get himself land.*

**Box 2: The Katsande narrative**

*Mr. Katsande is a 52 year old man. He has a family of 4 children. He is a 2nd generation immigrant to Chegutu. His father moved from Murehwa to Chegutu a small town whose colonial and post colonial economy was based on farming and a clothing and textile manufacturing company, David Whitehead. He was born in Chegutu when his father was employed at a farm. He grew up in Chegutu and when his father's employer moved between farms the whole family moved with the farmer. Eventually the father got tired of moving and his employer secured a job for him with a friend, working in a grocery shop. Mr. Katsande (Jnr) started working at David Whitehead in 1988. Before that, he had been doing some odd jobs at the farm where the father was employed. In all these years, Mr. Katsande (Jnr) and the whole family never went back to Murehwa, the rural home. The father occasionally went for family occasions but never took the rest of the family. The father eventually resigned from the grocery shop and retired back to Murehwa. Back in the rural home, he discovered that there was no land for him since all the other siblings had allocated land amongst themselves. He then went and sought a stand at his sister and brother-in-law's village where he was given some land for subsistence. The sister later passed away and the father remained staying with the brother in law. The brother-in-law then also passed away, leaving the father taking care of the family home. In the meantime Katsande Jnr had gotten married and started his own family back in Chegutu. In 1996, David Whitehead downsized and retrenched a sizeable number of its employees, amongst them Katsande. After losing his job, he realized a few months later that he couldn't afford housing (they had previously been housed at a company house). He decided to send his family to Murehwa where his father was staying. He stayed behind living with a family friend trying to look for another job. By the end of 1997, when nothing had come through as far as a job was concerned, he went to Murehwa and joined his family. 1998 was a difficult year. He sold the household goods "property" that he had acquired working in Chegutu to be able to feed his family. Towards the end of that year he decided to go back to Chegutu and try and look for another job. He had to sell the remainder of his property just to raise bus fare. A month later his father passed away and he had to go back home. Back home, after burying his father, the headman notified him that since he did not "know" of him, he had had only the request for the father to stay with the brother-in-law, him and his family could not stay in the area and had to look for somewhere else to go. This was also the time jambanja started. He was amongst the first to go on farm invasions and he moved into Athlone in October 1999.*

**Box 3: The Gondo narrative**

*Mr. Gondo is 49 years of age. He finished high school at Mutoko High in 1985. He has a wife and one child. His first wife died in 2003 and he remarried in 2005. In 1987 he started working in Mazowe as a buyer for a white buyer in the gold panning industry. He worked there for 2 years until he moved to Chegutu in 1989 working at Muzvezve Chrome Mine. Between 1990 and 1995 worked in Rusape as a shop-fitter for a company called Work Bench. He was retrenched during ESAP and went back home to Dombwe. He stayed there for a year helping parents with their farming since they did have enough land to allocate to him as an individual, they could only farm together as a family. He later went to Hoyuyu Resettlement where there was more land to help relatives who would give farm yields as remuneration. During this time fertilizer and other inputs were available. In 2000, when jambanja started, he decided to get land in Athlone since he wasn't comfortable with the situation in Hoyuyu of being a dependent.*

These narratives highlight the different circumstances of Athlone households. It was typical in Zimbabwe even before the FTLRP that when husbands lost their formal employment, especially during the ESAP years, they would go back home to the rural areas. Those in the sample who were retrenched during these years found that on going back to the communal area, the family land had been apportioned amongst siblings and family members who had remained in the area or those who had maintained strong agricultural production ties with their communal land. Even though families could be based in urban areas, it has always been typical in Zimbabwe that during the rain and planting season, the wives would be sent "home" to farm. The households in

Athlone that had not maintained strong ties with their communal farms did not have any land to go back to after retrenchment like Mr. Katsande, or after retirement like Mr. Chadambuka.

Others, whilst they had land, needed more "space" in terms of "social space". Typical responses that reflected this included reference to family, "*pakatambanuka*"-freer space, "*kure nehama*"- far from relatives and "*pangu ndega*"- where I am alone. Reasons for need for social space have typically been reflected in other studies to show family feuds, social pressures, witch-craft accusations among others. In Athlonesome men were remarrying or starting a new life after either the death of a spouse or divorce. Others who wanted to marry a second "younger" wife would find it easier to start a new life, with a new wife, in the new resettlement areas. As highlighted in the demographic presentation, there were a lot of "young" households Athlone. Others would also cite the need to create geographical and social space between their households and members of the extended or immediate family. One respondent pointed out that *"tangatisisina kugarisana zvakanaka nana babamunini,(muninina wememurume)*", (relations were no longer conducive between my family and brother-in-law) because of a fight the husband had had with his siblings.

Others, 10 households, had absolutely no land, only occupying some space to live on, allocated either by some relatives or by the headman. The desperation of some families in terms of access to land could be drawn from the example of Mr. Katsande which shows that some families, victims of retrenchment, went back to their rural homes only to find the family land subdivided amongst their siblings and no land left for them. In this case some were not accommodated at all by their immediate families; others were given land by in-laws who were in better positions. This would be insecure land that could be taken any time and whose use was negotiated beginning of every planting season, a situation most respondents had been uncomfortable with. The advent of *jambanja* brought relief for many such families.

**Table 2: Land Status**

| Land status | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Landless-(apportioned residential stand, relying on neighbors for farming land | 10 | 36 |
| Land but infertile | 6 | 21 |
| Land but places far | 2 | 8 |
| Land but insufficient | 6 | 21 |
| Land but social/ family circumstances (divorce, feuds, marriage) | 4 | 14 |
| Total | 28 | 100 |

Two respondents highlighted that they had had land in their old communal areas but had decided to move to Athlone because it was closer to their areas of formal employment. Whilst they had maintained their old communal homes before FTLRP, the economic strain they were facing made it impossible to commute to these rural homes to farm as before. They considered that it was important for them to farm to supplement the husbands' formal income through subsidising household food needs. Athlone was close to Harare so the wives could stay during farming season and the husbands could visit at weekends to help. This was the case for two households; Foromani and Chakafa. They both originally came from Mutare which is about 300km from Harare. Mr. Foromani reflected that his situation was also worse in that even though he had land in Mutare, it was hilly and mountainous and difficult to farm. Other respondents, 21 percent of the sample, from communal areas in Murehwa and Mutoko, cited that the land they had in the communal areas was no longer fertile and yields were very low.

The data and review of the respondents' circumstances highlights that Athlone beneficiaries represented a broad range of circumstances. Whilst the circumstances varied, it can be concluded that the sample in Athlone showed beneficiaries who were in need of land. This is despite popular misconceptions that influential people, advantaged groups and the rich; including rural based business people, teachers, civil servants, political leaders and chiefs constituted the majority of beneficiaries. It is very difficult to regard Athlone beneficiaries as any kind of advantaged group. Looking at the evidence of their existence, they are just like Munslow'

(1985)'s findings of early resettlement phases beneficiaries. They are just poor peasants who remain on the margins of subsistence, with very insignificant cash incomes. Evidence from Athlone also supports Sachikonye (2005), Marongwe, (2007); Scoones, (2008), Moyo, (2005)'s assertions that a broad range of worthy beneficiaries, in terms of land and livelihood needs, benefitted from the FTLRP.

## 3.3 DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF ATHLONE HOUSEHOLDS

The "household" has been conceptualized as a unit of analysis for investigating both rural and urban livelihoods. The "household" has also been used as a basis for analyzing decision making on production, consumption and investment. Literature on households suggests that the household is an arena of interactions that have bearing on livelihoods and livelihood outcomes (Guyer, 1986). The use of the "household" as a unit of analysis also reflects the understanding that some income may literally be shared and that, more generally, consumption is shared (Hill & Cook; undated). ESA (1995 cited in Hill & Cook, undated: 2) defined a household as:

*"small groups of persons who share the same living accommodation, who pool some, or all, of their income and wealth and who consume certain types of goods and services collectively, mainly housing and food. The criteria of the existence of family or emotional ties may also be added".*

This research adapts from this definition and broadly extended households to include extended family members. "Households" is employed and conceptualised in this report as encompassing boundaries, structures and relationships between households, family and wider kinship networks.The children of Athlone farmers, even those who had their own families; who are married, were also included since they contribute and consume produce generated by Athlone farmers. The following highlights the key demographic features of Athlone households.

### 3.3.1 Gender

**Table 3: Gender Distribution**

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 10 | 37 |
| Female | 17 | 63 |
| Total | 27 | 100 |

Table 3 illustrates the gender of the respondents to semi-structured interviews. Most females were interviewed in the general semi-structured interviews and the males were interviewed for mini-life histories. During the time of the field research, men were busy with various farm duties. This accounts for the higher percentage of female respondents.

### 3.3.2 Age

**Table 4: Age distribution**

| Age Group | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 19-35 | 10 | 37 |
| 36-49 | 12 | 44 |
| Above 50 | 5 | 19 |
| Total | 27 | 100 |

Most respondents fell between the ages of 36-49. It emerged during the interviews that the women were younger than the males. Only 1 male respondent who was single fell into the 19-35 age groups. Six males were in the 36-49 age groups.

### 3.3.3 Marital status

**Table 5: Marital status**

| Marital status | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Married | 24 | 89 |
| Single | 3 | 11 |

Athlone has the majority of the families in married structures. Twenty four of the respondents were married, 2 of the single respondents were widowed and one male respondent was single. Households in Athlone showed a trend of young wives as reflected by the age distribution since most of these wives were second wives. The first wives stayed in the old communal areas. This would account for the preponderance of households with younger wives and older husbands, though it is typical in Zimbabwe that husbands are older than their wives.

### 3.3.4 Household size

Table 6 shows the number of children in Athlone households. All households enumerated were composed of a single family unit. Families had an average of 3 children. It also emerged in the research process that the age groups for the households with less than 4 children were composed

of young kids below the age of 10. This necessitated the delineation of household type as either "young" or "old" to show how old the children in these households were.

**Table 6: Household size distribution**

| Number of children in the respondents' households | Respondents | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 4 |
| 1 | 1 | 4 |
| 2 | 6 | 22 |
| 3 | 10 | 37 |
| 4 | 3 | 11 |
| 5 | 2 | 7 |
| More than 6 | 4 | 15 |
| Total | 27 | 100 |

### 3.3.5 Household type

"Young" households have very young kids, on average between 1-3 children under the age of 10. These "young" households are typically families that were started in Athlone, or for younger families who might have just married between 2-3 years before "*jambanja*". Some would also be cases of older husbands who married younger wives after settling in Athlone. "Older" households have children that are older than 18 years of age, some with their own families.

Older households would respond to the question of how big their family was with indications of numbers of children they have, even though the children themselves were now adults with their own families. In this case, a household had a total of between 6-12 children. There are a lot of young kids in Athlone. Every household has 1 or 2 kids below 5 years of age. Families are made up of older husbands and younger wives, which may explain the preponderance of young kids since younger wives are in the prime child- bearing phase of their lives.

Whilst households in some cases would be defined as a unit sharing a hearth for their consumption needs, it is very important to include these older children as members of the households of respondents, particularly in consideration that they are a huge factor in the consumption patterns and resource mobilisation of the respondents. If a respondent household

produces grain from its yields, the allocation patterns and subsequent surplus is affected by how much is allocated to all the children even if they have their own families.

**Table 7: Household type**

| Household type | Number of Households | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Young | 21 | 78 |
| Old | 6 | 22 |
| Total | 27 | 100 |

These children may also provide inputs for crop production to their parents. This analysis presents evidence of how familial networks are important in the analysis of households and how it may be limiting to restrict the conceptualisalition of a "household" to people sharing a hearth, especially in the "older" household cases in Athlone.

### 3.3.6 Education

There is not much variation in education levels of household heads. Age seems to be the determinant of how far a household head would have gone with school. Those in the 40-50 age range are likely to have attained secondary level of education. In terms of tertiary or vocational training, some have training in different areas, like farmer training and welding. There are four teachers in the farm which reflect that they attained at least "O" level education and went for some teacher training course. There is one member who is the former DA of Murehwa. Since he was not physically present in the farm during the field work, his level of education and training could not be verified but one can insinuate some level of education and or training due to the employment field. One household head was employed at the president's office but could not divulge his training.

For the purposes of analysis, since the majority of respondents have secondary education, it may have little sense in attempting to deduce fine distinctions among the adult populace based upon education, even in comparison to those who only acquired primary level education. Since all of the farmers had at least primary school education, all the farmers were taken to be functionally literate.

**Table 8: Education level of household heads**

| Level of education | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| No education | 0 | 0 |
| Primary level | 3 | 9 |
| Secondary level | 20 | 63 |
| Course/ diploma | 4 | 12 |
| Tertiary Education | 5 | 16 |
| Total | 32 | 100 |

### 3.3.7 Employment

The study interrogated the employment status of the household heads. The majority of respondents stated agriculture as their form of employment. The circumstances of this unemployment, however, varied from retrenchment and retirement, and those that had never been formally employed. Table 9 below shows the distribution of employment status of all the households in Athlone.

