

REPORT on ZIMTRUST sponsored workshop on
COMMUNITY BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN NYANGA DISTRICT
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The following report was prepared for Nyanga District Council, Nyanga Local Government, ZIMTRUST, and community representatives who attended the above workshop. It's intent is to summarize some of the key issues confronting community-based natural resources development in Nyanga. Each of the proposed projects have their own obstacles to implementation; while the District continues to work as a whole on a Natural Resource Use Plan, it is important to keep the particulars of the respective projects in mind.

First, I think it is important to keep in mind that the three groups are at different "levels" or "stages" in their project planning/preparation and thus have different organizational capacities. To further compound these differences, the proposed projects each have their own political history, which layers on top of the relationship between the respective project communities and the District Council and Nyanga Local Government.

DZIWA: Archaeological Site and Game Park

Dziwa, from my observations, and from their obvious absence from the workshop, is only beginning to think in terms of a community-based wildlife project linked to the archaeological site currently under National Monuments. Dziwa community representatives need basic information about the possibilities of CAMPFIRE-inspired projects, and they need help in organizing community structures which can help educate residents and ultimately formulate a management plan for the area.

In many ways, Dziwa residents were those who would have benefitted most from the recent workshop. Their failure to attend is, I think, indicative of their being out of the "information loop" of the Nyanga District Council, and a reflection of poor planning on the part of the District Council and Local Government. Both of these need to be rectified, and the powers that be in Nyanga need to make a greater outreach effort to Dziwa, if any community-shaped project is to get off the ground.

Perhaps more than any other project, the ideas shaping Dziwa have emanated from Local Government and District Council without ever having thorough discussion/feedback at the grassroots.

RWENYA: Rwenya Game Management Area

The Rwenya Game Management Area has both a longer history than Dziwa's proposed project, and a more extensive involvement of District Council and Nyanga Local Government in both planning and the preliminary stages of implementation. Several members of the Rwenya Wildlife Management Committee are also councillors; they are thus "plugged in" to the information and resource circuit which emanates from Nyanga District Centre. This coincidence of institutional structures--the fact that some members of the local Rwenya Committees are also members of the District Council--seems to be a great help to the project's organization at lower and upper tiers. The village and ward groups appear to me to be well organized, representative of the range of local opinion, and well informed of District Council activities and plans. The flow of information up the tiers is also smooth; local concerns can move up the committee structure and ultimately be heard in the District Council and other district level fora.

Despite these organizational accomplishments, Rwenya suffers from a number of formidable obstacles: the large area involved requires strong coordination among its constituent parts which encompass multiple wards within Nyanga and Mudzi Districts, necessitating a complex management structure; the once-promised-and-then-aborted FAO funding for the project raised residents' and Councils' hopes, and then disappointed them, resulting in a great deal of misunderstanding, and unclear goals of initial implementation; the area's remote location and proximity to Mozambique also leave it vulnerable to poaching; and a "frontier" mentality which includes land use practices running counter to the project's stated objectives.

I had several discussions with Rwenya representatives at the recent workshop which emphasized these related themes and pinpointed particular problems. Some residents who had been living in the gazetted Game Management Area feel they were wrongfully and forcibly evicted from their rightful homes without any form of compensation. A fraction of these families have moved back into the gazetted area while another fraction remains hostile to the project, not understanding the reasons for their forced movement, nor seeing any potential benefit of a project promised long ago and still unfulfilled. Recent migrants have joined these returning families within, and near the gazetted area. Some have come to prospect for gold and have established more or less permanent homesteads; their goldpanning, I am told, is having serious effects on the environment.

Rwenya representatives thus paint a picture of a "frontier" area which contains pockets largely out of their control, and inhabited by many recent in-migrants or temporary residents (this would include short-term visitors engaged in poaching or gold mining). Just who constitutes the Rwenya "community" is difficult to define,

and (from all accounts) difficult to monitor. The recent National Parks patrol conducted in Rwenya, which found evidence of significant poaching activities, suggests that the community is not agreed on the principles of wildlife management as expressed by the wildlife committee members.

In short, Rwenya appears strong on its organizational structure and its access to information and resources enjoyed by the District Council. It seems weakest on grassroots awareness and consensus, as well as on the formidable logistical problems confronting the monitoring, let alone policing, of a vast frontier area. The Wildlife Committee's "mandate" to represent their constituencies appears to emanate more from District Council and Local Government than it does from the resident Rwenya communities. I should qualify this, however, by saying that I am not well acquainted with the particular Rwenya communities affected by the proposed Game Management Area. I have, however, spoken at length about these problems with Rwenya residents and with Local Government staff.

