



**BRITAIN ZIMBABWE SOCIETY**

**Incorporating the Newsletter of the Britain Zimbabwe Society**

# Education: 'The wider world has a lot to learn from Zimbabwe'

## *REPORT ON 2011 RESEARCH DAY: OPTIMISTIC, REALISTIC, PANORAMIC*

*This year's research day took place on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June at St Antony's College, Oxford. The day was structured around four thematic panels covering key issues across a range of educational contexts. Overall, a sense of purpose was maintained with lively panel discussions, and thoughtful interventions from the floor. Professor Ngwabi Bhebe's keynote address on Zimbabwe's university sector was fascinating in its detail and optimistic in its message. In his closing summary, Dr Knox Chitiyo, chairman of the Britain Zimbabwe Society and co-convenor of the Research Day, highlighted the resilience and innovation of Zimbabweans in an emerging context of re-generation in the education sector. He ventured to claim that 'the wider world has a lot to learn from Zimbabwe'.*

### **Panel One – Schools**

*Barbara Mahamba, PhD candidate, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies; Prof. Catherine Campbell, Professor of Social Psychology at the London School of Economics; and Prof. Terri Barnes, Associate Professor, Department of Gender & Women's Studies and Department of History, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.*

The first panel, chaired by Dr Clayton Peel, looked at 'schools'. Three very different papers were presented.

#### **'Learning does not end...'**

Barbara Mahamba's historical account looked at the gendering role of Catholic mission education. Specifically she focussed on Empandeni Mission in the Mangwe district of Matabeleland in the period from 1887 to 1930, during which time it was run by the Jesuits. Taking as her starting point a definition of

gender that foregrounds its social construction, Mrs Mahamba described the ways in which the values and practices of Catholic schooling clashed with those that underpinned the indigenous system of education for girls. This traditional education was informal and lifelong, as captured in the Ndebele saying *ukufunda kakupheli* (learning does not end). By participating alongside their mothers in the

day-to-day upkeep of the home, by increasingly taking on responsibilities, for example of younger siblings, and by receiving more explicitly from their grandmothers and paternal aunts instruction pertaining to initiation and marriage, girls were prepared for their role in Ndebele society. Although gendered, this role included a significant spiritual dimension which the mission school sought to suppress. For example, in Empandeni and its surrounding area, women occupied important positions within the local Mwali and Shumba cults.

While the church strongly opposed the practices of these cults, it simultaneously placed obstacles in the way of women who wanted to express their spirituality through the Christian church; for example by making it very difficult for them to become nuns. Missionary education attempted to discredit the 'indigenous role of motherhood' by, for example, criticising women for keeping their girls out of school in order that they could learn by working alongside them. Nuns tried to replace mothers as role models and as early as 1904, the idea of a boarding school at Empandeni was suggested; the ultimate solution to the 'problem' of parental influence. The priests and nuns put a lot of pressure on girls to have Christian marriages; this included, for example, priests making fathers agree to match their daughters with Christian men.

Whilst missionary education set out to prepare African girls for a particular form of (western) motherhood, boys were 'educated' for the world of work where their place in colonial society included working as domestic servants in the households of European women. These women also experienced a gendered curriculum but one geared towards the production of mistresses whose future role would be to manage the work of servants. At the time, the education on offer for 'coloured' girls was more 'academic' than that designed for Africans; it was aimed at preparing them for domestic service in well-to-do European households. Mrs Mahamba concluded by

reiterating the main finding of her research: that although the indigenous system of education for girls was gendered, it imbued values that were not respected by the equally, though differently, gendered system of schooling imposed by the Roman Catholic Church.

In answer to the question, 'What is education for?', a question that resurfaced a number of times during the day, Mrs Mahamba suggested that the essential task of missionary education was evangelisation. Africans initially went to school out of curiosity, 'to unlock the mystery of turning letters into words', as one informant put it. Later, they hoped to use education as a means for upward mobility.

## **Schools and HIV-AIDS**

Prof. Catherine Campbell's presentation outlined the role of schools in supporting HIV/AIDS-affected children in Zimbabwe. She examined the complex psycho-social, legal, financial and health needs of AIDS-affected children (orphans, child-headed households, carers for sick adults and siblings) - and how many of them live in challenging circumstances, with very little adult support. International health policy documents repeatedly position the school as the social institution best placed to help such children. Yet to date, little is known about how schools can best be supported to play this role, or about strategies already developed by individual teachers and principals to offer such support.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that in cases where they have the support of their school principals, some individual teachers are offering children a range of support - for example grief management support, and advice in income generation strategies. Some also turn a blind eye to late school fees, lack of uniforms, and frequent absences by such children. However, there is also evidence that in some situations, schools are the site of humiliation and bullying of such children, who are also particularly vulnerable to abuse e.g.

sexual abuse of girls by male teachers. There are sometimes high dropout rates by AIDS affected children, and poor school performance.

In the context of an interest in how local people can best respond to the challenges of AIDS, given the realities of poorly resourced and over-burdened health and welfare sectors, and relatively low NGO presence, Prof Campbell and her colleagues' study will examine how schools are currently responding to the needs of AIDS-affected children, and document examples of both good and bad practice in this regard. They hope to draw conclusions about if, and how, schools - whose role has traditionally been seen rather narrowly as that of educating the future workforce - can be supported to adapt and expand their role to serve as 'surrogate families' for AIDS-affected children, rooting their findings in existing examples of best practice by Zimbabwean teachers.

Prof Terence Ranger asked Prof Campbell whether her research might be too 'school focussed'. He pointed to the relationship between school and church which was an important theme in Barbara Mahamba's work. He also wondered about 'traditional notions of healing and sickness' and their place in this initiative to develop 'AIDS competent schools'.