**Table 9: Employment status**

| Employment status | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Formal employment | 6 | 9 |
| Retrenched | 22 | 69 |
| Retired | 3 | 9 |
| Never employed | 1 | 3 |
| Total | 32 | 100 |

The three elderly household heads were retired. The six household heads who were formally employed stayed off the farm but their employment status was known by key informants. Of the six, four were teachers, one was an Assistant District Administrator and the other one worked at the President's Office. The majority of household heads, 69 percent, had been retrenched in the mid and late 1990's, through either their companies' downsizing or shutting down operations. In terms of these respondents' employment backgrounds, most did not have any specialised

training. Only one young man had never been employed as he couldn't find employment after finishing his O' levels.

**Conclusion**

The main aim of this chapter was to introduce Athlone Farm and its residents to the reader. Athlone Farm's geographic position in Zimbabwe influences the livelihood activities that residents can engage in. It is in an area of agro potential as determined by its topography and rainfall patters which makes crop production a natural livelihood alternative. Other infrastructural services have also been highlighted as they are central to the pursuit of any livelihood activity. Chapter 4 will discuss how Athlone Farm residents' access to these services have affected the livelihood activities they pursue. Other aspects that are household specific as outlined here, such as gender, household composition and size, and household head employment status, will also be used to discuss livelihoods for Athlone residents in Chapter 4. This Chapter, thus, sets the benchmark from which to assess the livelihoods of the resettled households.

## CHAPTER 4: LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES IN ATHLONE

### Overview

This chapter first highlights the conceptual framework that was used in analysing the livelihoods of households resettled in Athlone farm. The main aim is to highlight the activities that the households in Athlone have engaged in to sustain themselves, and, to all extent possible, evaluate how their lives have changed from the circumstances before they resettled as highlighted in the preceding chapter. Athlone beneficiaries reflected that they relied on rain-fed agriculture, and livestock production for their livelihoods. Even though Athlone farm had an irrigation system in place, its management and use has not benefitted the beneficiaries. Athlone households also engage in some off-farm activities and on-farm, non- agricultural based income activities. Whilst government has instituted some support programmes for smallholder farmers, Athlone beneficiaries have not sufficiently accessed the support, and ultimately face limitations to their production activities. This chapter discusses these issues according to identified themes aimed at addressing the central questions of the study.

### 4.1 OVERVIEW OF THE FRAMEWORK USED IN THE ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

"Livelihoods" as a concept, has been defined, and frameworks for analyzing it, put forward, by a number of scholars in different but related forms. According to Bebbington (1999), livelihoods can be understood in terms of;

*" people's access to five types of capital assets (human, social, natural, cultural); the ways in which they combine these assets in building up their livelihoods to meet their material and experiential needs; the ways in which they are able to expand these asset bases through engaging with other actors through relationships governed by the logics of the state, market and civil society and the ways in which they are able to deploy and enhance their capabilities both to make living more meaningful and more importantly to change the dominant rules and relationships governing the ways in which resources are controlled, distributed and transformed into income streams"* (1999; 1).

This research employed the **sustainable livelihoods framework** as expounded by DFID. The livelihoods framework offers a way of thinking about livelihoods that helps order complexity and makes clear the many factors that affect livelihoods. It also presents the main factors that affect people's livelihoods, and the typical interrelations between them. The framework is a people-centred analysis that begins with simultaneous explorations of people's assets, their objectives

(the livelihood outcomes they are seeking) and the livelihood strategies they employ to achieve these goals. Feedback relations between these and the transforming structures and processes affect livelihoods. The framework identifies five important types of capital assets: human, natural, financial, social and physical.

**Human capital** is made up of the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that, together, enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives (DFID). At both the household and community level, human capital is determined by the amount and quality of labour available. Crucially, human capital is needed in order to make use of any of the four other types of capital assets, as well as being valued for itself. It is for this reason that human capital has been regarded as the most important asset to be developed by poor women and men. It is therefore necessary, though on its own, insufficient to secure positive livelihood outcomes.

**Social capital**, the social resources to which people have access to, is a determinant of their ability to manage relationships and transactions in commercial markets, in social institutions and civil society, and with government agencies. These may be developed through networks and social contacts, membership of more formalised groups, and relationships of trust, reciprocity and exchange that facilitate co-operation, generate trust and reduce transaction costs. The endowment of the different types of capital asset that people have affects their ability to engage with external institutions. External institutions may themselves be a product of social capital.

**Physical capital** comprises the basic infrastructure (shelter, water supply, transport, communications, etc.) and manufactured goods (e.g. tools and equipment) necessary to maintain livelihoods. A single physical asset may predispose an individual to generate multiple benefits. If someone has security over land, a natural capital, this may be translated into financial capital as they can use land, not only for direct productive activities, but also as collateral for loans.

**Natural capital** constitutes the natural resource stocks from which resource flows and services useful for livelihoods are derived. There is a wide variation in the resources that make up natural capital, from intangible public goods such as the atmosphere and biodiversity to divisible assets used directly for production (trees, land, etc.). Natural capital is clearly essential to those who derive all or part of their livelihoods from resource-based activities (farming, fishing, gathering in forests, and mineral extraction among others). Land is thus a key natural asset that has been

provided to resettled communities through the FTLRP. Land, however, on its own cannot be sufficient as a livelihood resource without access to other capital assets. Whilst beneficiaries to the FTLRP have gained access to land, this research uses the livelihoods framework to look at what other assets are available to these beneficiaries to enhance or inhibit their livelihood activities.

**Financial capital** denotes the financial resources; cash, credit or other liquid assets, that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives. It can include regular flows (pensions, remittances, state transfers) as well as stocks (savings, jewellery, even livestock), which can contribute to consumption as well as production.

This conceptual framework was used to evaluate what assets were extended to the resettled communities through land redistribution and to also evaluate how these assets have been employed by Athlone residents to enhance their livelihoods. It was also used to highlight the assets that are pertinent to livelihoods in Athlone, to which access for such resources for Athlone beneficiaries is limited.

## 4.2 LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES IN ATHLONE

### 4.2.1 Rain fed crop cultivation

Crop production remains the dominant source of food and livelihoods for rural African families (Ellis, 2000; Bryceson, 2002; Rigg, 2005). This is typically so for Athlone households. Rain fed crop production is the main livelihood activity. Maize is the dominant crop produced for household food needs and for its exchange value. Sample households grow soy beans, wheat, ground nuts and tobacco. Dry farming is the dominant system for the production of all these crops. Maize crop and soy beans are mainly grown for household consumption needs. Even where households sell their farm products, they keep enough in stock to feed the family until the next season's harvest. Participants raised serious alarms of how it would be irresponsible for a household to sell produce and then run out and suffer hunger towards the end of the season.

Table 10 highlights the two main food crops that Athlone farmers produce. Most farmers produce between 6-10 bags of maize and more than 10 bags of soya beans in Athlone. This is deemed sufficient to cater for household grain needs as well as to have surplus that is used for other trading arrangements for example, for labour, groceries and livestock accumulation as will

be discussed later. Households, even those that did not have marketable surplus, considered themselves food self- sufficient. Respondents highlighted that the yields for the season 2007 to 2008 had not been good due to a number of constraints. In other years, according to respondents, yields had been better surpassing what this table has presented. According to Mr. Harufaneta of AREX, these figures show yields that are sufficient but that do not, however, reflect the full potential of the land and the farmers.

**Table 10: Example of yields in Athlone (2007-2008)**

| Crop | Number of bags*[7] | Number of households |
|---|---|---|
| Maize | 1-5 | 3 |
| | 6- 10 | 12 |
| | 10-15 | 5 |
| Soya Beans | 1-5 | 2 |
| | 6- 10 | 7 |
| | 10-15 | 8 |
| | More than 15 | 10 |

According to literature, rural crop production is influenced by a variety of factors. The asset base of individual households determines the outcome of their production activities. These assets typically include access to draught power for tilling the land, fertilisers, seeds, land, labour; and, for all rain-fed production systems, rain is an important mediating factor (Bebbington, 1999). Literature also points to land as a limitation to productivity for rural farmers in Sub Saharan Africa particularly, due to the colonial background of land dispossession and continued sub-division of family plots due to inheritance laws (Bryceson, 2002; Byerlee, 2005; Ellis, 2000). In Athlone, due to land redistribution under the FTLRP; land shortage is not a limiting factor. Beneficiaries in Athlone received A1 plots each of 6ha: 1 ha home-stead, 1 ha grazing and 4 ha arable. The limiting factors for Athlone production are discussed in the next section.

### Limitations to crop production

According to the livelihoods framework, all assets are important to the enhancement and security of livelihoods. Land reform should extend to agrarian reform, transforming not only land holdings, but also facilitating the transformation of the agrarian economy (Munslow, 1985).

[7] A bag represents 1 tonne and is made up of 10 by 20kg buckets

Whilst the FTLRP has provided access to land for crop production, the research came up with other assets that inhibit the potential for resettled farmers to enhance their livelihood. Households in Athlone engage in rain fed crop production with some limited levels of success. Yields in Athlone are largely determined by a range of other factors. Draught power is an important asset for crop production since all households rely on the ox-drawn plough to till their land. Rigg (2005); Campbell, *et al.*, (1997); Scoones, *et al.*, (1996) and Kinsey, (1998) have documented how central cattle as draught power are to crop production. Households in Athlone that do not have draught power tend to have lower yields. The three households that had a yield of between 1-5 bags of maize did not have cattle for draught power. The main explanation for the low yields was that they rely on the networks of neighbours to secure draught power. This means that they lose out on the early rains when those who have cattle plough their own fields first before giving them cattle to plough with. In some cases, households that do not own cattle rely on hiring communal area farmers to plough their fields for them in exchange for grains.

Access to agricultural inputs especially fertilizer also determines yields. Seed inputs have been easy to access in Athlone compared to fertilizer. Households indicated that in the seasons when they have had better yields, it has always been due to access to fertilizer. Fertilizer has been a major limitation throughout the country (Moyo, 2003). Even though the government has initiated various programmes to support availability of agricultural inputs highlighted in Chapter 2, Athlone residents have not been able to benefit from these schemes due to reasons which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Sources of fertilizer for Athlone households have either been "black market" sources and, for others, savings from allocations given in the past planting seasons by either the GMB or AREX. Other respondents confirmed diverting the use of fertilizer allocated for soy production by Banwax, a private contractor to maize production in breach of their contractual agreement with Banwax. It has also been typical for farmers to exchange stock, especially cattle, for fertilizer. Income for buying fertilizer from the 'black-market' is either from the sale of previous season's yield, or for some remitances from working children

From 2000, Zimbabwe has experienced three drought seasons (Moyo, 2003; Richardson, 2002; Anderson, 2002). These droughts have been used to account for the loss of productivity on resettled land and have been a subject of immense debate. Some scholars account the loss of productivity to the FTLRP (Richardson, 2002), and others have pointed to erratic rainfall

patterns at different periods of the crops production (Moyo, 2003; Anderson, 2002). Other scholars have also pointed out that rainfall is the single most important variable that affects dry land crop production in Africa (Mortimore, 1998; Makhado, Matondi & Hungwe, 2006). Athlone households have also been prone to the vagaries of the rainfall patterns since they settled in Athlone.

According to respondents, rainfall patterns have affected yields with crops failing due to either shortage of rain or excessive rains. The rain effects are also mediated by other factors pointed out by respondents. The soils in Athlone are heavy such that when the rains fall for consecutive days without respite for farmers to weed, this affects the crop. In other instances, the amount of rain that is received require fertilization for crops to do well. Due to fertilizer shortage, farmers cannot achieve the balance needed when there is too much rain. Rains, coupled with the effects of labour shortage and limitations of draught power and soil quality also affect acreage used by households. When there is too much rain, the most efficient means of tillage is diesel-powered tractors. Without the tractors, households use less of their land and using ox-drawn tillage is largely inappropriate and ineffective.

Small family farms have been documented to be labour intensive and more labour efficient compared to the large scale commercial farms (Hazell, *et al.*, 2007). Labour has also been found in studies to be a limiting factor in family crop production (Bebbington, 1999). Labour for Athlone households is mediated through various sources. Family labour is not sufficient for crop production in Athlone due to the family composition highlighted in the earlier section. As such households use labour from neighbouring communal areas for tilling, weeding and harvesting. Such labour is exchanged for grain and small stock, depending on their needs. Extended family networks are also a source of labour.

