



Livelihoods after Land Reform in Zimbabwe

Working Paper 2

The Fast Track Land Reform Programme and
Livelihoods in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of
Households at Athlone Farm in Murehwa District

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The land reform that has unfolded in Zimbabwe since 2000 has resulted in a major reconfiguration of land use and economy. Over 7 million hectares of land has been transferred to both small-scale farm units (the A1 model) and larger scale farms (the A2 model). The land reform has had diverse consequences, and there is no single story of what happened and its implications.

The Institute of Development Studies (University of Sussex, UK), the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS, University of the Western Cape, South Africa), the African Institute for Agrarian Studies (AIAS, Harare), the Centre for Applied Social Sciences Trust (CASS Trust, Harare) and the Ruzivo Trust (Harare) came together to support a small grant competition aimed at generating new case study insights based on original and recent field research by young Zimbabwean scholars. The aim was to bring together solid, empirical evidence from recent research in the field. There were over 70 applicants, and 15 small grants were offered. The result is this Working Paper series. All papers have been reviewed and they have been lightly edited. In all cases however they remain work-in-progress.

Today policymakers are grappling with the question of ‘what next’? How can a new agrarian structure be supported, and a vibrant rural economy be developed? Yet such discussions are often taking place in a vacuum, with limited empirical data from the ground and overshadowed by misperceptions and inappropriate assumptions. We hope this series – together with the wider research work being undertaken by our organisations and partners – will help to enhance policy making through a solid evidence base.

As these papers clearly show, there have been highly varied impacts of the post-2000 land reform: on rural livelihoods, on agricultural production, on markets and the economy, on farm workers and employment, on the environment and on institutions and governance arrangements, for example. And these impacts have played out in very different ways in different places. These papers cover a range of themes and offer insights from across the country.

They add up to a complex picture, but one that offers key pointers for the way forward. They counter the excessively pessimistic picture often painted about Zimbabwe’s land reform, yet highlight important failings and future challenges. We very much hope that they are widely read and shared, with the insights made use of as Zimbabwe charts its way forward.

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The small grant competition was coordinated through the Livelihoods after Land Reform research programme (www.larl.org.za).

Summary

When Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980, it was faced with the challenge of addressing the colonial legacy of disparities in access to education, health, income, employment among others. This was coupled with other discrepancies in access to production resources, including land which was controlled by a minority of white farmers in commercial agriculture. In contrast, the majority of the black population eked an almost 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 challenges of how to implement large scale reforms that would address these discrepancies whilst maintaining earnings from crop production as the commercial crop production sector contributed to the country's Gross Domestic Product earnings.

Government policy from 1980 to 2000 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) between 2000 and 2002. 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 people. 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 at 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 were resettled at Athlone. Emphasis in the study was placed on capturing the livelihood activities of resettled households. 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 and grain needs and the needs of families and friends amidst the poverty and grain shortages that Zimbabwe has experienced since the FTLRP started. However, Athlone households' livelihoods are considerably vulnerable as they have only managed to survive at a subsistence level. The study concludes that whilst the FTLRP, provided land as an asset, land on its own has not been 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. A lot of potential, as shown in the finding of the study, thus remains untapped.

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Acronyms

AGRIBANK	Agricultural Bank of Zimbabwe
AGRITEX	Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services
AREX	Agricultural Research and Extension
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
PLAAS	Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
ZESA	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority
ZINWA	Zimbabwe National Water Authority
ZUPCO	Zimbabwe United Passenger Company

Introduction

At independence in 1980, the new government of Zimbabwe inherited the colonial legacy of racial disparities in land ownership and production systems (Moyo 2005). Land was divided more or less evenly between blacks and whites, although the latter constituted less than 5.5 percent of the population (Kinsey 1982; Moyo 1995). About 6600 white farmers retained 39 percent of the land, amounting to 15.5 million hectares of prime agro-ecological farmland, whilst one million black households remained consigned to 41.1 percent of the land, or 16.4 million hectares of marginal land (Weiner, *et al.* 1985; Moyo 1995). Large scale commercial farming land was in the more favourable areas in natural regions I, II, III whilst three quarters of the communal area land was in Natural Regions IV & V which are considered marginal and unsuited to cropping. Communal areas were heavily populated, and in 1981 it was estimated that they were accommodating 219, 000 households in excess of their carrying capacity (Kinsey 1982).