Prof Campbell responded that her research is about 'how schools interface with outside agencies'. As regards the relevance of traditional (African) ideas, she talked about the tendency in education development programmes for Western conceptions of childhood (notions of 'innocence' and the like) to be stressed in opposition to traditional values such as the teaching of life skills through participation in (for girls domestic) work practices.

### The teaching of history in Zimbabwe's secondary schools

Prof Terri Barnes described a small-scale

research project conducted with colleagues Munyaradzi Nyakudya and Government Phiri in 2010 that looked at the teaching of history in Zimbabwean secondary schools. Referring to a recent article in *The Zimbabwean*, Prof Barnes began by describing the ZANU-PF notion of 'patriotic history', which, in its most extreme form, is indistinguishable from party propaganda. The purpose of such history is to support four recurrent party lines: fast-track resettlement is legitimate; no external interference based on 'Western ideals' such as human rights; all whites are racist enemies; the African population can be divided into 'patriots' or 'sell-outs'. Prof Barnes listed six areas that a thorough analysis of high school history should cover, noting the limitations of the present study which focuses on just three: official syllabi, exam structures, and teacher perspectives. She then recounted the history of official 'O' level syllabi since independence, beginning with the European history-oriented 1970s 2160 syllabus which remained in use until 1991, when it was replaced by the 'Marxist-oriented' nationalist syllabus (2166). This 'new' syllabus was shortened and history was made an optional subject in 1999 but was reinstated as a compulsory subject in 2001, when another syllabus (2167) was introduced.

Crucially, Prof Barnes explained, the 2167 syllabus had much less international comparative history and came with a different exam structure. In the past students were required to write full essays, but now only had to answer four out of 23 short questions. This, coupled with the fact that the exam is not sectionalized, means that teachers can be selective about which parts of the syllabus they teach and, in any case, it is not possible to cover everything.

Against this background, Prof Barnes summarized the main themes that emerged from interviews conducted with seven practicing teachers in July 2010. The overall finding from this small sample, is that teachers are choosing 'safe' topics like pre-colonial kingdoms and Bismarck, and avoiding

teaching the last thirty years of Zimbabwe's history partly because they lack the resources but also because, as one teacher put it, 'teaching current things can be dangerous particularly during elections'. In the secondary sector then, even though 'patriotic' history is being propagated in Zimbabwe by the media and in some classrooms, many teachers (including the research participants) should be applauded for finding ways of avoiding it. But the ironies abound. After 30 years of independence and major changes to high school syllabi and books, European history dominates in Zimbabwean classrooms once again, this time as a safer choice for fearful teachers avoiding the risks and the consequences of being found to be 'unpatriotic' in the interpretation and instruction of the Zimbabwean topics.

In her conclusion Prof Barnes also discussed the continuing existence of a balanced and critical approach to the teaching of history at the University of Zimbabwe. In answer to the question – What is education for? – Prof Barnes said that education exposed people to different perspectives, to engage them with exciting material and to teach them how to evaluate what they have read.

Dr Alex Magaisa recalled his own history education, paying tribute to a particular teacher. He valued the breadth and depth of the nationalist curriculum of the 1990s and wondered whether current students are able to draw on such a wide range of material. Prof Barnes responded by saying that the first revised syllabus was designed to provide students with a broad view, but it had limitations. It was very academically-oriented and was not suited to everyone.

Chris Patterson, speaking from experience in the publishing industry, made two points about history text books. First, with respect to the UNICEF textbook initiative, he noted that out of three participating publishers the pro-patriotic one produced a greater portion of books in the history consignment, but it was not selling particularly well. Second, he noted

that the best selling 'A' level history books are imported books about world history. In responding to this Prof Barnes acknowledged that it is important to remember that people (most significantly teachers) do make choices within the system about which materials to use, and it is important not to assume that patriotic history approaches have automatically drowned out all other voices.

### 'Higher Education sector has awoken' – Professor Ngwabi Bhebe's Keynote Address

As UNESCO's representative for southern Africa, distinguished Zimbabwean historian and Vice-Chancellor of Midlands State University, Professor Bhebe addressed the audience on the current position of universities in Zimbabwe and southern Africa. Professor Bhebe began his talk by reminding the audience that 'Wars start in people's minds; education is also in the minds of people.' He confirmed his commitment to the questions facing Zimbabwe's higher education sector today and outlined some of the challenges still ahead.

Zimbabwe's education system has enjoyed a reputation of high quality both within the country and beyond. However, faced with the more recent macro-economic problems, higher education has been badly affected. Universities hit an all time low in 2008 when lectures were temporarily suspended. However, Bhebe's presentation did not lament the situation, but instead described how these challenges have rekindled a 'capacity to imagine'. Bhebe emphasised the devastating effects of economic sanctions on HE and the wider delivery of social services. He suggested that these sanctions undermined the developmental goals of universities. Nonetheless, the HE sector was now beginning to rebuild, and the political situation following the formation of the Government of National Unity had laid the basis for progress.

Zimbabwe has 13 universities. Nine are state funded and four privately run. Each of these universities is at a different stage of development. The University of Zimbabwe is the oldest of all the universities. The National University of Science and Technology was set up in 1991. Zimbabwe Open University (distance education) was established two years later in 1993. Midlands State University (MSU) was founded in 1999 and the remaining institutions were established after 2000. The more recently founded institutions require a great deal of infrastructural development and have borrowed accommodation in order to try to meet their needs. In addition, the UZ needs a lot of maintenance. MSU has used locally generated resources to purchase properties and staff resources. Most important of all in higher education is human capital and this is the area in which all of Zimbabwe's universities have suffered the greatest. There has been an incredible exodus of staff to elsewhere in the region and beyond. Experienced academics have crossed borders or left the continent altogether. The majority of the staff remaining are inexperienced and (often) under-qualified and staff training opportunities have been very limited. Furthermore, scholarships for Zimbabwean postgraduate students to go abroad almost completely vanished overnight. The exodus of senior academics constrained the system from reproducing itself.