**Box 4: Loose reciprocal relations as source of labour**

***Mr. Chipuriro*** *lives with his family composed of 4 young (age range) children and his wife. During the 2007/8 season an elderly woman who was recorded as his "ambuya"- grandmother joined his family. Further enquiries with the neighbours highlighted that the woman used to move from household to household in the previous seasons helping in people's fields (kuruwira), but has since become a permanent addition to the Chipuriro household. She is not considered a "worker" by the family but neither is she a "relative" particularly given the background of how she came to stay with the Chipuriro's.*

***Tinashe*** *is a 14-year old boy; son of the Chitsike's who stays with the Chakafa's. He is not considered a "worker" but a helper. Mr. Chakafa and the rest of the family stay in Harare though the wife stays for longer periods on the farm especially during peak agricultural periods. The Chakafa's also employ a teenage boy as a farm worker and Tinashe is reportedly needed to keep this teenager company even though he also helps doing various kinds of homestead and farm work. A loose reciprocal relationship exists between the Chitsike family and the Chakafa families that facilitates Tinashe's staying with the Chakafas.*

***Mr. Foromani*** *"employs" his mother's niece to take care of his plot. This arrangement was negotiated by the whole family since the niece was considered troublesome and a burden by the family. She had two kids out of wedlock with different men. Since she needed somewhere to stay and he needed someone, a relative, to take care of his plot, it was seen to be beneficial for her to stay with her kids at the plot, contribute to Mr. Foromani's farming and she would also benefit the family by remitting her share of the produce to Mutare where there is always grain shortage. She also manages the other two workers that Mr. Foromani employs.*

The Chipuriro and Foromani narratives highlight what I considered as loose reciprocal arrangements as, even though the "grandmother" and aunt were considered family, they each got some remuneration and also contributed labour to the family. They also get farm produce as remuneration. Details of the relationship in the Chakafa scenario were difficult to interrogate. Mrs. Chakafa calls Tinashe their "son" giving the impression that he is part of the family and distinguishing him from the worker though the researcher got divergent views and analysis from community members who held the impression that *"vanoshandisa mwana"*-they use the child. This is particularly in the view that Tinashe is of school going age but does not go to school due to financial constraints to pay school fees. If he was their "child", they would also send him to school just as their sons, of the same age, go to school in Harare.

Children are another source of labour even though their contribution is limited in Athlone by the problem of lack of schools near the farm. Their labour power is only taped into during school holidays since most households leave their children to go to school in their old residential areas; be it communal or urban areas. Urban area kids are less likely to come to the farms to contribute during school holidays as reflected by Mrs. Chakafa in reference to her sons who detested never helping at the farm during the school holidays[8].

[8] Interview with Mrs. Chakafa

Even though families use outside sources of labour for their production, family labour is still vital in production. According to Guyer (1986), labour is an intra-household negotiated need. Men and women produce different crops with women typically being responsible for household staples and the man producing cash crops amongst the communities he studied. This was, however, not the case in Athlone as there is no gendered division of crop production. The family works on producing all crops together. Guyer (1986), however, points to an aspect of gender division of labour typical and very important in Athlone. He points out that male and female labour is complimentary in ways indispensable to crop production and that also determines yields.

**Box 5: Gender and crop production at Athlone**
**Mr. Gondo**'s wife passed away in their second year of resettling at Athlone in 2002. He found it difficult to engage extra labour in the fields because in almost all cases, the labourers have to be fed. Without the female support in this regard from his wife, he found that labourers discriminated against him, as the felt that he would not be well provided for food during the time they were working in his fields.

**Mr. Rwodzi**, lost his wife in 2008 when they were about to harvest their tobacco. He recounted how his tobacco almost went to waste as he couldn't get people to help him;

"*Sister, if you have had a loss like mine the Gods would have laughed at you, you are nothing. I looked at my tobacco crop in this field and people were refusing to help me with the harvest. My crop almost perished in the field because I couldn't find helpers"*[1]

These two scenarios highlighted how the absence of the wife affects production. In Mr. Gondo's case it could be taken at face value that people did not want to help him. Upon reflection and analysis, it is clear that the reason for Mr. Rwodzi's problem was that he didn't have a wife who would assure the labourers food whilst they were working in the fields. These two cases show that household labour is nevertheless crucial in order to be able to garner all the other possible labour sources. The need for labour contribution from wives in this regard is also evident in the trend in Athlone that most males who came to Athlone alone during the early phases of resettling seem to have quickly remarried or married a second wife to stay with, in Athlone. In confirmation of this analysis one respondent said he had married "*kuwedzera maoko"*- to increase the number of hands working on the farm.

### 4.2.2 Irrigated crop production

In tropical and sub-tropical regions, water is a highly variable natural resource subject to seasonal, as well as long term variations (Mortimore, 1998). In Zimbabwe, where agriculture is dependent on rainfall, it is the single most important variable affecting crop production (Makhado, Matondi & Hungwe, 2006). Irrigation, within this background offers many opportunities. According to Chiza (2005), irrigation has a multi-faceted role in contributing to food security, self-sufficiency, food production and exports. He contends that in smallholder farms, irrigation assists with both food production and cash crops enabling farmers to benefit directly and indirectly from crops produced. Irrigation, particularly small holder irrigation, has the advantages of enabling farmers to increase crop intensities through double cropping, through supplementary watering during drought, as well as enabling crop growth in dry areas-crop expansion (Tafesse, 2003).

The history of Zimbabwe irrigation developments shows that there was high concentration of irrigation systems on large scale commercial farming land than on communal and state lands before the FTLRP (Makhado, Matondi & Hungwe, 2006). The opening up of commercial land to smallholders under the FTLRP also opened up opportunities for irrigated production systems for the newly resettled farmers. Athlone farm beneficiaries have also been well positioned to take advantage of the irrigation systems they inherited upon resettling at the property. The following discusses how far they have organized themselves to that end and highlights the constraints and opportunities for improved livelihoods from irrigated crop production.

When Athlone farmers were resettled, a proportion of the farm was under irrigation[9]. However, there are differing accounts of what happened to the irrigation infrastructure that settlers found in Athlone. The headman alleged that the farmer moved the pipes and other equipment to Exeter farm which was owned by his son. This was a move that was informed by negotiations between the farmer and some politicians in the area assuring the farmer that Exeter would not be expropriated. As such, moving the equipment was the farmer's way of safeguarding and

[9] It was not possible to get statistics of the land that was under irrigation with the old farmer since the farmer had moved out of the farm and could not be contacted for an interview.

saving some of his investments. Exeter farm was, however, also eventually expropriated and the headman alleged that Exeter farm beneficiaries benefited from equipment from Athlone.

One key informant, Mr. Chakafa, held the view that Athlone beneficiaries had acquired the farm intact with all the irrigation equipment. Some people had stolen and plundered the equipment for various domestic uses as they were not sure that they would stay at Athlone. As such, by the time they wanted to settle and use the irrigation equipment an audit showed that there was a lot of equipment missing and infrastructure had been destroyed. This situation is typical of what has been documented about the effects of the FTLRP to resources on acquired farms (Marongwe, 2007; Sachikonye, 2005). In the early years of settling during FTLRP, beneficiaries did not consider the government serious with the process. Many were suspicious that the whole process was an election gimmick to get ZANU (PF) votes in the 2000 elections. Settlers were reportedly invading farmland in order to loot with no serious intentions of farming.

In order to start utilizing the irrigation facility in Athlone, Mr. Chakafa recounted that he was instrumental in getting people together to discuss what needed to be done. He talked to people about the threat that government would take the farm away from them if they left productive facilities, including irrigation, lying idle. This threat formed the basis for the co-operation of farmers leading to the formation of the Mushawatu Irrigation Scheme. The scheme was also formed as the legal mechanism by which the project could access the loan that they needed from Agribank to purchase pipes to revive sprinkler irrigation.

There are a number of complications that the scheme faced with the application for the loan, the institutional arrangements for water access and, broadly, in managing the relations amongst its members. The application process took long as papers were reportedly lost at the Agribank offices. The whole process of submitting applications, getting notification of the award of the loan, payment and delivery of the pipes and other parts took close to eight months. According to Mr. Shortie, the secretary of the scheme, by the time the loan was approved, the price the scheme had initially been quoted had gone up. In the end, they ended up with less than they had requested. It would seem that this complication set the ground for how the co-operative would work as they received less pipes than needed.

Water management has been problematic at Athlone. Whilst according to Mr. Chakafa[10] the initial agreement was they would farm as a co-operative after acquiring the pipes, this did not work as the leadership decide to break members into groups and allocate each group their own pipes. Each member would then farm as an individual and rotate the use of the water pipes.

Water is pumped using electricity; people pay the water authority Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) a certain amount and the electricity company, Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) collects a certain percentage through the GMB to keep the supply running. All repairs to broken equipment are mostly done at the site. If a fee has to be paid, all members contribute to pay a person contracted to do the job.

There is high misuse and wastage of water in the scheme evidenced by the variety of wasteful uses I recorded from personal observation. Water pipes are drawn up to the homestead to make it easy for people for that particular household to get water for domestic purposes (washing, cleaning and bathing). In the process, I noted a lot of spillage as residents accessed water from disconnected pipes. In the dry season, water pipes have been drawn to sites to mould bricks. In order to water fields, each household has allocated days for using the pipes. The continued disconnections of the pipes have led to leak due to wear and tear. Not only has this system led to water wastage. It has also led to inefficient use and insufficient watering of crops. According to Mr. Chakafa, in 2007, his winter wheat crop only received 10 days worth of water which is too little for a good yield. Due to this problem, he did not plant the winter crop for the 2008 season.

[10] Mr. Chakafa is an absentee farmer whose wife stays in Athlone during planting season. He is considered highly influential member as he works in the President's office.



**Figure 4: Mr. Foromani inspecting his winter wheat crop**

Mismanagement of equipment has also been reported by others and verified by the researcher with evidence of irrigation infrastructure lying around at almost every homestead in the farm. Since pipes are carried from one field to the other, responsibility and accountability has reportedly been difficult to enforce[11]. There has also been allegations of theft of pipes mostly by people who are either of the Apostolic Faith sect, or who sell to the Apostolic Faith church members who use them to weld aluminium pots and dishes. Maintenance of equipment is done by committee members who do not have the requisite technical skills. The *sabhuku* and the security committee member have become the default professionals for irrigation burst pipe incidences.

During data collection in Athlone, the researcher witnessed an average of four burst pipe incidences per week. In all cases, the headman and the member in charge of security, Mr. Katsande was called to attend to the problem. For big repairs, the headman has a son who specialises on machinery maintenance and works in Harare. This son is called when a "big" problem arises. In an informal discussion with a member of the community, he highlighted some interesting information about this arrangement. This informant felt that the farmers were overcharged when the son did such repairs.

[11] Interview with Mr. Shortie- irrigation Secretary

The above scenario is contrary to propositions that have been made that smallholder irrigation leads to expansion of the irrigated area, increased water availability and improved water use (Kay, 2001). Kay holds that government and donor funded smallholder schemes have failed in Africa due to their top-down nature. He also posits that distribution of technologies such as trickle and sprinkle irrigation and piped supplies can help farmers to manage their water better as well as reducing wastage and that these technologies have the potential to raise the productivity of water and labour (Kay, 2001).

The Mushawatu Scheme was fortunate that they were able to access a loan in order to buy the pipes and sprinklers. The scheme also seems to have been grass root driven even though this may be doubted since it only came out as a reaction to the threat of having the farm repossessed by the government. It is also largely autonomous from outside interference though, without a strong management structure, the autonomy has not been an advantage.

These circumstances should have made success for the Mushawatu Scheme more possible. Instead the Mushawatu Scheme has not been able to benefit from the irrigation in the ways that have been documented for smallholder irrigation and as such, the livelihoods of the farmers who are in the scheme are not very different from those who are not part of the scheme. The main reasons for its failure seem to be a lack of institutional capacity to manage the scheme. Members have also not received any training to address production, markets and management that other success schemes in Zimbabwe have been documented to benefit from (FAO, 2000). The problems that Mushawatu Scheme has faced have also been documented for other irrigation ventures in Zimbabwe (FAO, 2000).

### 4.2.3 Livestock

The role of livestock has been documented in studies of rural livelihoods (Hatch, 1996; Lipton, 1996; Mortimore, 1998; Ellis, 1998). The role of livestock incorporates both an income and a wealth function. According to Hatch,

*"the wealth of a man is always reckoned in cattle, since it is in cattle that he must acquire wives for himself and his sons..."* (1996: 81).

Cattle provide a variety of functions including meat, milk, hides, manure, insurance and draught power, a means of social exchange, security against adverse conditions and an asset which may be quickly liquidated in emergency situations (Hatch, 1996; Lipton, 1996; Mortimore; 1998). In Zimbabwe, according to a study carried out by Scoones, 1992 (cited in Hatch 1996), transport and draught provision were the most important functions of stock holding followed by *lobola* and milk.