The particular land history of the area appears relevant, as well: I am told that families were evicted from Lawley's Concession in the late 1950s. The recent evictions (and that certainly is the term some people use to characterize the "resettlement" of people from the gazetted area to new "communities") do not come without precedent. The lack of any perceived benefit in exchange for the deeply resented social cost of moving a homestead should be seen in historical context, both locally and nationally.

While I am not as familiar with the details of Rwenya's development as a project as I would like to be, my impression is that the driving force has not been from the grassroots, but rather from Local Government and the District Council. This may explain some discontent on the ground, and the perception, held at least by some Rwenya residents, that the project is being pushed "from the top down" with unclear beneficiaries. To be fair to Rwenya's community representatives, they have made great efforts to reach out to their constituencies; but the vast areas, the remote location, and local perceptions have been difficult obstacles to letting the grassroots shape a coherent project.

KAEREZI (Kaerezi River Protected Area = KRPA)

Kaerezi is the situation I know the best since I have been resident there for the past year and a half. In that time, I have seen a radical turn-around in local perceptions of the KRPA, and in its relationship to "community" self-determination. When I arrived in Kaerezi in June of 1990, most residents saw the KRPA as an instrument of government control and a top-down plan drafted by outsiders for the benefit of outsiders. The KRPA was variously associated with the encroaching borders of the Nyanga National Park, the resultant loss of grazing area for Kaerezi residents, the

predominantly white (and perceived to be colonial) Nyanga Downs Fishing Club, and attempts by high ranking Government officials to establish private trout production within the area. Significantly, residents then linked the KRPA to forced resettlement in linear villages--villagization--a contentious political issue which has colored relations between Local Government and Kaerezi area residents since Independence.

Just as with Rwenya, the land and political history of the area is important to note. As you know, the Tangwena people were forcibly evicted by the then landowner and Rhodesian Government during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Huts were burned down, property destroyed, and cattle seized; children were detained in ransom for people's agreement to resettle in Nyangui (now Bende Communal Area), Holdenby, or Gokwe. In the early 1970s, many families lived in the nearby mountain forests; others took refuge at Nyafaru. Many eventually fled to Mozambique, living there until after the war. In short, people feel that they had a particularly bitter struggle for their ancestral homeland which was finally recognized (in their opinion) when the Government purchased the land in 1981 for the "purpose of resettling the Tangwena." Some see Kaerezi Main Resettlement scheme as the rightful inheritance (nhaka) of Rekayi Tangwena, a reward for the contribution of Chief Tangwena and his people to the liberation struggle.

Kaerezi Main Resettlement Scheme, composed of approximately 750 settler families, contains a culturally "Tangwena" core, in addition to portions outside of the traditional Tangwena chieftainship boundary. Some of these people, most notably those who live in the Tsanga river valley near the Kaerezi Experimental Wheat Station, culturally self-identify as "Tangwena" as well. The Acting Chief, who currently receives a Government allowance, and traditional masabhuku continue to exert a considerable influence over local opinion and action. Within the traditional Tangwena boundaries, VIDCOs have been largely ineffective organizations, suffering from the image of being "sellouts" which seek to impose Government policy at odds with local interests.

Kaerezi Extension Resettlement Scheme, consisting of 193 settler families in Nyamutsapa and Dazi, the communities respectively east and west of the Upper Kaerezi, was purchased by Government and annexed to Kaerezi Main in 1988. The east side was, at that time, mostly settled by self-defined "Tangwena" people living within the chieftainship's traditional boundaries. The "resettlement" of people east of the river has been a concept largely void of practice since the majority of those now living in Nyamutsapa occupy the family homestead where they were living in 1988 when Ministry of Lands purchased the land. DERUDE demarcated residential stands in 1988, but only a few Nyamutsapa families have moved to occupy them. In 1991, when the Nyanga DA issued letters of warning for people to occupy their allocated residential stands, the Chief's response was to threaten to "chase away" anyone who moved

into the designated linear villages. As a result of this unresolved conflict, the vast majority of Nyamutsapa residents reside outside of their allocated residential stands.