Between 1980 and 2000, various land reform programmes were implemented but they did not manage to deliver a balance between large- scale commercial land and communal land. When Zimbabwe embarked on a land reform programme in 1980, debates around the efficiency and effectiveness of large scale commercial production against small holder farming were topical guiding government policy before the FTLRP. It was popularly held that levels of productivity, patterns of land use, and overall methods of farming in the commercial farming sub-sector were “overwhelmingly” superior to those of local peasant farmers (Weiner, *et al.* 1985; 252). Scholars, however, 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 both in terms of land quality and quantity (Weiner, *et al.* 1985, 252; Moyo 1985; Kinsey 1982).

Whilst in the first twenty years of Zimbabwe’s independence there were discussions and considerations for livelihood enhancement through land redistribution, debates around the issues were marginal and hardly influenced policy framework. Even though many studies of this period showed that resettlement had impacted positively on livelihoods as well as agricultural potential of smallholder farmers (Kinsey 1982), the debate hardly affected the land policy making arena. The background to the advent of the FTLRP has been well-documented. The land occupations in 1997 and 1998 that culminated into the FTLRP (2000-2002) have largely been attributed to the resentment towards the commercial agriculture 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. The FTLRP that the Government of Zimbabwe embarked on from 2000 to 2002 brought to the fore a revival of the discussion on the prospects that lie in land redistribution for livelihood enhancement, poverty alleviation and broader economic development. It brought about more serious attention to this discussion, especially at academic levels.

This paper is based on a study of beneficiaries of the FTLRP and is aimed at contributing empirical evidence that points to the potential and prospects that land reform has for poverty reduction. Moyo has 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, 12¹) . The study was also premised on the recognition that there is a lack of good empirical studies on the newly resettled farms as what is available are general statements based often on unreliable statistics and the accounts provided by different individuals (Derman 2006). Whilst critical reviews of the FTLRP have focused on analysing its impact on aggregate economic indicators such as GDP per capita this research was based on the premise that there is also a need to consider its impact and potential at the household level.

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 at Athlone farm. 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 at Athlone.

The main question that guided this study was:

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

Other secondary questions dealt with are:

1. What livelihood activities do newly resettled farmers pursue at 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 research was carried out in the course of four weeks of staying in the case study area, Athlone Farm. Field work was carried out initially for one and a half weeks from the 29th of June to the 10th of July 2008. The study population was made up of 32 households and interviews were carried out with 27 households. Athlone farm was chosen for this study because Murehwa District, in which it lies, is not very different from other prime agricultural zones in Zimbabwe. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were carried out with key male household members to interrogate household heads’ past employment history, past agricultural activity, past livelihood activity/ sources of income and to review their lives in Athlone.

Key informant interviews could only be conducted with an AREX official and with a junior loans officer at AGRIBANK as it was difficult to get information from other institutions such as the 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 departments. The main reason for this was the sensitivity of the land question. Government documents that are in the public domain were also used as sources of data and reference points for the analysis of government support services received by Athlone residents.

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

Overview of the framework used in the analysis of findings

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).

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. 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. Whilst necessary, it is insufficient on its own to secure positive livelihood outcomes.

Social capital is the social resources that determine people's 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.

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 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).

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.

Land is the 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.