**Table 11: Cattle ownership**

| Number of Cattle | Number of Households | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 10 | 37 |
| 1 | 2 | 7 |
| 2 | 8 | 30 |
| More than 3 | 7 | 26 |

The most striking trend as far as livestock ownership in Athlone is concerned was the low level of cattle ownership and the preponderance of cattle and chickens as the main types of stock in the area. Ten households do not own any cattle and all households have some chicken. Ownership patterns seem to be determined by where new farmers originated from before settling at Athlone. All the households originating from towns, or that did not have secure land in neighbouring communal lands, did not own any cattle. Eight households did not bring any livestock into Athlone. They have, however, over the years, managed to acquire some. The average number of cattle households have acquired is two. Such acquisitions are accounted to a variety of processes as highlighted by the Foromani and Chadambuka narratives in Box 5.

**Box 6: Acquisition of livestock by settlers at Athlone Farm**

**Mr. Foromani**, obtained his first livestock through some form of barter trade. He obtained through informal channels (*ndakangoiwanawo*) some fertilizer (14bags of 50kg Ammonium Nitrate) which he traded for a heifer. Earlier in the year, his father-in-law from a neighbouring plot had also managed to secure a livestock through purchase from a desperate neighbour.

**Mr. Chadambuka** lost all his cattle before moving to Athlone. There are a variety of circumstances contributing to this loss. First, he had used two to help his son pay *lobola* as a social obligation. Secondly, the other livestock died for reasons that he could not establish. Thirdly, the remaining one he had killed at his mother's funeral to provide food for the people[1]. However, he noted that his son had recently bought him two heifers that were yet to be transported to Athlone.

In Athlone, livestock uses vary across households. According to Kinsey *et al.,* (1998 cited in Campbell *et al.,* 1997), cattle sales are rare and are a result of urgent cash needs or disaster sales during droughts. In Athlone, some households have sold their cattle (in very rare cases) to supplement the household income in order to buy inputs. Mr. Chadambuka reported that he had slaughtered one ox at the death of his mother. Mr. Mukotami reported selling his ox to buy fertilizer and some feed for his pigs.

Despite the finding that cattle sales at Athlone are infrequent, trading patterns were, nevertheless, captured in this study as they contributed to households' livelihoods sources. The trading price or exchange value for cattle in Athlone and its surrounding environs is not fixed. Prices depend on how desperate the buyer or the seller is. Both the buyer and the seller engage in their own separate cost and benefit analysis of the exchange; both settling for what they consider fair deals. The Foromani narrative of exchange above reflect that the exchange of fertilizer for cattle was beneficial to the two parts even though some people thought the exchange was a bit unfair; the fertilizer was of much more value than the heifer. This same case also shows that livestock plays an important role in supporting agricultural crop production, being exchanged for fertilizer. The practice of paying dowry on behalf of sons captured in the Chadambuka narrative is typical of what has been captured in other studies (Hatch, 1996; Scoones, 1992 cited in Hatch 1996; Campbell *et al.,* 1997) illuminating the various uses of stock.

Chickens have been used by some households in labour exchanges for the fields. In some cases, they are used as payment for tillage services. Where cash income is needed, chickens are also reportedly the easiest to dispose of. Only one household had goats though they were hosted with a relative on another farm due to concerns over predators (hyenas) in Athlone. Another household reported losing two goats through strangulation during the tethering process. This is an efficient way for small stocks when there is labour shortage. The practise can be dangerous as stock may go round the tree whilst grazing and, in the process, strangle itself. Other participants highlighted that goats were difficult to keep on the farm not only due to the threat of predators but also due to the strict tending attention they require. In Athlone grazing areas are close by and irrigation means that there are green fields throughout the year necessitating tending to the goats all the time.

### 4.2.4 Off-farm livelihood sources

Barret *et al.,* (2001) gives a distinction between "agricultural" or "farm" activities (derived from the production or gathering of unprocessed crops or livestock or forest or fish products from natural resources) and "non-agricultural" or "non-farm" activities (all other activities, including processing, transport or trading of unprocessed agricultural, forest and fish products). This is the distinction that was employed in analyzing the different activities of Athlone households. Literature on livelihoods has pointed out that rural livelihoods are mediated though diversified activities (Bryceson, 1999; Bryceson, 2002; Barret *et al.,* 2001; Rigg, 2005; Ellis, 2000). Bryceson conceptualises diversification to comprise of *"change in labour form from peasant household labour to wage labour, individual self-employment, or reliance on remittances, pensions, rent or other income transfers"* (1999: 172).

Whilst land based activities like crop production and livestock are dominant, there are a variety of off-farm and non-land based activities that households engage in which are becoming more important and contributing an increasing percentage (about 40 percent- 60 percent) to family incomes (Bryceson, 1999; Barret *et al.,* 2001; Ellis, 2000). In a study of the Western Cape, Wolfgang Thomas identified a range of rural non-farm activities that have potential of creating additional livelihoods that included, but were not limited to, small and large enterprises and informal sector activities (Thomas, 1996). The following will highlight what other livelihood sources Athlone households have:

**Remittances** have been defined by Adams as money and goods that are transmitted to households back home by people working away from their communities of origin (1991, cited in Maphosa, 2007). Literature has discussed the importance of remittances in rural livelihoods through migrant labour, and even recorded the growing role that they are playing in rural households (Rigg, 2005). Remittances have been documented to contribute to agricultural production in supplying inputs, and have emerged as an alternative form of financial relief for households and productivity. In a study of rural Mexican areas, Orozco (2003) concluded that remittances spent on the purchase of such inputs as land, cattle, and other agricultural equipment allowed rural households to continue these agricultural activities despite no apparent earnings from the agricultural production itself. Indeed, the history of rural-urban linkages and remittances' contribution to similar agricultural accumulation patterns and production in colonial Zimbabwe has been well documented (Phimister, 1993; Ranger, 1993).

**Box 7: Remittances as source of livelihoods at Athlone Farm**

"Older" households with children that are married and work in towns do not seem to receive cash remittances from their children either. One respondent laughed when I suggested that maybe the family got remittances from the son who was a teacher. He pointed out that teachers under paid, to the extent that they cannot remit anything. The son then arrived as I was carrying the interview with the father and the father said, *"This is the son who is the teacher. He has come here to look for food. I actually take care of him instead of him taking care of me."*

Another respondent, Mrs. Katsande also smirked when I suggested that she got groceries from her son-in-law since her daughter had just got married[1]. She shared that even though people say her daughter was married, she personally did not consider it a marriage. For her, "*varikungobika havo mapoto, kungogarisanawo zvavo*"- "living-in", since the son-in-law had not even paid "*tsvakiraikuno"*, the traditional "little" fee that is sent to in-laws to let them know that their daughter eloped and she is staying with his family. As it were, she occasionally helped her daughter and son-in-law by taking care of their son during the school holidays to ease their burden.

The fact that there are on average less households benefiting from remittances does not, however, limit their importance. They have contributed to the activities of the households that do receive them. Mr. Chadambuka's son bought him a heifer. Mr. Soka also reported receiving help from his son with seeds and fertilizer. Another farmer, Mr. Mukotami receives more from his family; both from the children and from his wife who manages her brother's shops. According to Mr. Chadambuka, in the absence of reliable government support, remittances from his son are the only way for him to acquire fertilizer for his farming- "*Dai pasina mwanakomana wangu, hataikwanisa kuwana chikafu mumunda*".

**Barter trading** is an important aspect of livelihoods in Athlone. Staying in the area allowed me to witness trading arrangements and the conditions under which some farm produce is traded and marketed to fulfil various family clothing and dietary needs. Trading patterns at Athlone also highlighted the gendered nature of access to resources and also reflects how the household is a site of gendered struggles for distribution of resources.

**Box 8: Gendered nature of trading patterns**

A trader passed by the **Murehwas**' homestead during an interview. She was selling clothes in exchange for grain and other farm produce. Mrs. Murehwa wanted a skirt which was to be traded with three buckets of maize grain. The husband insisted that they did not have enough in their stocks for her to purchase the skirt. The wife insisted that she would get the skirt since she worked so hard in the field and she directed her argument to me;

*"Mai Tadiwa, I have these cracks on my feet at such a young age and have nothing to show for it. I got these cracks from the tobacco crop last season and when he went to sale the tobacco at the floors he bought himself a work suit, gumboots and a scotch-cart and nothing for me. He buys groceries and says he bought for me yet he also eats the food. Now when I go back home (to the rural areas) people see me with these cracks and shabbily dressed; What for? I am getting the skirt".*

She later shared with me that she had arranged with the lady to leave the skirt. She would find ways of getting the maize to pay for the skirt either from the stock or from the maize that was in the field under irrigation to be harvested in November without her husband's knowledge.

At the **Mukotamis'** a trader passed by selling *tswanda, rusero*[1], washing baskets, and other reed household products. The wife showed interest and the husband told the trader that they did not have stock to buy with. He explained;

*"You know what? These traders get a lot of our produce. You have just asked me how much we harvested and I said two tonnes. I wouldn't be surprised if it was more. They (wives) start stealing from us when the produce is still in the field to trade for things. When we have the crop at the homestead and especially soon after harvesting and we still have plenty it's difficult to keep an audit so they take and trade. She thinks I don't know".*

These two highlight the importance of trading and the trading patterns in the area. Women trade in household clothing and food needs whilst men trade and buy investments into agricultural production and "bigger" assets like cattle, scotch carts, fertilizer and others. The two incidences also highlight the household as a site of gendered struggles for distribution of resources.

Trading patterns change over time depending on availability of produce. In the late season when there is more poverty, Athlone farmers reported that they could exchange for products for much less since traders coming to Athlone would be more desperate for food. They predicted that they could be able to purchase cattle for less than 5 tonnes of maize grain around the months of November and December when people from surrounding communal areas were more likely to have run out of the 2007-2008 yields. Mrs. Mapisa indicated that she was keeping tonnes of soy beans in anticipation of getting a better trading agreement for her to purchase a cow in October 2009.

**Table 12: Examples of marketing trade offs**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 ladies skirt | 3 bags maize grain |
| 14 bags fertilizer | 1 heifer |
| 2kg sugar | 1bag maize |
| 5 tonnes maize grain | 1 heifer |

These findings on barter trading in Athlone can be interpreted in various ways. Gillespie *et al.*, (1994) highlight that, one hundred and twenty years ago, most rural households in the United States sustained themselves by farming. While some agricultural products were sold for money on the open market, some were produced solely for household consumption or for bartering with neighbours. They highlight that in this social and economic context, the household, the community, and the economy were tightly bound-up with one another and that the economy was *embedded* in the social relations of the farm household and the rural community.

This was found to be typically so for Athlone households. Labour exchanges and bartering were also embedded in the everyday economic life in rural communities, all signifying the "economic embeddedness" of rural lives. The description of 18th century pre-capitalist rural America by Gillespie *et al.*, (1994) could easily be a description of Athlone households of 2008. It begs the question of whether Athlone households have gone back to the pre- capitalist mode of production. Society and production in Athlone could be interpreted as pre-capitalist as highlighted by these findings.

**Beer brewing** was identified as a source of income for African rural families in Bryceson (2002)'s studies. Athlone was, however, marked by the surprising absence of beer brewing as a cash generating activity. Enquiries revealed that residents got beer from neighbouring communal areas. When I went for the second fieldwork trip, my visit coincided with the Hanwa "*seven days*[12]" occasion. Mr. Hanwa had not mentioned beer brewing as a source of income. When I inquired about this with him he indicated that he had forgotten about it because he didn't consider it a substantial contribution to his resources. He justified brewing beer because he enjoyed entertaining and having people around him for company- *"kungounganirwawo"*. The

[12] The beer is known as "chiseven days" because the beer brewing process takes seven days for the beer to mature and be ready for consumption.

occasion is also important for social development and for building social relations. Mr. Hanwa's omission of the beer brewing opens the possibility that other households did not mention some activities during the enquiry as they did not consider them important sources of income. This includes, **cross border trading** even though no household reported it as an income generating activity. Mr. Murehwa highlighted at one time, he had tried the trading, he realised it was not worth it and the money earned from such ventures was not a lot to be considered a source of income.

Another situation that confirms this analysis is that when I went for my second field trip, Mr. Murehwa he had gone for **cross border trading**. When he came back he said he had gone to Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique to try and find some income generating activity during the post harvest period. He had not mentioned any such activities as possible income sources when I had talked to him in an earlier discussion. He said he hadn't mentioned it because he had only just heard from a friend of the possibilities of earning extra income in these countries. He, however, thought that it wasn't worth it and the money earned from such ventures was not a lot to be considered a source of income.

There are some activities that were not included by respondents as income generating activities that I observed in the periods that I was in the field. **Moulding** bricks, **cutting and supplying** thatching grass and **thatching** of huts are activities that members in Athlone engage in. The analysis of such activities is complicated. Workers of a family may not constitute membership to a household by other definitions since they are not "biological" family members. However, this study included resident workers as part of the household. As such their activities are crucial if they contribute to the livelihood outcomes of the families that employ them.