The withdrawal of funding from multi-lateral organisations impacted further on the deteriorating situation; this was exacerbated in light of the negative images of Zimbabwe pervading the international media. Academics remaining in Zimbabwe struggled to keep in contact with the global village and to conduct quality research.

These difficulties have been tackled in a number of ways. Firstly, teaching assistants have been selected from among graduate students working on their master's degrees. At MSU postgraduates have been trained in pedagogical skills. Part-time workers from commerce and industry with higher degrees

have been recruited for work in universities. Additionally, the multi-currency system has improved conditions in Zimbabwe's universities and slowed the exodus of staff. Partnerships have been established between institutions in the region and funds are being raised to revitalise universities. The 'brain drain' has been challenged by creating a 'brain gain' opportunity, using those in the diaspora to help strengthen and create new networks of support. These initiatives have led to exchanges or short visits for students and staff to partner institutions, and the twinning of certain universities in Zimbabwe and South Africa. However, these regional initiatives also require a great deal of funding and government sources have so far been inadequate. On a positive note, staff salaries have been honoured, despite the abiding unpredictability of the situation.

Prof Bhebe recalled more schemes set up by universities to try to raise additional funds. The UZ have started using a farm and others have hired out some of their facilities for commercial use. In November 2010 the MSU held a fundraising dinner which raised a staggering US\$1.8 million towards the construction of a new library. Millions of dollars have been invested by private companies in student accommodation and commercial facilities.

With regard to tuition fees, the government has allowed universities to charge 'reasonable' fees. Students and university representatives have negotiated this with the government. Yet many parents are still unable to pay, and students cannot graduate until their fees have been paid. There are a number of government schemes to help poorer children enter university and there is evidence that orphans are among those finding their way into HE despite financial constraints. Widening access is on the agenda in the form of 'parallel programmes' and 'lifelong learner' schemes. Libraries remain under-resourced, but a number of e-learning strategies are being adopted. At MSU there are about 10,000 students; all students during their third year go

out on a work placement for the duration of the academic year, which means that at any one time there is a computers to students ratio of roughly 1:6. Further investment in ICT has been sought from private companies.

The search for solutions to promote sustainable development in Higher Education continues. Crucially, Prof Bhebe ended his talk by proclaiming: 'Higher Education in Zimbabwe is an awake animal! It is no longer slumping.' As an indication of this regeneration, students are again working towards MAs at the MSU, which hopes to be training postgraduates to PhD level in the near future.

## **Panel Two - Universities**

*Dr Gerald Mazarire, Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, University of Zimbabwe; and Dr Alex Magaisa, Senior Lecturer, University of Kent.*

Chaired by Rev. Zeb Manatse, the second panel looked at the university sector. Two papers were presented.

### **Challenges of the more recent past**

In the first presentation **Dr Gerald Mazarire** focused on the University of Zimbabwe where he is Chair of the History Department. Having presented on the history of the UZ at a previous conference at the University of Illinois, Dr Mazarire developed his thoughts, focusing on the challenges of the more recent past. He provided some background, describing the well-established infrastructure, highly qualified staff, and campus-wide network of computers that the university had enjoyed prior to 1998. Between 1998 and 2003 there was a growth in postgraduate training despite the country beginning to experience increasing political and economic difficulties. Dr Mazarire suggested that the university hit an all-time low in 2003 when it temporarily

closed and lost most of its qualified staff.

Since then, and particularly following the formation of the Government of National Unity in 2008, there has been a new drive to restore the UZ to its leading position. The new 'strategic plan' intends to see the UZ diversify and expand, to upgrade its ICT, and to focus on postgraduate training. There is an added emphasis on development and research, and a desire to reclaim lost human capital.

The UZ has attracted large enrolments, creating a problem with over capacity. Zimbabwe has seen the gradual commercialisation of education, and the UZ has reduced the number of points necessary to access programmes in order to widen participation. There are issues with the lack of teaching space, library limitations, and the computer networks not working. Staff turnover is a problem, as well as a lack of intellectual rigour. Teaching salaries are fair with lecturers receiving US\$1300; senior lecturers \$1500; and Professors \$1800 per month. The UZ has free access to a number of academic journals, but unfortunately, UZ publications ceased to function in 2003. The last copy of *Zambezia* was issued in 2007, but there are efforts to resuscitate this work.

### **Getting the Diaspora involved**

**Dr Alex Magaisa** from the University of Kent spoke on behalf of Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Interface (ZDDI) about ways in which Zimbabweans in the diaspora can get involved with education and development back home. He reported on the work of ZDDI and the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA), represented by Laura Wintour. Following a preliminary visit by Ms Wintour to the region in 2009, an education focus group travelled to Zimbabwe and South Africa in March and April 2010. Consultations were held with members of universities and Centres of Higher Learning in and around Harare, at MSU, Masvingo, Great Zimbabwe, and Bulawayo. The group also met with representatives from Wits University and the

University of Cape Town in South Africa. The aim was to take a grassroots approach to understanding the challenges faced by engaging in (a lot of) group discussions with teaching staff, students, the ministries of education, and other key stakeholders. A report was later produced and made available on the CARA website.

In South Africa the team wanted to gauge the willingness of Zimbabweans in the diaspora to help and contribute to development back home. The purpose of their visit was to see what could be done, as well as what was already happening on the ground.