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

Findings

The following discusses the main findings of the research project. The first part gives an introduction to the study site, outlining its geographical position and physical and natural assets which contribute to and affects the livelihood activities that beneficiaries pursue at Athlone. Some background to the beneficiaries is also given outlining their places of origin and motivations for resettling. Livelihood activities are outlined and discussed in the second part of the presentation. The paper also outlines the support the Athlone residents have received to assist in their livelihood activities and concludes with a broad analysis of the findings.

Introduction to Athlone Farm

Athlone farm is situated in Mashonaland East province of Zimbabwe. It falls within Murehwa and Macheke districts, 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 provinces.

Zimbabwe is divided into five agricultural regions. Agro-ecological Region 1 is suitable for the production of coffee, tea and horticulture produce. Region 2 with high annual rainfall, in excess of 750 mm is best suited for intensive crop production. It is characterised by, 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.

History of Athlone settlement and administrative structures

When the land occupations started in Zimbabwe, a number of people also took up residence at Athlone farm 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 characterised by running battles with the farm owner and his workers as they tried to drive off the land occupiers. By 2000, as the resettlement programme formally took shape, a total of 72 households were settled on Athlone farm.

The study sample fell under the jurisdiction of one headman, Headman Chadambuka. The village committee is the main administrative structure for the area. A village chairperson, a war veteran is the local government representative who heads the village committee. The committee is made up of six

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

Residential structures

Houses in Athlone are typically made of pole and mud. A majority of twenty- five houses were constructed from pole and mud and thatch roofing. Four houses in Athlone are made of farm bricks, and have asbestos roofing. Three houses have corrugated iron sheets roofing. Only four households have a “blair” toilet at the homestead, while the majority uses the bush system Residents pointed out concerns that faecal matter is run- off into unprotected drinking water sources during the rainy season.

Education facilities

Athlone farm is serviced by Nyamita Primary School which is located on a neighboring farm Exeter and Maggi. Other families send their children to schools in the nearby communal areas of Nyamita and a little further in Uzumba. Both options are estimated to be 10km from the farm, a distance which is very difficult for young children to take every day to and from school. Most families have thus left their children in either in the old communal homes or in the towns so they can attend school. They join their families during school holidays. The nearest secondary school is Nhowe Mission School which is considered very expensive that very few farmers both from Athlone farm and Murehwa communal areas can afford to send their children there. Even that school is 7 km away from the farm. Other families also prefer their children to go to schools in the old home areas where they stay with relatives during the school term.

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 fuel shortages, the one bus that services the Macheke to Murehwa route bus does not operate as regularly. Residents opt to walk to Murehwa using 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.

Water and sanitation

There are no boreholes or tapped water at Athlone. Residents rely on unprotected wells for drinking water, cooking and other household uses. The water is not safe for human consumption. Only one homestead has a protected well and three families in the close neighborhood of the homestead also have access to this well. According to the health committee member, during rainy season, problems of diarrhea arise because only four households have access to a “blair toilet” while the rest rely on the bush. Water runoff into the dam contaminates the water, leading to high incidence of water-borne diseases.

Demographic features of Athlone Households

The “household” has been conceptualised as a unit of analysis for investigating both rural and urban livelihoods. The “household” has also been used as a basis for analysing 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. 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. 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.

Gender

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 were mainly carried out with females particularly for 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 accounting for the higher percentage of female respondents, (63%). Only one respondent was a widow and was a plot holder in their own right.

Marital status

Athlone has the majority of the families in married institutions. Twenty four of the respondents were married, 2 of the single respondents were widowed and one male respondent was single. Households at Athlone showed a trend of young wives as reflected by the age distribution since most of these wives were second wives. A total of 6 households had second wives and the circumstances varied as highlighted on the discussion on the reasons for resettling.

Household size and household type

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. “Young” households, (78%) have very young kids, on average between 1-3 children under the age of 10. These “young” households are typically families that were started at Athlone, or couples that married between 2-3 years before the resettlement. Some would also be cases of older husbands who married younger wives after settling in Athlone. “Older” households (22%) have children that are older than 18 years of age, some with their own families. Older households had children who are adults with their own families. These households also had 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.