An example is of Mr. Foromani's worker, Samutoko. Samutoko is well known for his craftsmanship; mending shoes, building and thatching. He has engaged in reciprocal arrangements with different people in Athlone and the exchange value of his labour contributes to Foromani's household. He thatched Mrs. Mapisa's hut in exchange for thatch grass which he needed for the Foromani kitchen and bathing shed. As such the research recorded such activities as contributing to household activities and livelihood sources.

## 4.3 AGRICULTURAL AND INFRUSTRUCTURAL SUPPORT IN ATHLONE

Literature concerned with the benefits of land reform has discussed the conditions under which livelihoods can be enhanced through the distribution of land. According to Ghose (1983), much depends on what follow-up policies are pursued by government to support land reform beneficiaries. Other scholars also contend that the provision of land alone does not lead to enhancement of livelihoods (Cousins, 2007). Dorward *et al.*, (2004) postulates that appropriate and high yielding agricultural technologies, enhancement of local markets offering stable output prices, seasonal finance for purchased inputs, secure and equitable access to land, infrastructure to support input, output and financial markets are key determinants of productivity in resettled areas. This is the range of provisions that constitute an agrarian reform process.

These are strongly associated with state investment in infrastructure, research and extension, plus interventions such as price stabilisation, input supply, guaranteeing procurement, and credit subsidy. In Asia (Taiwan, China, South Korea, Vietnam and Japan) where land reform was largely successful, the re-distributive land reform process was in all cases, complemented by other policies, which increased the access of small farmers to markets and inputs and improved production incentives (Griffin *et al.*, 2001).

There is also room, as pointed out in the literature, to involve private enterprises in supporting smallholder farmers to increase their productivity (Dzingirayi, 2003; Duma & Thomas, 2008; Rusike and Dimes, undated), through mechanisms such as contract farming. As such contract farming has commanded a lot of attention in discussions about the opportunity it offers and the constraints that may affect its contribution to smallholder farming. According to Duma and Thomas (2008), contract farming offers the opportunity to new farmers to sell their produce to agribusiness at predetermined terms and prices. The University of Stellenbosch Business School found out that contract farming enjoys wide acceptance and support from its key participants - small-holder farmers, agribusiness and the government. It also fills the gap for smallholder farmers in market knowledge access, advanced and improved production technologies, technical advice and credit provision (Duma and Thomas, 2008).

Duma and Thomas (2008) contend that contract farming assures agribusiness of stable supplies of agricultural produce for processing and export. It is particularly relevant for the Zimbabwean government which has not been able to provide relevant and sufficient services to the resettled farmers. According to Dzingirayi (2003), "contract farming, lays at the door of the farmer, seeds,

fertilizers, chemicals, and a ready market" which, in short, are all the essentials for commercialization of agriculture (2003; 6).

Given this literature background on the importance of both government support and the potential that lies in private agribusiness partnerships with smallholder farmers through contract farming, the following section is aimed at discussing how far Athlone beneficiaries have accessed different government and private support mechanisms and the factors that mediate this access. It will particularly discuss access to markets, inputs, extension services and financial resources. It will also review how the access, or lack thereof, to these services affects Athlone households' agricultural activities and by extension, their livelihoods. The section will also review the success of government support mechanisms and the contract farming arrangements between Athlone farmers and Banwax, the only agribusiness company with established relations with Athlone. This essentially is a review of how far land redistribution in the FTLRP has transformed the agrarian economy.

### 4.3.1 Government support

Access to inputs, seeds and fertilizer, is very important to yields in Athlone as discussed earlier. The main sources of input support in Athlone are the GMB, AGRIBANK, Banwax, Maguta and AREX. This analysis will first look at the relations that Athlone farmers have with the various government arms of support. These relations are based on the Athlone farmers' own understanding of what they are supposed to get as support, regardless of what the policy pronouncements of the government agents say. This is important because the farmers' own understanding is what determines whether or not they access the provisions. A particular question in the discussions was whether or not respondents had applied for any support and the reasons why they would not have applied. This was asked in order to ascertain the levels of awareness of respondents to the support mechanism.

Respondents showed that they had not accessed Agribank loans as individuals. However, the irrigation scheme, Mushawatu, had managed to get a loan from Agribank for the purchase of the irrigation pipes. The experience during the application process for this loan seems to have affected and influenced Athlone farmers' approach towards Agribank. It emerged in the process that Agribank needed collateral in terms of assets for accessing loans.

Mr. Soka recounted that when they were applying for facilities to acquire irrigation pipes, out of the initial 72 households, only two people, including him, had title to their houses in Harare, which could be used as collateral. The rest did not have and the permits that they held for land in Athlone, suggests that they had no full ownership rights despite their residence. An understanding of collateral was also problematic in the discussions with the community because some withdrew from the scheme, afraid that their little assets, particularly cattle, would be confiscated if the scheme defaulted on servicing the loan. This need for collateral was considered problematic by the people in Athlone. As such, they all reflected a reluctance to apply for Agribank loans since they did not have collateral.

In an interview with Mr. Chakawa (Interview on 2/09/08) of Agribank he explained to me a different process for A1farmers. There is a facility for A1 farmers, which does not require collateral. According to him, the only reason why collateral was required for Athlone was because of the value of the loan they required which was considered high. This shows a lack of awareness amongst Athlone residents of the provisions that give them access to Agribank loans.

Whilst this may be so, one farmer, Mr. Foromani, related that he had no success in accessing Agribank loans. This was particularly because he could not even help with the information to facilitate his application. Every time he had visited Agribank offices in Marondera, no one was willing to help with the proper information and he kept pestering until he eventually got the application forms. When he applied, it took 6 months for him to a response that his application had been turned down. No one was able to explain to him what he had fallen short on since he had submitted all the required documentation, including his certificates of sale to GMB. This shows that loans and information about loans is very difficult to access.

Athlone farmers have received seed from the GMB. The arrangement is that farmers will get seed at the beginning of the season and are obligated to sell their produce to the GMB after harvest. They either transport their produce themselves or, in some seasons, GMB will collect from a central point for all surrounding farms. GMB has also been an intermediary office for both the Reserve Bank and Maguta. It has also often been responsible for distributing input loans to farmers in Athlone on behalf of Maguta and the Reserve Bank. They are also responsible for collecting and keeping records of farmers' production and deliveries to the national granaries. Farmers in Athlone are not very clear on the position of GMB though they understand the need to keep a track record of delivery to GMB. Every farmer reported selling

some part of their produce to GMB, as they were aware of government pronouncements of future audits on farmers which would be used to evaluate whether beneficiaries were productive and deserving of the land they had been given under the FTLRP.

Farmers in Athlone have also received seed from Maguta, others have received fertilizer and, in 2005, two farmers received tractor tillage support from Maguta. The agreement for Maguta is that farmers will sell produce to GMB which Maguta will then acquire from GMB. There were however reports that in other seasons, Maguta had been responsible for purchasing grains straight from the farmers. Mr. Soka said he had sent his produce to GMB even though he was supposed to send it to Maguta because, he didn't know the procedure and he didn't want to end up stranded with produce without transport.

Maguta was considered by respondents a "poor" scheme. Inputs, particularly fertilizer, were distributed late. The supply of inputs (when there is provision for) is very haphazard and disorganised. This was confirmed by the AREX key informant who stated that there is no consultation between the people who are responsible for purchasing implements and AREX officers. There is no co-ordination with AREX who are supposed to be the experts to get calendars of when and what is needed at different times. In addition the availability of inputs is also a major constraint, according to the AREX informant.

A further complication is also a form of political expediency where the distribution of inputs is also used for political reasons, and benefactors may not be overly concerned with the timing and sustainability of input provisions. In some cases people receive inputs at a time when they are no longer needed and they end up stocking them up for the next season. In some circumstances, people who receive fertilizer and seeds may end up selling them or diverting the use for which the fertilizer would have been meant. This is the case were farmers may receive fertilizer for wheat but they end up keeping it for next season's maize crop and essentially affecting the levels of projected wheat yields.

Given the above scenarios, one should be cautious of reports that assert that new smallholder farmers do not produce because they sell the inputs that are provided, since that may not be the main problem. Instead the major constraint seems to be the shortage of fertilisers and the poor timing of their distribution. One can argue that if there were enough inputs on the market for

farmers to purchase or to get as government support, then there would be no need to divert such inputs to the parallel market.

### 4.3.2 Marketing, transport and communication

Whilst Athlone farmers engage in agricultural production to various levels of success, the study also interrogated the effect of lack of **markets, transport** and **communication** to livelihood enhancement for the farmers. The preceding chapter discussed the transport and communication networks in Athlone. It has been highlighted that these are insufficient in facilitating the activities of farmers. This section discusses how the situation in Athlone affects farmers' productivity.

The absence of transport and communication networks limits the delivery of inputs and farm implements for farmers. This was reflected by farmers and is discussed in more detail in the following chapter. Farmers face difficulties in marketing their produce particularly for tobacco farmers. Tobacco is only marketed in Harare and the seed input is also sold there. Marketing is a challenge, not necessarily due to transport limitations. The last season, 2007 to 2008 was particularly problematic due to the shortage of cash. Farmers recounted difficulties in the process of getting their produce to the market and finally getting their payments. The Hanwa narrative below best illustrates the transport and marketing challenges affecting Athlone farmers.

**Box 9: Marketing narrative:**

*Mr. Hanwa and some from Athlone pooled in resources to hire a lorry to take their bales of tobacco to Harare. The cost of hiring the lorry was too high but the group had no choice. When they got to the auction floor, their truck was around number 150 in line. The traffic moved so slowly that they were in the queue for three days before they got to the gate. It took another 2 days until they got their tobacco on the floors and a day for the auctioning. In the meantime, they were sleeping along the wall of the auction floors. Since they didn't have money when they went there, they kept tabs with women who establish cooking businesses to cater for tobacco farmers. For the whole week they were waiting for the payment, they were running credit for food. The cheques for their payment took 2 days to be written and when it was finally handed over, the next battle was how to get it changed for him to get his money. Lucky for him, he had a nephew with businesses who gave him cash for his cheque amount. He also managed to negotiate for his friends to get cash from his nephew. Others who are not so lucky go to other people who charge between 10-25 percent interest on cheques to get cash.*

Mr. Hanwa's narrative highlights the high cost that farmers pay to market their produce. The interest deductions on cheques are also very high for farmers who do not have much to spare. Mr. Hanwa also pointed to how vulnerable farmers are, due to the circumstances of the marketing environment. Besides paying for food, he jokingly made a rejoinder about some of the farmers also having to pay for other services received during the course of the week. He related

that some farmers who did not sleep outside would get accommodated by prostitutes who also take the chance for "business" opportunities from these farmers. Others also blow the money on alcohol after getting paid or some would also have run an expensive food bill during the week awaiting their transaction. More farmers ended up going back home with far much less than they would have been paid for their produce.

Mr. Hanwa's narrative and discussion shows that there are a lot of dynamics at the floors that highlight the complexities in the marketing of produce and that affect, in the final analysis how much farmers take home. This could also be linked to Mrs. Murehwa's sentiments about her husband's refusal to buy her a skirt when she had suffered with the crop. Husbands seem to have the power and opportunity to dispose and use tobacco money in ways wives may not be aware of. Mrs. Murehwa also indicated that she didn't even know how much exactly they had got from the tobacco crop. These findings confirm Guyer and other scholars' analysis of households as sites for gendered decision making struggles (Guyer, 1981; Mayoux, 2004). Mayoux, 2004). Mayoux, 2004). Mayoux, 2004).

### 4.3.3 Attitudes and views- review of government support by Athlone farmers

This section is aimed at presenting the attitudes and views of Athlone farmers to government mechanisms of support. Information emerging from discussions about access to government support pointed to a general feeling amongst Athlone residents that whilst there seems to be government support available, the residents of Athlone felt they did not get it due to a variety of reasons. Some pointed out that they never got information on time. They would only get the word that inputs like fertilizer or seeds and diesel, had been delivered at Maggi after some days. By the time they sent their representatives there, they would be told that the supplies were finished. This happened even in cases where allocations come and are supposed to be allocated per ward or farm. Respondents attributed the problem to different reasons. Others felt that because the farms are too big and far apart, communication would be a natural problem. Others, however, felt it was a deliberate excuse that those responsible for allocation used.

Some also suggested that the problems facing Athlone had to do with their weak political influence as compared to the farmers of Maggi. This is because Maggi is a farming block in which a lot of influential people have been allocated A2 plots. The senator, Member of Parliament for Murehwa and members of the ZANU PF Murehwa District Central Committee all have farms close to Maggi. According to Athlone farmers, this is the reason why Maggi was

chosen as the distribution point and also why all inputs benefit the people close to the "big" people.