‘Academic refugees’, those who worked as lecturers in Zimbabwe but who have since been working in other jobs in the UK, were a point of focus. One of CARA's projects was to seek a form of ‘rehabilitation’ for academic refugees. This would include some form of training for those who had been outside of the system for some time, but who wanted to return to lecturing. Dr Magaisa reported that some Zimbabweans have returned to the country and taken up posts in education since the situation stabilised. Others still need to be made aware that they can go back. Magaisa firmly stated that the diaspora should not be seen as a problem, but as part of the solution. He concluded his presentation by pointing to the constructive collaborations that can be formed between private and public institutions. One such successful collaboration with ECONET has produced a virtual lecture environment for use in Zimbabwe’s universities.

Dr Knox Chitiyo, the chairman of the Britain Zimbabwe Society, has written a summary of the Zimbabwean Higher Education Initiative Consultation which can be found on the BZS website:

<http://www.britainzimbabwe.org.uk/Diaspora.htm>

A question was raised about the relationship between schools and higher education institutions, in light of the fact that many children in Zimbabwe now are not in schools.

Another member of the audience wanted to hear from the panel in regard to student rights abuses in recent years and the government’s mission to democratise the country and its institutions, including universities.

In view of the fact that all panel members were male, ‘was this a fair representation of the place of women in HE?’ asked Angelous Dube. Are Zimbabwe’s universities dominated by men?

Dr Mazarire insisted that the issue of democratisation should not be understated and that student rights should be upheld. He also suggested that there are a significant number of women in administrative roles at the UZ and privileged access for female students, in order to address the gender imbalance in the student body, has been discussed. Finally, the UZ in the past has published books for schools and can help to bridge the gap between high school and university education.

The panellists were also asked to comment on how they would like to see universities contribute to the development of Zimbabwe as a country.

Prof Bhebe, contributing from the floor, emphasised the crucial importance of HE in development, but claimed that it is often still troubled by a lack of funds. Many people think that Africa just needs literacy, and international organisations generally fail to appreciate the role of higher education. Dr Magaisa pointed to the role of universities in the development of Zimbabwe, highlighting knowledge transfer, knowledge generation, and community development and regeneration as important areas.

### **Panel Three – Global Links**

*Dr JoAnn McGregor, Reader in Human Geography, University College London; Dennis Sinyolo, Co-ordinator, Education International; Lee Taylor and Maggie Coates, Trustees of Friends of Hlekweni; and Pat Akhurst and Pam Stuart of the Stevenage-Kadoma Link.*

The third panel, chaired by Angelous Dube, looked at global links. Four papers were presented.

### **Transnational politics of exile**

Dr McGregor, focusing on the transnational politics of exile and solidarity, described a number of new research projects aiming to contrast the current diaspora with that of the 1960s and 1970s during the liberation struggle. Among the themes to be explored within this work are: remittances, property, transport businesses, family dynamics, broken marriages, children, student politics, and more. Dr McGregor's interest is the experiences of Zimbabweans lobbying the British government and campaigning in the UK, and how the diaspora shaped the imaginations of nationalists. Her paper presented some of the work that has been done so far, made some preliminary observations, and raised some new questions.

Committees formed by Zimbabweans in London reflected the turbulence of politics at home. Those in the diaspora in the 60s and 70s referred to themselves as exiles. Dr McGregor mentioned the Justice for Rhodesia Campaign, the role of the churches, and the various campaigning strategies deployed during the struggle. Britain coming to terms with its post-colonial identity and the legacies of this era were highlighted. This project emphasises the internationalism of the liberation struggle and the place of intellectuals within it. It explores the part played by elites and their experiences overseas in the west.

Certain similarities between the current and previous diasporas can be seen, such as the British government's restrictive immigration policies. There are also some important differences; for instance, the forward-looking outlook of those in the 60s and 70s, compared to the very uncertain time of now. Britain was a changing society in the times of the earlier diaspora, with feminist movements, unions, and post-colonial identities emerging. There was also a socialist transformation taking

place, with a great deal of enthusiasm and debates over political transformation. People looked forward to the opportunities of civil service jobs on their return. On the subject of education, scholarships were available but there was a lack of opportunity in Rhodesia. Student protests occurred and student unions were linked to ZANU and ZAPU at home and in the diaspora.

The Africa Centre was a focus of diaspora activity and anti-apartheid demonstrations. Conversely, there were pro-Rhodesia Front campaigns organised by the Anglo-Rhodesia Society as was illustrated in one of the photographs presented in Dr McGregor's presentation. One picture showed a group of protestors waving banners with the slogan: 'Stand firm Ian'.

### **Education in a global context**

**Dennis Sinyolo**, a teacher working for Education International, an umbrella organisation representing teachers in 171 countries, discussed education in a more global context, and the implications for Zimbabwe. One aspect of his presentation focused on the Millennium Development Goals. To meet these, Africa still needs an additional two million teachers. ICT is one of the biggest challenges facing schools in Zimbabwe, especially internet access. Mr Sinyolo also spoke of the 'de-professionalisation' of teaching, claiming that many teachers are under-qualified, while others are only employed on short-term or fixed-term contracts, making the profession unattractive to potential new teachers. He insisted that governments needed to improve working environments in order to prevent further out-migration of teachers.

He also raised the loss of status for incoming teachers, such as Zimbabweans entering the UK.

A couple of support programmes were mentioned, in particular the Teaching Training Initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa (TISSA).

This task force aims to build the capacity of teachers in developing countries. There are other government and World Bank funded initiatives, but often these do not support 'fragile states'. The Migrant Teacher's Portal is an interactive forum for data collection and a tool for professional development. It could be used to improve teaching quality and effectiveness.