West of the river, in Dazi, people were "resettled" in planned linear villages after they were forcibly evicted from the Tsanga Valley Wheat Estate, which at that time was purchased for the then ARDA parastatal farm. Land use planning was done prior to their physical arrival in the resettlement scheme, and the vast majority of Dazi residents moved directly onto a government demarcated residential plot within a planned linear village. Dazi thus represents a resettlement scheme proper, while Nyamutsapa is a hybrid arrangement combining elements of a resettlement scheme with those of a Communal Area. Nyamutsapa, in particular, is culturally linked to the larger "Tangwena" community living in Kaerezi Main Resettlement Scheme.

In 1988, National Parks finalized the purchase of two adjacent parcels of land--Glen Eagles and Kwaraguza--which extended the borders of the National Park estate north to meet the southern boundaries of the Kaerezi Extension and Kaerezi Main Resettlement Schemes. Most local people (in Kaerezi Extension and Kaerezi Main) see this as an "encroachment" on their land rights, and as a questionable land use decision, exchanging grazing areas for National Parks land.

The details of Kaerezi local history, with which I am obviously much more familiar than those of Dziwa or Rwenya, do much to frame current attitudes toward the proposed KRPA, and indeed toward some of the ideas embodied by CAMPFIRE. The "traditional" authorities' attempts to control the KRPA in its initial stages were overcome only when Nyamutsapa and Dazi residents organized to choose a democratically elected Steering Committee which would represent the interests of Kaerezi Extension residents.

They reasoned that since they were paying the "social costs" of the KRPA--principally the loss of grazing area for their cattle and other livestock--they should be the primary beneficiaries and also the self-defined "community" responsible for managing the area's natural resources. It was after the initial ZIMTRUST (July 1991) workshop in Nyanga that these ideas began to take more solid form, much to ZIMTRUST's credit for sponsoring the forum which enabled the Steering Committee to discover its own voice.

"Traditional" leaders in Kaerezi Main, who consider Nyamutsapa (but not Dazi) under their control, eventually publically consented to the Steering Committee's legitimate role in planning the project. This allowed for an intensive "awareness campaign" orchestrated by the Steering Committee to educate a significant number of the settlers in Dazi and Nyamutsapa. At the numerous public meetings I have attended with the Steering Committee, it is clear that public opinion is strongly behind the Committee itself, and the core ideas

of the KRPA: principally, an integrated land and resource use plan involving trout production, a fishing concession, tourism, and fruit production.

The KRPA is not without its critics. Some fear eventual destocking if the protected area removes critical grazing land from settlers' use; others fear, despite assurances to the contrary from Local Government, that the river project will be "linked" to forced linear villagization. Given the area's history of forced removals, people remain uncertain about their future settlement on the land. This fear resurfaced last year when residents of Bende Gap had their huts burned by Messengers of Court and the Police when they were recently evicted from Forestry Commission land.

Overall, however, the residents of Kaerezi Extension have done a commendable job organizing and educating themselves, and investing their democratically chosen Steering Committee with the capacity to legitimately represent local concerns to Local Government and other external powers--that-be. When one remembers that the residents of both Kaerezi Main and Kaerezi have no voting representative on the Nyanga District Council--they are, literally, disenfranchised--this accomplishment is no small feat. Since the resettlement scheme does not fall within the District Council's land authority, the question of how to grant appropriate authority to Kaerezi residents has always been problematic.

Most Kaerezi Extension residents I have spoken to feel that trout, tourism, fruit, and afforestation are what they have chosen for themselves. The potential introduction of wildlife in the area is seen as the idea of outsiders and as not emanating from the grassroots structures that people have worked hard to establish and legitimate. This attitude may change with time, but I think it important that ZIMTRUST keep Kaerezi's local history in mind as it proceeds forward with it's educational/awareness program in Nyanga. Local people have voiced to me the concern that a game management component would be at odds with the locally crafted KRPA plan. While some are open to the possibility of considering wildlife stocking in the future, most people I have spoken with see more problems than profit in the long run: in particular, they fear that wildlife will deplete their grazing areas which will, in any event, diminish with the formal demarcation of the KRPA. And they see wildlife management as something that is far down the road, if at all possible, in their development plans. Their current desire, as I understand it, is to proceed with their own land use plan for Kaerezi, keeping alternative uses open for the future as long as they are sympathetic to the goals of the integrated plan.