According to Mrs. Chakafa "*vekuMaggi vanodya nemashefu"*- "the people at Maggi eat with the big bosses". In another case, Vice-President Mujuru donated two tractors, which were supposed to be allocated between the two districts which Maggi and Athlone separately fall in. However, after the Vice-President left, getting the other tractor proved a problem and it was never given to the Athlone district. There are also other allegations of people in Maggi getting more fertilizer than they need in their farms and using the fertilizer for payment for labour. This is not in line with the stipulated conditions of the RBZ for input support as outlined in chapter 2 and it seemed that there were no mechanisms of enforcing adherence by farmers to conditions set.

These findings support literature on the importance of social capital. According to Bebbington (1999) social capital as the vital endowment in influencing the extent to which rural people access resources important to build sustainable livelihoods. Athlone residents seem to have weak social networks to facilitate their access to inputs and other government support facilities. They are also not organised strongly to make their demands on the political structures and government institutions to improve their access to government support.

Whilst government support, as highlighted earlier, has been documented to be crucial to support smallholder production, Vengroff & Farah point out that other scholars have considered the possibility that "government involvement in the provision of agricultural inputs may be dysfunctional or at least far from optimal in promoting change" (1985; 76). This is essentially because the provision of inputs for agricultural production is likely to suffer the same bureaucratic "pathologies" that typically affect African rural development. These include political interference, ineffectiveness of means-targeting, sizable leakages, procurement and distribution delays, and inadequate farmer training that reduce the effectiveness of the package (Rusike & Dimes; undated). Similar limitations are also evident in the mechanisms that have been instituted by the government for distributing agricultural support since the beginning of the FTLRP as ascertained from the experience of Athlone farmers.

The main problems that can be drawn through an analysis of Athlone residents' access to government support include, an inflated bureaucracy evidenced by four government departments having the responsibility of distributing services; the RBZ, GMB, Maguta and AREX. There is

an obvious duplication of responsibilities, and blurred lines of accountability and responsibility which have both resulted in inefficient delivery of services as well as giving room for corruption. This is evidenced by reports by Athlone residents that when they go to GMB to access certain products they are often referred to another authority, either to AREX or the Reserve Bank. Residents are also not very sure from whom they get different support as all the government departments have at some point helped with seed, fertilizer or diesel.

There is also lack of co-ordination evidenced by an instance when residents in Athlone reportedly gave their maize to GMB and two days later the Reserve Bank buyers also came into Athlone to get maize. This is confusing for the farmers who would sell to either GMB or Reserve Bank, leaving one to wonder who keeps their track record of productivity to secure more inputs for the next season as stipulated by the policy on support discussed in Chapter 2.

Athlone farmers have also pointed to the high incidence of corruption affecting the distribution of government support and their access to inputs, fertilizer and diesel. They pointed to allegations that influential people, particularly in the neighbouring Maggi farm, were accessing all conduits of government support (AREX, GMB, Maguta and AGRIBANK) for various implements and inputs. Mr. Chirenje[13] related how at one time when he went to Maggi, one of the workers at a plot pointed todifferent heaps of fertilizer in the storeroom and said;

"*This heap is from AREX, this one from GMB and we are waiting for the delivery from Maguta".*

The fertilizer would be reportedly be used to purchase cattle or would be resold to these new farmers next season at very high prices. Mr. Chirenje reported that last season he had bought a bag of fertilizer from a farmer in Maggi at a price he was sure was 20 times the original price.
Mr. Soka also recalled the following to support allegations of corruption;

*"Corruption is rife. People are not honest. Government support is not getting to the people. I know about government support because I visit the towns and watch on T.V and see the Reserve Bank Governor giving statistics that indicate that stuff/goods are here to benefit everyone and being distributed. One day I came back and asked "vakomana, makawana fertilizer"- guys did you get fertilizer, but no one had even heard about it. By*

[13] Discussion with Mr. Chirenje on 26/ 01/08

*the time we went to Maggi, we found out they had distributed everything and the fertilizer was finished yet not even one person from Athlone had received."*

Another incidence of corruption involved his son and friend who had pooled in their money and purchased fertilizer (1 tonne) from GMB. Every time they enquired if the fertilizer had been delivered for them to pick it up, they were told that it had still not been delivered. When it eventually got delivered and they went to get their purchase, they realised four people had receipts for that same fertilizer and none of them got it. *"Who audits GMB?"* was his main question.

### 4.3.4 Private support for Athlone farmers: the case of Banwax

Banwax is a private, Harare-based seed, stock feed and cooking oil producing company, which operates in Athlone, providing seed and other inputs to farmers. According to Duma and Thomas (2008), contract farming entails that farmers grow crops for and with the assistance of agribusiness. Contracts are negotiated in advance stipulating agreed purchase terms, type of crop, quantity, quality and price. Farmers may receive such support as guaranteed markets, seeds and other inputs like pesticides, weed killers and transport for produce. Farmers can be contracted individually or in groups. Some agribusinesses are involved in the monitoring of the crop throughout the planting, up to harvesting stages.

Typically, the relationship between willing Athlone farmers and Banwax is that Banwax gets into a contract with an individual farmer for the supply of fertilizer, seed, pesticides and other chemicals. Banwax is obligated to, on top of providing inputs, help the farmer throughout the season from all the stages of planting, weeding and harvesting, providing expert advice on a per-need basis of each individual farmer with whom they have a contract. Banwax then buys from contracted farmers and also from others not necessarily contracted by the company. An estimated 40 percent of farmer's produce is taken annually by Banwax in lieu of the inputs provided.

A number of issues came out of the interrogation of the relationship between Banwax and the farmers pointing to different understandings and potential limitations to the contractual arrangements between Banwax and individual farmers. According to Duma and Thomas (2008) and Rusike and Dimes (undated), the experience of contract farming has documented some successes for all parties involved in such ventures though some problems have been drawn from the practice of contract farming. Power imbalances have proved problematic leading to the

exploitation of farmers by agribusiness. Agribusinesses have reported problems with side-marketing where contracted farmers market their produce to other entities defaulting on the contractual obligations. Farmers also deliver produce late and wrangles have been rife over prices where farmers demand prices higher than the originally agreed prices and also failure to deliver agreed quantities.

In Athlone similar problems were also discovered. Farmers raised some dissatisfaction with Banwax's pricing system. There were allegations from farmers that Banwax did not set up prices in the contracts. It would, however, buy from farmers before they had a chance to get information on other prices particularly being paid by GMB. Banwax price was always lower giving the farmers a feeling that they were treated unfairly. According to Banwax, this was the wrong interpretation by farmers of the situation. Pricing is largely dependent on the time the farmer brings produce to Banwax, which would mean that at times prices would fluctuate in a season. This is typical to the broader economic environment in Zimbabwe were producer prices change three times in a month. In the last season, Banwax reported that its price had started off higher than the GMB price for farmers who sold earlier. Banwax tries to adjust prices according to inflation yet farmers looking in retrospect do not consider that.

Banwax as a service provider also experiences problems with the farmers it contracts. Farmers reportedly get seed which they then sell to neighbours. This affects yields to some extent. Banwax has its field officers who monitor the crop and at harvest time will evaluate and work with the farmer to verify the reason for crop failure. Justified crop failure is not offloaded on the farmer. The field officer can advice and predict well in advance what level of crop is to be expected even when the crop is still in the fields. They also monitor conditions to predict reason for crop failure whether through too much water or little water. The major problem they have had has been with farmers maliciously withholding produce, selling off inputs and side-marketing.

Even though Banwax is a contractor, it faces similar challenges as the farmers it contracts. These include cash shortages, which restrict how it pays farmers and affects its relationships with contracted farmer, fertilizer access as well as transport problems due to diesel shortage. In the season (2007-2008), a lot of farmers defaulted on payments because some refused to find their own transport to take produce to Banwax depots that are in surrounding farms. The nearest for Athlone farmers is at Exeter which is not too far to use an ox- drawn cart yet farmers were not

cooperative. By the time Banwax could secure transport some farmers were pointing out that they had not yielded much; even though Banwax field officers had on record their prediction of produce from respective farmers, others said they had gotten into family problems and since Banwax had not come to get "their" crop on time, they had sold to raise funds for whatever problems befell their families.

Some farmers were not satisfied with the nature of contractual agreements. One particular farmer, Mr. Foromani pointed out that he would have been happy to keep a copy of the contract so that he could go back to it when it came to paying up. Respondents who had never been engaged by Banwax were often discouraged by the experiences of those who have had loans from Banwax. Hence, Mrs. Mapisa considered a waste of time getting into a contract with Banwax since the conditions from Banwax were not very favourable. In the times that she has been forced to get into the contract, the main reason has been the need for fertilizer.

Investigation of the issue of contracts with the buyer reflected that whilst the farmers did not get a copy each of the contract with Banwax, the procedure each year was that at a community meeting, which Banwax would call for at the beginning of the season, the contract was discussed and all conditions set out and obligations discussed. A block committee made up of seven elected members from the farm was responsible for signing this broader contract on behalf of the farmers. The committee is responsible for representing farmers to officers and to head office. It also helps with the collection and distribution of implements. The constitution of the committee and a copy of the contract are kept by the chairman and vice-chairman. Individual farmers, with this contract in mind, would sign upon receiving the inputs tying themselves to the obligations set out in the contract.

This has been documented by Rusike and Dimes (undated) as the normal procedure for contract farming arrangements According to them, farmers are approached as a group in order to safeguard investments in inputs and training, and use peer pressure to monitor each other. The group committee reduces transaction costs of communication with farmers, delivering inputs and collecting outputs. Making an individual contract with every farmer in the group obligates the farmer to repay credit, reduces free-riding, and facilitates contract enforcement through the courts (Rusike and Dimes, undated). Even though Banwax has not taken any legal action against defaulters, it is an action that has been considered and which they say might be used in future, according to the Banwax buyer, Mr. Gan'a. It has been documented elsewhere, however, that

prosecuting defaulting smallholders is a major challenge which in most situations does not lead to recovery of loans (Duma & Thomas, 2008).

Whilst the contract arrangements that Rusike and Dimes (undated) reviewed have worked out well, in Athlone complications have arisen in the understanding of the origins of the contract as well as some other mitigating factors. Some farmers alleged that Banwax keeps the contract and when it comes to paying for delivered produce, farmers are told they agreed to conditions that they do not remember. According to Gan'a, the reason why some farmers said were not aware of the contract conditions was that a number of them would not attend initial meetings and only got interested when it came to inputs. This could be true in the case of Mr. Foromani who is an "absentee" farmer, staying in Zvishavane where he works only, coming to Athlone occasionally and would be more likely to miss such initial meetings. The other reason was that people get excited about seemingly "free" things and do not reflect that they will need to pay back. When it then comes to paying back they are not as happy as they were when they received "free inputs"[14].

Reviewing its performance in contracting farmers, the buyer was of the opinion that the company had been successful. What determined its success and levels of contracting was availability of seed on the market. In a season where soy seed was easy to get on the market, farmers would be less likely to get into a contract with Banwax. The main drawback, however, was fertilizer, which most farmers found more difficult to acquire for themselves. In such instances Banwax would be able to attract and contract more farmers, though the need for fertilizer also posed the challenge that contracted farmers would reallocate the fertilizer to other crops in their fields affecting the soy bean yield. Other farmers also specialized in other crops and since Banwax only supported soy beans production, this naturally excluded farmers who were not interested in soy beans. To hedge against such practices, the company has an insurance policy to protect itself from likely losses of investment due to farmers defaulting.

Generally, there is a high level of mistrust between Banwax and farmers. The University of Stellenbosch Business School study found that there was a relationship of trust between contractors and farmers, though they would vary from one contractor to another (Duma &

[14] Indeed during my stay and informal conversations I heard a lot of reference to "Banwax inopa mbeu dzemahara" Banwax gives free seed.

Thomas, 2008). This is largely not so in Athlone, as pointed in the discussion above. Farmers do not trust Banwax and some have opted not to get into contracts with Banwax due to the experiences of their neighbours. Price setting is a major problem since the runaway inflation in Zimbabwe makes it difficult for all parties to agree on a price before whilst negotiating the contract. Notwithstanding these difficulties, from Banwax's own analysis and its experience working with farmers in Athlone, there is potential for farmers to produce more. If inputs could be available, a lot of the farmers could increase their productivity. Mr. Gan'a's analysis was also that there were other farmers that were not very good with the farming business, who were struggling and for whom no level of support could help. This has implications for the analysis of the levels of support that should be extended to smallholder farmers.

### 4.3.5 Agricultural extension and support services

According to Dorward *et al.,* (2004), research and extension is one of the conditions for increased smallholder productivity. Indeed in the early phases of Zimbabwe's resettlement programme, a phase that has been typically beamed the smallholder production revolution (Rukuni and Eicher, 1997; Anderson, 2007), productivity amongst the smallholder farmer was increased due to a combination of hybrid maize varieties, mineral fertilizer, agricultural extension, agricultural credit systems, and subsidized producer prices. According to Kinsey (2002), in the early resettlement stages, extension services helped a lot for resettled farmers to improve on production technology. This section will discuss the provision of agricultural extension services to Athlone farmers.