Lastly, the future of the teaching profession was considered. It was suggested that poor conditions of service have transformed teaching into a stepping stone to other professions. Mr Sinyolo warned of the long term implications of decisions such as that made in the UK to get rid of the Teaching Council. For Zimbabwe in particular, there is a real need to invest in education. Mr Sinyolo described how the education system had become fragmented, suggesting a single vision for the entire education system is needed, along with refresher training and programmes for voluntary returnees from the diaspora. His paper complimented earlier presentations in the day by highlighting the challenges faced by teachers (and academics) in Zimbabwe, the diaspora and globally.

### **Faith and Practice: Hlekweni and its contribution to learning**

Trustees of Friends of *Hlekweni* **Lee Taylor and Maggie Coats** spoke next about the *Hlekweni* Training Centre, based on a farm near Bulawayo. The centre was founded by the Quaker Society in 1967 and *Hlekweni* (place of laughter) has since provided a 'grass-roots beacon of hope', training young people in practical occupational skills, self-reliance, and confidence. The residential training centre is a farming community which has rapidly developed and diversified over the years in the face of numerous challenges throughout changing political times. Keeping the centre going has been difficult at times, and the speakers highlighted the current need to showcase evidence of student and graduate stories in order to continue to attract funding from donors. Poor infrastructure at the centre

is in need of refurbishment and their library needs updating. Drought and political unrest, particularly during the 1980s, have also affected the community.

Entrepreneurial skills are considered very important at *Hlekweni*, and training is based around market needs. Peace-building, conflict resolution, and leadership skills also feature in the training programme. Practical skills taught have included bio-intensive sustainable agriculture, pig and poultry production, carpentry, construction, running children's nurseries, and a micro-lending project for beadwork. The centre receives a very mixed intake, with some students coming from a poor educational background and lacking in confidence. There has been a decline in the command of English among more recent students. Students struggle to pay school fees and many find it difficult on graduating to raise the start-up capital to start out on their own.

Maggie Coats, who has a background in women's education, spent some time in Botswana looking for external accreditation of qualifications offered. A new outcome-based curriculum is now well under way, and the trainers working at the centre are keen for further training opportunities and accreditation development. Students at the centre are especially keen to take forward their English skills, reading, and writing.

At the close of the presentation some student voices were offered to the audience, illustrating the ambition and success of some who have undergone training at *Hlekweni*. One successful farmer had inherited 15 hectares of land under a government scheme. Another had educated three children using the money earned from his carpentry trade. More information on the *Hlekweni* Training Centre can be found on their website at:

<http://www.hlekweni.org/>

## The importance of international links

The final paper on this panel complimented the previous presentation and again highlighted the importance of international links. **Pat Akhurst** and **Pam Stuart** gave an overview of the Stevenage-Kadoma link, one of the most enduring and successful links of its kind. From its inception in 1986 the link was intended to create a community and to promote understanding between the two towns. Kadoma was chosen to partner the new town of Stevenage as they shared a number of features, such as size, an industrial base, and rural surroundings. A formal declaration of friendship was made in 1989. Over more than 20 years the link has created a range of training opportunities in IT and agriculture, and exchanges of teachers and members of church groups. The link was set up, not as a charity, but as a meeting of friends.

In keeping with the topic of the research day, Pat and Pam's presentation focused on the educational aspects of the link. Partnerships have been formed between schools at primary and secondary levels. One scheme aimed to support girls in secondary education. School children from Stevenage were matched with 'pen-friends' in Kadoma, although this became difficult to sustain and was replaced by the 'whole school partnerships' scheme. Today, more than 17 schools in Stevenage have been partnered with schools in Kadoma. The schools have engaged in fundraising to help keep Zimbabwean students in school when they have struggled to pay their fees, as well as helping in areas of nutrition, sport, out-of-school activities, and formal education.

Contact has also been established between church groups in Stevenage and Kadoma and a Link Committee was set up to co-ordinate their work. Teachers from Kadoma have visited the schools in Stevenage where they were hosted by local families. In 2004 seven teachers came to the UK and it was realised from this exchange that there are many problems shared by teachers in both towns. More recently, the teacher exchange

programme has been hampered by visa regulations. However, the link continues to operate along many dimensions according to the strict principles of mutuality, and sharing of knowledge, experience, and decision-making.

More information on the Stevenage-Kadoma Link can be found at:

<http://www.skla.org/index.html>

## Panel Four – Education in context

*Dr Bruce Mutsvairo (Amsterdam University College); Dr Blessing Makwambeni (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, SA), Miss Chipo Chung (Envision Zimbabwe), and Dr Knox Chitiyo, Chairman, BZS.*

What should be the aim of a journalist's training? The epistemological foundations of journalism education in Zimbabwe, the tension between theory and practice, is a central theme running through the research being conducted by **Dr Bruce Mutsvairo** and **Dr Blessing Makwambeni**. The need for such analysis was evident in editors' preference for journalists who write well and tell a good story. This suggests a preference for vocational training and/or learning on the job.

Yet by contrast, some courses (e.g. at UZ) seek to expose students to theories that highlight the journalist's role as a meaning maker in the context of (global) hegemonic relations. The aim here is to produce competent practitioners who are also predisposed to reflect critically on their practice, conscious of the impact that it might have. The speakers sought to define the competing discourses that underpin journalism education in Zimbabwe: not simply to distinguish between good and bad curricula, but to critically analyse the range of courses. They began with an account of how the current range of courses was established. The 'pioneering' vocational diploma offered by Harare Polytechnic from 1980 was followed by other programmes, including a number of

university-based theoretically oriented courses such as the Journalism and Media Studies degrees offered by the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in Bulawayo. To complement their in-depth analysis of selected curricula, Dr Mutsvairo and Dr Makwambeni conducted interviews with senior Zimbabwean journalists. They concluded by describing their research focus as a 'microcosm' of what is happening in journalism education across the world.