Education

There is not much variation in education levels of household heads. Age seems to be the determinant of the household head’s level of education. Those in the 40-50 age range are likely to have acquired

secondary level education or gone up to at least form 2. Five household head had basic vocational training in different areas, such as farmer training, bee- keeping and welding. There are four teachers at the farm which reflect that they finished at least “O” level education and went for some teacher training course. There is one member who is the former District Administrator for Murehwa. One household head was employed at the president’s office but could not divulge his training. For the purposes of analysis, since all of the farmers had at least primary school education, all the farmers were taken to be functionally literate.

Employment

The study interrogated the employment status of the household heads. Six respondents were formally employed, twenty two had been retrenched, and three respondents had retired whilst the only one respondent had never been employed. Eighty one per cent of respondents stated agriculture as their form of employment.

Beneficiaries’ places of origin and motivations for resettling

Respondents came from neighboring Murehwa and Mutoko communal areas-(*kumaruzevha*), the colonial “reserves”. Others who moved from towns also came from other communal areas of the country. 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 land quantity as well as land fertility. The beneficiary narratives below highlight the circumstances leading to some of the households resettling in Athlone. The research captured narratives beneficiaries which highlighted the different circumstances of Athlone households.

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 then 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 4 years 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 5 acres 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.

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 Muzveve 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.

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 realised 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.

These narratives highlight the different circumstances of Athlone households. In Zimbabwe husbands who lost their formal employment, especially during the ESAP years (1991-1995) would go back to the rural areas or engaged in informal activities of employment. Those in the sample who were retrenched during these ESAP 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 as had happened with Mr. Katsande and Mr. Chadambuka.

Some respondents (14%) indicated that resettled in Athlone due to the need for more “social space”. Typical responses that reflected this included reference to problems with families. They mentioned need for freer space-“*pakatambanuka*”, far from relatives- “*kure nehama*” and “*pangu ndega*”- where I am alone. The need for free space also indicated overpopulation in their communal areas as they indicated the need for more farmland. At Athlone, households were either remarrying or starting a new life after 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.

Beneficiaries also cited 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 zvakana nana babamunini*”, relations were no longer conducive between my family and brother-in-law) because of a fight the husband had had with his siblings.

Ten households had absolutely no land, only occupying some space to live on, allocated to them 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 a victim of structural adjustment programmes who had gone back to his rural homes only to find the family land subdivided amongst his father’s siblings and no land left for his family. Land they subsequently accessed was insecure as it could be taken any time and whose use was negotiated beginning of every planting season, a situation most were uncomfortable with. The advent of *jambanja* brought relief for many such families.

Two respondents highlighted that while they had land in their old communal areas, they had, however, 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. Farming supplemented the husbands’ formal income through the production of the household’s grain 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’s reflected 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.

Livelihood activities at Athlone

Rain fed crop cultivation

Rain fed crop production is the main livelihood activity in Athlone. Maize is the dominant crop produced for household food needs and for its exchange value. There is a spread of those who grow soy beans, wheat, ground nuts and tobacco. Maize crop and soy beans are mainly grown for household consumption needs. Even where households sell their farm products, they always keep enough stock to feed the family until the next season's harvest. Participants in the study indicated that it would be considered highly irresponsible if a household was to sell produce and then run out and suffer hunger towards the end of the season.

Farmers at Athlone mainly produce soy and maize. Most farmers produce between 6-10 bags of maize and more than 10 bags of soya beans. 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 as they never ran out of food before harvesting the next season's crop. Respondents highlighted that the yields for the season 2007 to 2008 had not been good but earlier years had been better surpassing what this table has presented.