In Athlone, there are two resident AREX staff members. Individual farmers can call the "*mudhumeni*[15]"- the AREX staff, to demonstrate on their farm and Banwax to also offer extension services to the farmers with whom it has contracts. Banwax staff in some instances extends its services even to those it has no contracts with. AREX staff conducts group demonstrations on the farm on planting of tobacco, soy beans and wheat, which are the new crops that farmers did not produce in their old home areas.

[15] This term loosely translates to the "door man" a term used in the early extension days to denote the practice of extension staff to go from door to door offering extension services and demonstrating on individual farms.

### 4.3.6 Access to and use of extension support in Athlone

Interrogation of the extent to which available extension services were adequate and efficient, and the extent to which Athlone farmers had access to extension support yielded interesting information. The interviews with farmers sought to capture their perceptions of the extension services they got in as far as such services could improve their farming and productivity. Respondents had varying degrees of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the AREX staff in Athlone.

Some respondents indicated that they did not bother to consult extension staff whom they considered young, inexperienced and with only theoretical knowledge and not practical knowledge of what they were supposed to teach farmers. One old farmer felt that "these young ones" could learn a lot about farming from him. Others also thought that the AREX staff, that had their own plots in nearby farms, was not serious about their jobs as they devoted more time in their own fields instead of doing their work. Some farmers, on inspecting the fields of these staff, and seeing how badly they were doing, were convinced that they had nothing to learn from the AREX staff.

There were, however, some farmers who held different opinions and had made use of the extension staff's expertise in ways that improved their yields. Mr. Chivizhe and Mr. Hanwa were the two most positive about the effectiveness of the AREX staff. The two have recorded good tobacco yields compared to the rest of the farmers that they may have made maximum use of the advice of the extension staff. They also pointed out that some farmers in Athlone were ignorant and would always think "they knew it all". They would only call the extension staff "*vawondonga"* after they had already done things the wrong way, by which time, the AREX staff would not be able to help. They felt these were the people who would go around saying that the AREX staff was inexperienced.

Whilst access to and use of extension services was clearly a matter of attitudes, there is some validity to the accusations raised by farmers about the ineffectiveness of AREX staff. Kinsey (2002) pointed that the problem of inexperience and untrained extension workers also plighted early resettlement stages. According to a UNDP report, the capacity of extension staff is too limited to provide new settlers with the intensive advice required at the initial stages of development under the FTLRP. The head of AREX in Macheke, Mr. Harufaneta, confirmed the

lack of expertise amongst staff, particularly staff with practical experience. He also pointed to a number of problems that plighted the department leading to inefficient and ineffective service provision.

According to Mr. Harufaneta, the main problem that has faced AREX as a department in general, has been the loss of experienced personnel. The down side to the FTLRP was that it opened up access to experienced AREX staff that saw that engaging in production for themselves would earn them more than they were getting formally employed in the department. This is the main reason for the understaffing in AREX. Another reason is cited by Pazvakavambwa and Hakutangwi (2006) who saw the confusion and the restructuring of the department as having led to some resignations and, in other cases, retirements. Athlone farm seems to have been more disadvantaged, particularly that it only received field staff in 2004, even though the department had tried to deploy extension staff in every farm that had been acquired for resettlement. Even when there was an extension officer at Athlone, he had to cover three farms, each with an average of 70 farmers. This is beyond the stipulated extension officer to farmer ration of 1:50 according to Mr. Harufaneta. The problem was further compounded by the fact that the officers did not have transport due to fuel shortage and general shortage of motor bikes that extension staff has traditionally used in Zimbabwe.

Salaries for extension staff are also very low, leading to low morale and the need for the extension staff to "diversify" their income sources in ways which took them away from their responsibilities. A typical scenario is that at the time of the study, Athlone farm did not have an extension officer. The one they previously had, had been fired because he was being subcontracted by Banwax to help "its" soya beans farmers. Others also diversified by putting more time in their own fields so that they could also get income from their crop sales. The reason why the staff of AREX had plots close to their stations was mainly acquiescence by the department, as an incentive for staff so that they would not resign and engage in farming fulltime, if there was no scope for them to engage in their own crop production. The department also acknowledged how important it was for staff to earn extra income from farming since it did not have a sufficient budget for increased salaries.

**Conclusion**

The first section of this chapter discussed the livelihood activities and strategies of Athlone residents. It highlighted that Athlone households rely predominantly on agricultural crop

production. Households mainly engage in maize, soy beans, ground nuts and tobacco farming. Maize and ground nuts are crops that are grown to meet household food needs and surplus is sold or kept to purchase labour to help in production. Surplus is also used to barter and trade for other household food and clothing needs. Soya beans also fulfils household food needs but is mostly sold for cash income. Tobacco is the main cash income earner for households that engage in its production.

A number of factors affect yields for Athlone farmers. Whilst land needs have been met through the provision of land under the FTLRP, rainwater, inputs-seeds and fertiliser, access to markets and transport and communication affect yields and enhancement of livelihoods in Athlone. Irrigated crop production in Athlone could have offered more opportunities for Athlone farmers. It has, however, been affected by organisational problems, lack of capacity and limited resources. As such irrigation's potential for increased productivity has not been realised and has not benefited livelihoods meaningfully.

Athlone households have shown to be different from the studies that have shown a more diversified livelihoods portfolio for rural households (Bryceson, 1999; Reardon *et al.,* 1998 cited in Barret *et al.,* 2001) as they households engage more in agricultural activities than non-farm activities. Whilst remittances are crucial in contributing to livelihoods, the majority of Athlone households do not receive any remittances. This, however, does not mean that remittances are not important. As highlighted before, this may be interpreted to reflect the demise of waged employment in Zimbabwe and to also highlight how precarious livelihoods are for those who do not have sources of remittances.

In the absence of such remittances, these findings also bring to the fore the centrality of agri-based livelihood activities for the livelihoods of the resettled communities. Households that receive remittances reported them as a source, not only for food needs, but also contributing to their crop production needs in supplying seeds and fertilisers. Other activities, trading, beer brewing and cross border activities have been discussed in this chapter. A range of other farm activities contributing to household livelihoods included moulding bricks, cutting and supplying thatching grass and thatching of huts. Whilst these may not lead to cash earnings, they nevertheless have exchange value that contributes to household livelihoods.

A central question that comes out of the findings on diversification of Athlone households was why they have not diversified in as much ways as has been characteristic of rural households in other literature (Bryceson, 1999; Bryceson, 2002; Barret *et al.,* 2001; Rigg, 2005; Ellis, 2000). Answering this question, according to Barret *et al.*, (2001), needs an analysis of what determines diversification. They postulate that diversification measures are directly linked to household asset stocks and the feasible activity choices faced by different households. It also depends on the availability of opportunities for nonfarm livelihood opportunities.

An analysis of Athlone households reflects huge limitations as far as assets for diversification are concerned. They lack both the financial capital and physical capital to diversify off farm to earn extra income. Barret *et al.,* (2001) argue that educational attainment proves one of the most important determinants of non-farm earnings, especially in more remunerative salaried and skilled employment. Greater physical access to market likewise consistently improves non-farm earnings opportunities, public services such as education, communication, and transport infrastructure matter significantly to participation in non-farm activities. These are assets that are noticeably limited for Athlone households and these are factors that can explain why Athlone residents have not typically diversified in meaningful ways to supplement their livelihoods. As such, Athlone households reflectively exist on the margins of a subsistent, pre-capitalist economy.

The second part of section has presented evidence of support that Athlone farmers have received from both government and private business, Banwax. It highlighted that Athlone farmers have not received sufficient support from government even though there are frameworks for provision of support to new farmers in the form of seeds, fertilizer, diesel and extension and support services as presented in Chapter 2. They have not received fertilizers and seeds to reliable and consistent levels; extension support, even when it is there, has also not been sufficient. Only a few members of the community have benefited from government diesel and tractors for tillage. The Mushawatu irrigation scheme, however, managed to secure a loan from Agribank to buy pipes for their activities. Banwax has supported farmers with inputs to varying levels of satisfaction.

The section also presented an analysis of the factors that have affected Athlone farmer's access to government support. Athlone farmers do not have the political capital to enhance access to government support. A clear comparison is used by the farmers themselves in their discussions

of the differential access and privileged position of their neighbours on Maggi farm. Other wider economic factors also determine the level of support Athlone farmers received. The country has experienced economic difficulties since 2000. This has affected availability of agricultural inputs and services provision. At a wider national level, shortage of cash, limited foreign exchange earnings and high inflation has limited the government's ability to support new farmers. Notwithstanding these wider socio-economic factors, political factors and corruption have also limited, even further, support to Athlone farmers.

Contract farming, a possible effective and efficient support mechanism, has not performed well in Athlone. Banwax, the agri-business company helping farmers in Athlone, also faces the challenges outlined above in the socio-economic environment of the country. This has limited its capacity to give sufficient and effective support to Athlone farmers. Added on to this are operational challenges that it has also encountered in its relations with Athlone farmers. The challenges have also meant limited benefits to contract farming. Extension support has been affected by broader socio-economic factors.

AREX, the extension agency, is riddled with budgetary constraints, loss of experienced technical staff and lack of transport limits its operations such that service provision in Athlone has been poor. Given the scenarios outlined, a conclusion has been drawn as far as evaluating how far government and private support has contributed to livelihood enhancement on Athlone and most importantly, how far the FTLRP has transformed the agrarian economy. There has been negligible support by government to farmers on Athlone. Scholars have pointed out that sufficient support is important for enhancing the livelihoods of land reform beneficiaries (Ghose, 1983; Griffin *et al.*, 2001; Cousins, 2007). In Athlone, the levels of production that farmers have managed, and the agricultural livelihoods they have derived, as described in this chapter, have been achieved in the absence of meaningful support.

## CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### Overview

The broad aim of this research was to explore and capture the livelihood experiences of households resettled under the FTLRP. The research was specifically designed to look at how far the redistribution of land has led to any positive outcomes for resettled households, and to explore how their livelihood capabilities have changed since they have been resettled. Beneficiaries to the programme, resettled in Athlone Farm of Mashonaland East District presented the case study to interrogate the key questions posed by the study. This Chapter presents a broad summary of the research, first by discussing the context and background within which the research questions were framed. It also discusses the central questions and theoretical framework that was used for the analysis. It ends by discussing the findings and giving insights on the implications of the study to the broader discourse on land reform and livelihoods.

### 5.1 Summary of research background

Zimbabwe embarked on a land reform at Independence after a protracted liberation war struggle that had grievances over discrepancies on land ownership on its agenda. The new government of Zimbabwe inherited the colonial legacy of racial disparities in land ownership and production systems (Goebel, 2005; Thomas, 2003; Moyo, 1995; Moyo, 2005). As in other southern African countries, the land question in Zimbabwe centred on the form and consequences of unjust expropriation of land by colonial states (Sachikonye, 2005). Discrepancies in ownership of productive assets and production, and the political, social and historical imperative of land redistribution were widely acknowledged. Debates where, however, as they still are, polarised regarding the mode, scope and pace of implementation of the reform (Deininger & Binswanger, 1999; Moyo, 2000; Bernstein, 2005; Sachikonye, 2005).

This report has highlighted the major debates that influenced government policy in Zimbabwe before the FTLRP, which is the subject of this analysis. Whilst the government was faced with the challenge of addressing the disparities in land distribution as a social and moral imperative to address historical colonial injustices, thereby achieving equity and social justice (Kinsey, 1982; Weiner *et al.*, 1985), it also needed to create an environment conducive to economic progress. According to Bond & Manyanya (2002, cited in Van der Merwe, 2008), just like other developing African countries, the salient question that Zimbabwe needed to answer in this context, was how

to address the needs of the poor while also creating an environment where the economy could progress.

Other considerations in these debates centred on the viability, effectiveness and efficiency of small holder production compared to commercial production. Dominant discourse favoured the latter throughout the first 20 years of Zimbabwe's independence. Even though scholars argued against this popular view demonstrating that peasants were more efficient in their use of resources and that their production potential was affected by the unequal development of the sectors due to the colonial legacy that had favoured large scale commercial sector production (Weiner, *et al.*, 1985; 252, Moyo, 1985; Kinsey, 1982), land reform was influenced by consideration to promote large scale commercial production between 1980 and 2000. The few small holder projects that were implemented were insignificant in addressing the peasant challenges of landlessness, and overcrowding in communal areas. Commercial production was promoted to spur on industrial growth through back-ward and forward linkages between the sectors. This orientation to land reform affected the pace and form that land reform took. By, the late 1990's, when large scale invasion of commercial farming land began, land transfers to the majority were necessary and long overdue (Bond, 2008). The experience of 20 years of reform programmes had not succeeded in elevating the lives of the peasants.