In contributions from the floor, Dr Clayton Peel, formerly Deputy Editor of *The Chronicle* in Bulawayo, questioned the emphasis on theory in journalism courses over the development of a journalist who produces 'clean copy'. Dr Winston Mano, of the University of Westminster, described journalists as educators but pointed to a lack of critical journalism in Zimbabwe. He made the point that journalists need to be knowledgeable and that their training should be interdisciplinary. He also pointed to the rise of 'google journalism'. Prof. Diana Jeater asked about the role of journalism in creating hegemonic structures that constricted 'room for debate'. Dr Makwambeni responded that this was not a fault of journalism training *per se*, but was about the hegemonic context that journalism finds itself in. Ideally, journalism should be in the 'public sphere' - giving society an opportunity to dialogue with itself. Journalists should realise that they are part of wider society.

### Keeping cool heads through life skills learning...

In her presentation, designed to illustrate how education can be used towards peace-building among young Zimbabweans in the current socio-political realities, **Miss Chipo Chung** reported on 'Cool Heads Peace Education', a curriculum development initiative that her mother, former Education minister Dr Fay Chung, has played a lead role in implementing. Preliminary research

included focus-group discussions with 120 young men and women in 10 different rural and urban settings in Zimbabwe. The 16- to-30-year olds were asked two questions: What are the problems? What would be useful to learn? Problems discussed included shortages of essentials such as food, accommodation, and sanitary wear, as well as opportunities for paid employment. Violence was a key concern for victims but also for those who had been forced to take part. The young people did not feel that the school curriculum as they had encountered it was relevant to their lived experience, hence the need to design a new curriculum focusing on 'soft skills'. The initiative avoided national politics, but strove to develop students' understanding of local government, to focus on peace, but also to develop life skills. The basic model starts with the individual (students exploring their own identities and inner conflicts), and moves outwards towards peer and community relations. The first module of the project follows this pattern. A pilot initiative was very well received by the young people. A 17 year old girl reported using the 'power with' technique, acquired through the module, at home with her parents and gaining greater confidence to contribute to her family circle.

Writing the module was a challenge for its authors who are used to thinking in a more didactic and less participatory way. The curriculum includes theatre games, drawing, journal writing, and other non-formal tools. Feedback from participants was positive but a third did not think it would be possible to extend the learning into their communities. It was assumed that this was due to fear of the possible consequences. It is envisaged that the programme will create support networks that extend beyond the delivery of its modules.

Chipo says the programme is in its infancy and there remain a lot of unanswered questions as the curriculum was being trialled at the time of the presentation. Much more research was needed to develop a peace education that was culturally specific to Zimbabwe.

## The War Studies Programme

The final speaker on the programme was unable to attend the research day, so **Knox Chitiyo**, who was involved in establishing the War Studies Programme at the UZ in the 1980s, gave some insights based on his experiences. One of the aims of this programme was to bridge the gap between civil society and the military, and to promote understanding, better relations, and a movement towards lasting peace. Students on the course came from different backgrounds. Dr Chitiyo's experiences of that programme, together with the discussions generated from the research day, led him to a deeper reflection about the role of the military in national education in Zimbabwe. His view was that the youth training programmes and militias, together with Higher Education in the military, really needs exploring within a research day on education. The debate about the military and education leads one to think about where the military are situated and how they are, or should be, perceived – either as agents of peace-building, or as part of defence transformation. These are questions being debated in SADC (the Southern African Development Community) and the AU (African Union). The two issues are 'military education' and 'the military and education.'

It was suggested by a member of the audience that the official National Youth Training Programme in Zimbabwe, overseen by the Ministry of Youth Development, Indigenisation and Empowerment, should be distinguished from the unofficial youth militias which claim loyalty to ZANU-PF. The distinction, if valid, needs much more scrutiny and debate than was allowed in this segment. Nevertheless, the broader relationship between the military and education in Zimbabwe was marked as significant, even though this relationship can give rise to certain contradictions.

## Plenary Discussion

### Knox Chitiyo identifies six themes that emerged

(1) The historical dimension was explored most obviously in the papers by Barbara Mahamba and JoAnn McGregor. Mrs Mahamba's paper highlighted tensions between traditional and Western approaches to education, describing schools as sites of conflict. While they could be 'engines of aspiration' schools were also, at least for girls, 'engines for the domestication'. Dr McGregor's paper, by contrast, pointed to legacies of the more recent past; as Knox noted, people are still protesting! It explored the 'contestation of diaspora identities' and told the story of how Zimbabweans have engaged with the British governments over the years.

(2) In light of Prof Bhebe's description of the current state of HE in Zimbabwe, and alongside Dr Mazarire's specific focus on UZ, Dr Chitiyo praised the individuals and groups who have taken ownership of their local problems (sometimes finding solutions) in the face of immense challenges. He linked this with a theme from Prof. Terri Barnes' paper where she described the practices of high school history teachers who circumvent the political difficulties they face in their negotiation of the inherent tensions between the patriotic and critical dimensions of the history curriculum.

(3) The importance of current 'grassroots' initiatives such as *Hlekweni*, the Stevenage-Kadoma link, and the 'virtual lecture hall' represent links that take place at the level of community, independently of state support. With reference to the global context, Dr Chitiyo noted Dennis Sinyolo's description of the global crisis and Zimbabwe's proposal for an overall, comprehensive education plan.

(4) Education for peace was a central theme of Chipo Chung's presentation. Dr Chitiyo described the broader context of this in Zimbabwe, where he believes the security sector and civilian government need to come together to develop a joint focus on the matter.