Labour

Labour presents a challenge to households' production activities. Family labour is not sufficient for crop production at Athlone farm. 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 as relatives stay on the farm in arrangements of reciprocity labour for food, and also for managing the farm in the absence of the farm owner². Loose reciprocal relations are formed to acquire more labour as highlighted in Box 2. 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 got farm produce as remuneration.

² Mr Foromani employs his aunt to manage the two other workers he has on the farm since he works in town and trust a family member to better manage his affairs.

Box 2: 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 (kuruvira), 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. Community members who hold 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, are going to school in Harare.

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.

Whilst families may use outside sources of labour for their production, family labour is still vital in production. This was clear in one respondent, Mr. Gondo whose wife passed away in the 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, afraid that they would not be well provided for food during the time they were working in his fields.

Another widower, Mr. Rwodzi, recounted how his tobacco almost went to waste in the field towards harvesting since his wife had passed away about the same time. Recounting his ordeal, he said;

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 helpers³

Irrigated crop production

When Athlone farmers were resettled onto the farm, a proportion of the farm was under irrigation⁴. However, there are differing accounts of what happened to the irrigation infrastructure that settlers

³ Informal discussion with Mr. Rwodzi

⁴ 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

inherited at Athlone. The headman alleged that the farmer took the pipes and other equipment. 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.

According to Mr. Chakafa, the Mushawatu Irrigation Scheme was formed after he alerted beneficiaries about the threat that government would take the farm from them if they did not use the irrigation system. The scheme was formed also in order for the beneficiaries to access a loan from Agribank to purchase pipes to revive irrigation system. The scheme received a loan to buy pipes after a lot of problems with the application process which 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 for the pipes had gone up. In the end, they purchased less pipes with the loan than they had requested. Inflation was over one million percent end of May 2008 and by the end of June it was over nine million percent⁵. In August of the same year, the Reserve Bank removed ten zeroes from the currency to slow down the galloping inflation. Even this measure failed to curb the inflation challenges. Official inflation was over 231 million percent in October 2008 but the CATO⁶ institute estimated the annual inflation rate as of 31 October 2008 at 2.79 Quintillion⁷. Twenty-seven new currency denominations were introduced in Zimbabwe in 2008 alone⁸. From this one can draw a rough picture of the economic environment and extent of inflation.

Water management has been problematic at Athlone. Whilst according to Mr. Chakafa⁹ 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. The difficulty of water management has led to misuse of water 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 dry season, water pipes have been drawn to sites to mould bricks.

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 on the farm. Since pipes are carried from one field to the other, responsibility and accountability has reportedly been difficult to enforce¹⁰. During data collection the researcher witnessed an average of four burst pipe incidences per week leading to water wastage.

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. Irrigation, within this background

⁵ Figures accessed from on <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806270894.html>, 7 November 2008

⁶ CATO institute, <http://www.cato.org/zimbabwe>, retrieved 8 November 2008

⁷ A Quintillion has 18 zeroes

⁸ \$100m note introduced, withdrawal limits hiked, <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/banks74.19097.html>, retrieved 6 November 2008

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Interview with Mr. Shortie- irrigation Secretary

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.

The scenario in Athlone is such that the potential for supplementing rain water through irrigation has been lost due to poor resource management. 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).

Livestock

Cattle provide a variety of functions that including meat, milk, hides, manure, insurance and draught power, a means of social exchange, security against adverse conditions and an asset which may be rapidly liquidated (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 in Athlone

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 almost all households have some chicken. Ownership patterns seem to be determined by the origins of the new farmers in terms of where they stayed before they became resettled; households that either came from the towns, or did not have secure land in neighbouring communal lands did not own any cattle. They have, however, over the years, managed to acquire some stock. The average number of cattle households have acquired is two.

Box 3: 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. As for Mr. Chadambuka, he 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 people¹¹. However, he noted that his son had recently bought him two heifers that were yet to be transported to Athlone.