Whereas Kaerezi is not as well plugged into the District Council, and Nyanga District Centre activities, they are strong where Rwenya is weakest: they have a clearly identifiable "community" of beneficiaries (defined by residence in the river valley, and hence by those who will share the social costs of the project), and the

majority of residents appear to be agreed on the fundamental principles of the KRPA. Kaerezi's smaller area and population have allowed for community planning, consensus politics, and the task of implementation to be less formidable than Rwenya's considerable obstacles.

In my opinion, Kaerezi Extension residents need help from ZIMTRUST in refining their institutional capacity to move the KRPA to the implementation stage, and to better liaise with Local Government and district level extension staff. They appear to be capable of moving ahead with the project on the ground, and ZIMTRUST is well equipped to advise them on potential management strategies and institutional possibilities. For its part, Local Government should do all that it can to release the funds generated by the Nyanga Downs Fly Fishing club, and currently held in a trust fund for the residents of Kaerezi Extension. The KRPA Steering Committee is now prepared to handle those funds responsibly on behalf of the effected communities, and the prompt release of funds to the Committee would have a symbolic, as well as material value, showing residents the tangible value of the sustainable management of the river and environs.

CONCLUSION

I want to close with a couple of general comments about the recent workshop which distinguished it both from the first workshop and from what I had hoped would be an even greater movement toward implementation of community-based natural resource management projects in Nyanga.

First, I think that having the idiom of communication in Shona was a vast improvement over the July 1991 workshop. While some translation help was provided, the first workshop was much less accessible to many of the community representatives than was the recent one. In addition, the presentations by ZIMTRUST and CAMPFIRE were clear, understandable, and provocative for community representatives. The popular education techniques employed by all of you were extremely effective.

In contrast to this, however, I felt that community representatives had far too little time and space to develop their questions and present their opinions. Most of the members of the Rwenya and Kaerezi groups are at the stage where they need more of a "seminar" atmosphere than a "lecture" style workshop. Perhaps this is more along the lines of the model ZIMTRUST uses during field visits to potential project areas.

In particular, I think it would have been extremely helpful if representatives had the opportunity to discuss particular obstacles they are confronting--perceptions, attitudes, logistical constraints--and make demands upon the attending Government

departments to assist with relevant planning and implementation help. ZIMTRUST could have been a facilitator for this dialogue between local community representatives and Government staff, and could have contributed their own advice learned from experience with CAMPFIRE projects elsewhere. At this point, Nyanga needs help with coordination of the technical and management skills required in Rwenya and Kaerezi; these workshops are one of the few fora in the district when community representatives can meet with an assembly of technical support staff and district-level decision makers. For Kaerezi, in particular, their exclusion from voting representation on the District Council has made the ZIMTRUST workshops their only forum for communicating community opinion which is not mediated by Government employees.

Focussing the closing session of the workshop on letting participants identify remaining perceived obstacles for each project might have let community representatives and Government staff leave the meeting with a clearer sense of what, concretely, is the next step in bringing these projects to fruition. The single complaint I heard most frequently following the workshop was that the question of "where do we go from here?" was left unanswered. Your suggestion of a resource inventory is certainly an excellent step in that direction; I think that each of the groups and Local Government need to move beyond that, however, and confront the obstacles which have long delayed Rwenya and Kaerezi.

At some stage, community representatives, Local Government, ZIMTRUST, and the District Council will need to confront the issue of how "integrated" a district plan should be. Rwenya and Kaerezi, for example, are radically different projects in markedly different agro-ecological regions. While some of the institutional development requirements for those projects, and for that of Dziwa, may be similar, the technical and management regimes may be quite different. Similarly, Rwenya may wish to work through the District Council along the traditional CAMPFIRE model of devolving Appropriate Authority for wildlife management, from District, to Ward, to Village level committees. Kaerezi, currently excluded from legitimate political representation (including voting power) on the District Council by virtue of its status as a resettlement scheme, may wish to work through DERUDE and more directly with National Parks and Wildlife Management and other technical support departments. Until Rural District Council amalgamation becomes a reality, the relationship of Kaerezi to the existing District Council and other district fora needs to be resolved. In my opinion, Rwenya, Kaerezi, and Dziwa should move ahead with the understanding that they may eventually plug into an amalgamated Nyanga Rural District Council while also allowing for a transitional period of institutional arrangements. Until the long-promised amalgamation creates a viable Rural District Council, community representatives in Communal Areas and Resettlement Schemes need to work through existing structures and, if needed, create their own novel institutional arrangements.



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