(5) The theory versus practice tension that was highlighted in Dr Mutsvairo and Dr Makwambeni's research on journalism education raises questions about the professionalism of journalism in Zimbabwe. Here, similarities were drawn between the position of teachers and journalists in Zimbabwe.

(6) Dr Chitiyo concluded that although there are huge challenges, a 'rich and broad narrative' appears to be emerging in Zimbabwe as a new dynamic of educational regeneration takes hold. Possibilities such as the potential of language learning to promote global citizenship and a 'cross-cutting strategy' for primary and secondary partnerships need to be considered. Dr Chitiyo stressed the importance of Zimbabwe's development of the work presented during the day. In particular he paid tribute to Dr Fay Chung, who had established a tradition in Zimbabwe of a curriculum development process that begins always by listening. This was exemplified in the work that Chipo, her daughter, presented.

A short discussion followed Dr Chitiyo's summary. This began with Terence Ranger adding four critical comments/questions:

- ⤴ There are too many universities in Zimbabwe. How can the establishment of a new university in (for example) Lupane be justified when UZ student accommodation has had to be closed due to malfunction?
- ⤴ Something that needs to be discussed is 'education as a commodity'; here Prof Ranger gave as an example, Bishops in

Kenya who have sought to acquire a PhD purely as a mark of status.

- ⤴ With reference to the paper on journalism education, Prof Ranger described ALL of Zimbabwe's newspapers as organs of comment rather than news.
- ⤴ With reference to Chipo's paper Prof Ranger asked how might small scale peace initiatives come together to greater effect. He suggested a conference on the subject.
- ⤴ *BZS is grateful for the support of the African Studies Centre, Oxford; the African Studies Association UK (ASAUK); and the Journal of Southern African Studies. We acknowledge also the sterling work of Alan Pagden, Zoe Groves, and George Karekwaivanane, in contributing to this report and providing administrative support.*

## **Disability Studies – Zimbabwe**

On 27 October Midlands State University launched its new Disability Studies Masters and Diploma courses – a major breakthrough for disability rights campaigners as this is only the second university in Africa to do so. In a statement, the UK-based Canon Collins Educational Trust for Southern Africa said it was 'immensely proud' of its contribution to the process, having supported Kudzai Shava to study Disability at the University of Leeds, enabling him to write a new course for MSU and the Zimbabwean context. 'We are also proud to be directly supporting this new initiative, by providing scholarships and equipment to assist with disabled access to the course. We very much hope to be able to increase our support during the course of the year and are currently fundraising for this purpose', a CCETSA spokesperson said. - Canon Collins Trust.

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## COMMUNITY LINKS

### Over £100 collected for Hlekweni at Research Day

*For 40 years, Quaker witness at Hlekweni Training Centre (the Place of Laughter), near Bulawayo, has provided vocational training in sustainable livelihoods, working alongside the people of southern Matabeleland. Friends of Hlekweni, based at Milton Keynes, is the UK-based charity whose purpose it is to raise funds for Hlekweni. The customary end-of-Research Day collection was this year dedicated to Hlekweni, and it raised the sum of £100.91. Lee Taylor, Clerk to the Trustees of Friends Of Hlekweni, is a BZS member. 'I was pleased to be at the Research Day, and glad to meet some people - only sorry that it always seem to clash with the June Woodbrooke Trustees meeting,' she said. 'I was very grateful for such a generous collection - I gave the Friends of Hlekweni Treasurer £100.91 today! Thank you, generous BZS colleagues'.*

### Good Tidings from the Community of the Holy Fire

*'We have had several weeks of triumph!' the community's September newsletter reports. 'Three of the students got their degrees...Clarah Chifana is now a Bachelor of Laws, Wiriranai Muzhingi got his degree in Biomedical Technology, and Elen Henry got hers in Pharmacy'. Another member of the students' community, Sibonile Masukume, is returning to Zimbabwe, having passed the first two ACCA exams for Chartered Accountancy, while Tendai Mashinya has enrolled with University College Birmingham to study Hotel Management. The Community of the Holy Fire is a charity based in Dinedor, Herefordshire, with strong links to Zimbabwe.*

## OBITUARY

### General Tapfumaneyi Solomon Mujuru: A mixed legacy remains

**By Dr Knox Chitiyo**

SOLOMON Mujuru's death, on 16 August 2011, in a bizarre and horrific fire at his farmhouse, was an event which profoundly affected Zimbabweans from all walks of life. An estimated 50 000 mourners – some of whom had walked for miles to attend – formed a dense throng as his remains were laid to rest at Heroes Acre. Senior representatives from the perennially feuding parties which comprise the Government of National Unity (GNU) were in attendance, as was the diplomatic corps.

With Zimbabwe's post-2009 economic recovery stalling and with the nation mired in an increasingly toxic political stand-off, Zimbabweans were able to unite, if only briefly, in memory and grief around an iconic figure. And yet, as is often the case in Zimbabwe's history, nothing is quite what it seems; the political canonisation of Mujuru is

the result of a genuine national well-spring of grief, but the reality is that Solomon Mujuru was neither a sacred saint nor a pantomime villain. He should be seen as a human being who contributed hugely, in both positive and negative ways, to the making of modern, post-settler Zimbabwe.

His contribution to the liberation struggle is undoubted; he, along with Chief Rekayi Tangwena, played a key role in organising the clandestine crossings of Robert Mugabe and Edgar Tekere into Mozambique in the mid-70s – a crossing which would re-invigorate the political leadership of ZANU. In his own right, Mujuru, who at the time had adopted the guerrilla *nom de plume* of Rex Nhongo, played a key role, in tandem with Josiah Tongogara, in implementing ZANLA's increasingly ambitious military strategy. Mujuru was a no-

nonsense military leader (although less of a disciplinarian than Tongogara) and one who was very popular with ZANLA commanders as well as the guerrilla rank and file, for his charm and earthiness. But right from the start, Mujuru showed as great a flair for self-preservation and strategic alliances, as he did for battlefield élan. He was one of the few commanders from the liberation era to have joined - and survived - all three major guerrilla armies including ZIPRA in the 60's; the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA) in 1976-77 (ZIPA was an abortive attempt to establish a joint ZANLA-ZIPRA force in Mozambique); and ZANLA again from 1977-1979.