Households have sold their cattle in very rare cases to supplement the household income and in order to buy inputs. Mr. Mukotami reported selling his ox to buy fertilizer and some feed for his pigs. Even though cattle sales are infrequent, trading patterns were, however, captured in this study as they contributed to livelihoods sources for households. 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 parties 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.

Chickens have been used by some households in labour exchanges for the fields. In some cases, they are use 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.

Other livelihood sources

Literature has discussed the importance of remittances in rural livelihoods through migrant labour, and even recorded the growing role that they play in rural households (Rigg 2005). They have also been documented to contribute to agricultural production in supplying inputs, and are an alternative form of financial relief for households and productivity. Remittances are, however, not a part of the majority of the households' sources of income in Athlone. A total of twenty- one households (78%) are "young", comprising of children of not more that 10 years of age. This explains the absence of remittances in Athlone. Another contributing factor is that for those households where the heads were above 55 years of age they would have retired, thereby cutting off the typical source of remittance. Household heads

that were retrenched from their old jobs could not find replacement jobs thereby limiting the contribution of remittances to their households. Only six household heads in Athlone are formally employed. Farming is thus effectively the only alternative for the other twenty four households.

Box 4: 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 how teachers were under paid, to the extent that they cannot remit anything. The son then arrived as I during the course of this interview 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 married¹². She shared that even though people say her daughter was married, she personally did not consider it a marriage. For her, “varikungobika havu mapoto, kungogarisawo 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.

¹² There is a Shona idiom that says “*mukwasha muonde hauperi kudyiwa*” translating to the effect that a son-in-law is like a bottomless pocket, which will always provide for the in-laws over and above the lobola paid.

Box 5: 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, rusero¹, 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 values 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 a huge amount of her soy bean yield in anticipation of getting a better trading agreement to purchase a cow in October 2009.

Beer brewing was identified as a source of income for African rural families in Bryceson (2002)'s studies. Athlone was however surprisingly marked by the absence of beer brewing as a cash generating activity. Enquiries revealed that residents went for their beer at neighbouring communal areas name. However,

one beneficiary brewed some beer, “*chiseven days*”¹³, during my stay though he had not mentioned it as a source of income. He indicated that he had forgotten about it because he didn’t consider it a substantial contribution. Beer brewing was a source of entertainment as he enjoyed “*kungounganirwawo*”- having people around him, but is also important for social development and for building social relations. This opens the possibility that 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.

There are also some activities that were not included by respondents as income generating activities but 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.

Agricultural and infrastructural support at 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.

Access to inputs, seeds and fertilizer, is very important to yields in Athlone as discussed earlier. The main sources of support for farmers resettled under the FTLRP are the GMB, AGRIBANK, Banwax, and AREX. However, Athlone residents reported that they had not accessed government support except the loan received by the irrigation cooperative. 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 deeds to their houses in Harare, which could be used as collateral. They could not use the permits that they held for land in Athlone, as they had no full ownership rights of the land to use as collateral. This need for collateral was considered problematic by the people in Athlone as they were afraid that their little assets, particularly cattle, would be confiscated if the scheme defaulted on servicing the loan. As such, they all reflected a reluctance to apply for Agribank loans as individuals.

In an interview with Mr. Chakawa of Agribank he explained to me a different process for A1 farmers. There is a facility for A1 farmers, which does not require collateral. According to him, the only reason

¹³ 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.

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.

The story of Mr. Foromani, in trying to access an Agribank loan, does demonstrate the key problems that new farmers face in rebuilding their capital base for farming. When he tried accessing Agribank loans, he faced numerous challenges. This was particularly because he could not even get 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 get a response that his application had been turned down. No one could explain why his application had been rejected 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 and from the Maguta scheme through a contract arrangement. Maguta is a scheme that was introduced by government as a channel through which it would support farmer with inputs. 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. Whilst this arrangement has helped farmers, the main challenge has been the unreliability of inputs supply. Inputs, particularly fertilizer, have been distributed late. The supply of inputs is 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 with AREX experts to get calendars of when and what is needed at different times.