This research was anchored on the background of this history of land reform in Zimbabwe and the FTLRP of 2000 and 2002, and its consequent debates. The programme has demonstrably affected the socio-economic wellbeing of the country. According to Richardson (2004) agricultural production has plummeted since the programme was initiated in 2000 that by 2004 it had dropped by 30 percent. Contraction of the agricultural sector also saw the manufacturing sector and the whole economy shrinking by 15 percent by 2003 (Richardson, 2004). Unfavourable economic policies have forced manufacturing companies to shut down. Critical reviews of the FTLRP and mainstream media have focused on analysing its impact on aggregate economic indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (Richardson, 2004) and the above highlighted considerations. This research is, however, based on the premise that there is also need to consider its impact at household levels.

The broad aim of this research was to explore and capture the livelihood experiences of households resettled under the FTLRP. It used a case study of Athlone Farm households in Murehwa District to interrogate how far the redistribution of land has led to positive outcomes

for resettled households, and to explore how their household capabilities have changed since they have resettled in Athlone farm. The study population was made up of 32 households and interviews were carried out with 27 of them since the other five did not stay permanently in Athlone but had hired help working on their plots. Athlone farm was chosen for this study Athlone, particularly because Murehwa District is not very different from other prime agricultural zones in Zimbabwe. It was also chosen due to its availability as a case study, given the difficulty of access to many rural areas in Zimbabwe during the time of the 2008 elections.

The study used a qualitative approach in the collection and analysis of data. The researcher used this approach due to its strength in providing data that one would not be able to access using quantitative approaches like questionnaires. The study also used the method of triangulation to verify data from different sources. In-depth, unstructured interviews with household members and with key informants were carried out. In addition, observation and secondary documents were also used for data collection.

In terms of the demographic features of the respondents of the study, more women, fifty six percent, than men forty four percent were interviewed. Athlone has the majority of the families in married structures. Twenty four of the respondents were married, two of the single respondents were widowed and one male respondent was single. Households in Athlone showed a trend of young wives, as reflected by the age distribution, since most of these wives were second wives. Results of the study population and the households that were used as the unit of analysis highlighted that Athlone households are made up of single family units.

Families had an average of three children. It also emerged in the research process that the age groups for the households with less than four children were composed of young kids below the age of 10. Households were thus grouped as either "young" or "old". "Young" households have very young kids, on average between one and three children under the age of 10. These "young" households are typically families that were started in Athlone, or younger families who might have just married between two and three years before *"jambanja*". Some would also be cases of older husbands who married younger wives after settling in Athlone. Seventy eight percent of the households were "young". "Older" households have children that are older than 18 years of age, some of these children with their own families.

### 5.2 Synthesis of key findings

The study was largely informed by the sustainable livelihoods framework which was employed to interrogate the livelihoods of Athlone households after the provision of one key livelihood asset –land through the FTLRP. The basic tenets of the framework are that **sustainable livelihoods framework** as expounded by DFID. The livelihoods framework offers a way of thinking about livelihoods that helps order complexity and makes clear the many factors that affect livelihoods. It also presents there are five main factors that affect people's livelihoods, and there are typical interrelations between them that affect livelihood outcomes. The framework is a people-centred analysis that begins with simultaneous explorations of people's assets, their objectives (the livelihood outcomes they are seeking) and the livelihood strategies they employ to achieve these goals. Land reform was defined in the study as a process that entails changing the way in which land is held, usually moving from an inequitable land holding regime to a more equitable one. The sustainable livelihoods framework was used to interrogate whether or not, and how, the livelihood capabilities and opportunities of Athlone farmers were enhanced by the provision of land, as one of many assets needed for securing livelihoods.

The findings of this study highlight key contributions to the research question. Evidence presented in the research findings has shown that Athlone farmers have achieved increased food self-sufficiency at household level. None of the households reported insufficient grains in a season. They, however, showed limited potential to produce more than needed until the next season after satisfying the household food needs and exchanging for other needs. Athlone households have also contributed to food and grain needs beyond the immediate family as they remit their agricultural produce to the networks of households, kin and families. Through labour exchange arrangements between Athlone farmers and surrounding communal areas, they have also contributed to food provision in the communal areas. The provision of land as an asset has thus, only to this extent, improved household food self-sufficiency.

The findings have also highlighted that land was provided as a key natural asset for agricultural production to all respondents. **Natural capital** constitutes the natural resource stocks from which resource flows and services useful for livelihoods are derived. According to DFID, natural capital is clearly essential to those who derive all or part of their livelihoods from resource-based activities (farming, fishing, gathering in forests, mineral extraction, etc.). The provision of land extended space for habitation to families that were otherwise homeless. Such families, like the Katsande family, who did not have anywhere to stay by the time the FTLRP started viewed land

as an asset, not just to earn a livelihood out of, but also providing for habitation. They pointed to the provision of land as the most important aspect of the FTLRP. They considered themselves destitute before the FTLRP and their review was that they were better off in Athlone. Other families that were feuding with their kin saw provision of land under FTLRP as extending, not only geographical, but social space too, between themselves and their feuding family members.

The provision of land also helped some beneficiaries to acquire some assets they did not have before they resettled, or that they would not have been able to accumulate in the areas they previously stayed. Respondents that had been staying in towns, and those that did not have land in their rural homes, took up the opportunity to acquire cattle, scotch carts, ploughs and other farm implements. Land, however, on its own cannot be sufficient as a livelihood resource without access to other capital assets (Kepe & Cousins, 2002). Given the lack of, and limited levels of support highlighted in the preceding discussion, the central question to land and agrarian reform and livelihoods is how far the provision of land can achieve the full potential of enhancing livelihoods.

Scholars have contended that without follow up services, the provision of land alone cannot assure livelihoods. The sustainable livelihoods framework highlights that land is only one asset amongst many others which households need to acquire positive outcomes. Land provided under the FTLRP, though necessary, in its own has reflectively been insufficient to secure achievement of positive livelihood outcomes for Athlone farmers. This is very evident from findings in this study. Whilst beneficiaries to the FTLRP have gained access to land, this research uses the livelihoods framework to look evaluate how beneficiaries,' livelihoods have either been enhanced or inhibited.

Athlone farmers have limited access to other assets important to secure positive livelihood outcomes. The farmers evidently lack the social capital needed to command and access resources that are provided under the government support schemes. According to the livelihoods framework, **social capital**, the social resources to which people have access, is a determinant of their ability to manage relationships and transactions in commercial markets, in social institutions and civil society, and with government agencies. Compared to Maggi farmers who have the social and political networks, Athlone farmers find themselves disadvantaged in this regard. They are not able to interact with the government agencies and institutions to access government support. They are also not well organised to negotiate their access as well as to make use of the

resources to which they have access. This is made evident by their failure to operate the irrigation system to productive levels.

**Physical capital** comprises the basic infrastructure (shelter, water supply, transport, communications, etc.) and manufactured goods (e.g. tools and equipment) necessary to maintain livelihoods. According to DFID a single physical asset may predispose an individual to generate multiple benefits. If someone has security over land, a natural capital, this may be translated into financial capital as they can use land, not only for direct productive activities but also as collateral for loans. The findings showed that Athlone residents lack adequate transport and communication networks to enable them to market their farm produce as highlighted in the findings. This limitation also affects the returns on their marketed produce as recounted by Mr. Hanwa in the marketing narrative. Whilst the government has put in place funding mechanism for Athlone farmers that do not require collateral, farmers have, however, still been disadvantaged by the lack of tenure security and lack of collateral to access credit.

An asset closely linked to collateral is financial capital. **Financial capital** denotes the financial resources - cash, credit or other liquid assets that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives. It can also include regular flows (pensions, remittances, state transfers) as well as stocks (savings, jewellery, even livestock), which can contribute to consumption as well as production. An analysis of the financial assets available to Athlone farmers reflects negatively. Whilst they produce surplus, none is marketed for cash since in general the whole Zimbabwean cash economy has crumbled. The farmers also do not have access to any credit facility to help them in their production. Remittances have also been highlighted in the findings to have been eroded as waged employment continues to fail to support rural livelihoods. Athlone farmers have however indicated potential to accumulate the stock in form of livestock, though the potential is limited by the inadequacies of the other assets as highlighted here.

**Human capital** is made up of the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that together, enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives (DFID). At both the household and community, human capital is determined by the amount and quality of labour available. The study found that the majority of respondents had secondary education and decidedly treated all the farmers as functionally literate. Training in other areas did not; however, seem to affect their production potential since there were no variations in the area between those who had training and those without. Whilst households

were severely limited in the labour that they could command at household level, they, however, showed that their labour needs could be met from other sources. Smallholder contribution to employment generation through the use of hired labour rather than family has also been documented (Lipton and Longhurst, 1989; Hazell and Ramasamy, 1991). Athlone households reflect similar assessments. This analysis of the human capital in Athlone reflects more positively. However, training, through provision of agricultural extension services, would greatly enhance their capabilities.

The findings collaborate evidence from other studies that show how, despite low capital investment, small-holder farmers have done "reasonably" well (PLAAS and IDS project; Moyo, 2006). Households have cleared land, planted as crops and invested in new assets, many hiring labour from nearby communal land as has been shown in Athlone. Through various labour exchange arrangements, new resettlement areas have been a source of food for impoverished communal areas. This is evidence that hopefully opens up more deliberate efforts in pursuing smallholder agriculture as a means for ensuring food self sufficiency at the household level as a first step towards national food security.

These tentative results, however, need to be balanced with a solid critique of the state's policy or lack thereof, during this phase. Sachikonye (2005) has contended that in spite of the comprehensive reach of the FTRP, there has not been any clearly articulated government land policy. The FTLRP has failed dismally in reforming structures to deliver more than just land. The government, instead, adopted a piecemeal approach to the land question. As Kepe and Cousins contend that " although necessary, land reform will only be effective if embedded within a broader programme to restructure the agrarian economy" (2002; 2) Among other things, the restructuring of the agrarian economy entails extending such services as access to inputs, equipment, draught power, and marketing outlets. Infrastructural support for such services as extension, training and marketing completes the package of what makes a successful reform programme. The FTLRP has not extended the programme beyond just the provision of land. The redistribution of land has not been integrated into a wider agrarian and development strategy. The consequences have reflected in the socio- economic meltdown that has characterised the Zimbabwean economy since the beginning of the programme to date.

With expanding credit and irrigation facilities, increasing availability of modern inputs and increasing demand for agrarian surplus for purposes of industrialization, an emergent rank of

independent peasantry has been seen as representing the potential for dynamic entrepreneurs who could act as the "agents of an incipient capitalism in agriculture" (Ghose, 1983; 25) though the caution is that new forms of inequality and social differentiation would emerge and lead to unfavourable effects for poorer beneficiaries. Ghose points out however, that such a process need not necessarily generate poverty. Evidence from Athlone shows the same. Whilst some people may have benefited more, for example, the beneficiaries at Maggi, Athlone residents are not necessarily worse off than their communal areas counterparts.

However, notwithstanding these seemingly positive results for households, caution is stressed in this analysis in terms of the sustainability of the livelihoods Athlone farmers are deriving. Whilst their inherent potential has been documented (Kinsey, 1992; Moyo, 1995; Rukuni and Eicher, 1997; Anderson, 2007; Leo, 1978), the socio- political framework within which the FTLRP was implemented greatly curtailed the full potential of the capacity of these farmers. The socio-political context in which reforms are implemented sets limits to the scope of reforms (Ghose, 1983). The socio- political and economic environment for Zimbabwe has not been conducive to sustained growth and productivity for beneficiaries. Immediate results or reactions to reforms do not necessarily foreshadow long- term consequences and much depends on what follow-up policies are pursued by government (Ghose, 1983). However, allowing some optimism would bring the conclusion that if the situation was to change, and favourable government policies were put in place, positive results could be achieved.

**Conclusion**

The limitation of this study was that it was not sufficiently rigorous to be the basis upon which a solid argument for poverty alleviation for rural households through the provision of land can be built. However, building on a more comprehensive methodology, other studies could interrogate the argument that has been postulated for the strength of land and agrarian reform for development and livelihood enhancement. Evidence from Athlone reflects the livelihoods that the provision of land has extended to beneficiaries. Scoones (2008), Sachikonye (2005) and the Livelihoods after Land Reform Programme have also reflected similar scope for improved livelihoods. The findings of this and other cited studies on the potential of resettled farmers should, however, be taken cautiously. The sustainability of small- holder production still needs to be ascertained. The challenge is that the production system is susceptible to the vagaries of the socio and political economy as evidenced by the FTLRP phase in Zimbabwe. As such,

sustainability can be very difficult to achieve without a sustained, favourable social, political and economic environment.

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