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. 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. In some circumstances, people who receive fertilizer and seeds may end up selling them or diverting from the use for which the fertilizer would have been meant. In addition the availability of inputs on the market is also a major constraint for those who can afford to buy inputs for themselves.

Marketing, transport and communication

The absence of transport and communication networks limits the delivery of inputs and farm implements for farmers. 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 2007/8 season was particularly problematic due to the shortage of cash. Farmers recounted difficulties in the process of getting their produce to the market and getting their payments.

Box 6: 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. Thus it would take an average of two weeks to market their produce.

Mr. Hanwa's narrative highlights the high cost that farmers pay to market their produce. The interest deductions on cheques were also very high for farmers who do not have much to spare. Mr. Hanwa noted 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 grab the "business" opportunities presented by these farmers. Others also waste the money on alcohol after getting paid or some would run 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 auction floors that highlight the complexities in the marketing of produce, and that affect, in the final analysis, how much farmers take home.

Attitudes and views of Athlone farmers on government 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 get the information that inputs like fertilizer or seeds and diesel, had been delivered at Maggi Farm, which is 40- 60km from Athlone, 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 of 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 and it seemed that there were no mechanisms of enforcing adherence by farmers to conditions set.

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.

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.

Box 7: Corruption and misuse of inputs

Mr. Chirenje related how at one time when he went to Maggi, one of the workers at a plot pointed to different 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 is 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 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.”

Access to and use of extension support in Athlone

In Athlone, there are two resident AREX staff members. Individual farmers can call the “*mudhumeni*¹⁴”- the AREX staff, to demonstrate on their plot. 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.

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. Mr. Hanwa also thought that 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 working with the farmers. 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 staffs were inexperienced. The head of AREX in Macheke, Mr. Harufaneta, confirmed the lack of practical experience amongst staff. 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 AREX has faced been the loss of experienced personnel. The down side to the FTLRP was that it opened up access to experienced AREX staff that saw them 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. Athlone farm only received field staff in 2004 with one extension officer covering 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

¹⁴ 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.

Discussion of findings

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.

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. 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 findings, 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 (Kepe and Cousins 2002). The sustainable livelihoods framework which was used as the conceptual framework for analysis 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 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. 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.

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 analysis of the financial assets available to Athlone farmers reflects negatively. 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.

Human capital is an essential asset, which, at both the household and community level, 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 crops and invested in new assets, the majority of them 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 in reforming structures to deliver more than just land. The government, instead, adopted a piecemeal approach to the land question. As Kepe and Cousins (2002, 2) contend that "although necessary, land reform will only be effective if embedded within a broader programme to restructure the agrarian economy". 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 sufficiently and effectively extended the programme beyond just the provision of land, particularly for the small- holder and poor farmers. The redistribution of land has not been integrated into a wider agrarian and development strategy. As such it has failed to

fully harness the latent potential for livelihood enhancement, household and national food security that lies in smallholder production.

With expanding credit and irrigation facilities, increasing availability of modern inputs and increasing demand for agrarian surplus for purposes of industrialisation, 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). A caution is, however, made 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. They have in fact performed better in terms of sustaining their livelihoods more than their communal areas neighbours and better than they would have before settling in Athlone.

Conclusion

This paper has given a description of the activities that Athlone beneficiaries have engaged in since being allocated plots under the FTLRP. They engage in crop production, livestock and other non-land based activities. Despite the challenges that have been highlighted in the findings, Athlone households have better livelihoods than they would have enjoyed without the land. This has implications to the question of whether or not land redistribution can contribute to livelihoods enhancement. The evidence presented here is positive in this regard. Athlone beneficiaries have shown that they can produce for their own consumption and allowing some optimism would bring the conclusion that if the macro-economic conditions changed and favourable government policies were put in place, they could even produce marketable surplus.

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