For Mujuru to have not only survived, but also to have reached senior command level in each of these military groupings, proved that he had a keen instinct for survival and making the right friends at the right time. Although the second Chimurenga is often simplistically portrayed as a struggle between competing black and white nationalisms, this reductionism obscures the reality that the liberation war was as much a civil war as it was a struggle against white racism. Blacks fought against the Rhodesian forces; but blacks also fought for the Rhodesians in the army and Police – indeed the bulk of Rhodesian Army forces were black; the internal struggles between and within ZANU/ZANLA and ZAPU/ZIPRA were as bitter and violent as the war against the settler system, and the rural populace were tortured and killed by both guerrilla and Rhodesian forces. Black on black violence bequeathed a legacy of trauma which afflicts Zimbabwe to the present day. That Mujuru survived this era of internecine purges and battles speaks volumes about his luck – and sagacity.

His contribution during the liberation war was immense; but perhaps his greatest achievement was his key role in the creation of the Zimbabwe National Army in the early 1980s. Operation Merger – the creation of a single national army which fused Rhodesian, ZIPRA, and ZANLA forces from 1980-1983 – was a vital component of Zimbabwe's nation-building.. Had Op Merger failed, there is little

doubt that Zimbabwe would have been engulfed in a catastrophic civil war. Mujuru, as head of ZANLA, played a major role in building trust between mutually suspicious ZANLA, ZIPRA, and Rhodesian commanders and the rank and file. Following the departure of Peter Walls, Mujuru became commander of the ZNA. Largely at his insistence and against the wishes of some of his ZANLA colleagues who wanted the ZNA to be a 'revolutionary' army, the early ZNA was established along more traditional, conventional military structured lines.

Mujuru remained as the head of the ZNA until his retirement – as a full general – in 1992. Although I cannot say that I knew him well, I did meet him a few times during the late 80s and early 1990s. When the original War Studies Course was launched in 1987 as a partnership between the University of Zimbabwe and the Ministry of Defence, Mujuru – who was still known as Rex Nhongo – was guest of honour along with Robert Mugabe. At the time, I was a very young teaching assistant in War Studies and History within the History Department, and I, along with my colleague Dave Meltzer, was introduced to Mujuru. He gave us both the once over – I remember thinking that he looked young to be head of the army – and said with a smile: 'We already know how to fight. You young boys cannot teach us how to make war - but you must teach our guys how to make peace, when the time comes.'

Upon retiring from the military, Mujuru became one of Zimbabwe's most prosperous businessmen, with a string of farms and other businesses; he would also profit from the 1997 – 2003 DR Congo war and diamond trade. Mujuru also became a key power-broker within ZANU-PF, particularly within the Politburo. With ZANU-PF's political fortunes flailing following the emergence of the MDC in 2000, Mujuru launched himself full throttle into the treacherous waters of the ZANU-PF succession.

Although his military credentials, political stature, and popularity with the party rank and file might have made him a contender for national power, Mujuru preferred to work behind the scenes where he could leverage his considerable financial and political capital. He established a formidable political partnership with his wife Joice, who became Vice President in 2004. Together, the Mujurus became kingmakers and competed against the Mnangagwa group in the district and national power structures of ZANU-PF, as well as between the two MDC parties and ZANU-PF. Solomon also retained a high standing with the military; his attendance at the 2009 Zimbabwe Defence Forces Day, where he was warmly embraced by the chiefs of the armed forces as well as by Morgan Tsvangirayi, demonstrated his cross-political appeal and also hinted at a possible role as an interlocutor between the MDC and the military, a role which, sadly, remained unfulfilled.

But Mujuru had his share of missteps; his tacit support for Simba Makoni's Presidential bid in 2008 would damage Mujuru's standing in the eyes of the Party, and his insistence on Party renewal through a younger leadership found little support from Party and military hardliners who resented what they perceived as the Mujuru succession agenda. More recently, Mujuru was said to have become increasingly riled by the investiture of a new generation of hardliners within his former stamping ground, the Politburo. Apart from the political intrigues, there was also the human cost of the Mujurus' ascension to power. He was a successful farmer, and his encouragement and assistance to Zimbabwe's new generation of farmers is a lesser known achievement; but all that was scant consolation to the Watson-Smith family (former owners of Mujuru's Alamein/Ruzambu farm) who were forced, under pain of death like so many others, to cram a lifetime of endeavour into a box and a half-hour head start.

Similarly, although the bulk of the murderous excesses of the 1980s' *Gukurahundi* in Matebeleland and the Midlands were carried

out by the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade, which was not directly under his command, the *Gukurahundi* happened on his watch. Nor did he ever speak out publicly about the political violence of the past decade. Mujuru was a liberationist, but he was not a liberal.

Nevertheless, as Zimbabwe heads into an ever more uncertain political landscape, what is certain is that Solomon Mujuru was one of the makers of modern Zimbabwe.

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## **Patricia Chater: A daughter of Zimbabwe through many dangers, twists and turns**

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**By Mark Chater**

Patricia Chater, of the community of St Francis of Assisi, Rusape, died peacefully on 16 July 2011, aged 90. Her passing was very peaceful, and her family in England are particularly glad that we were able to visit her in Zimbabwe only a few months before – in April of this year – essentially to see her one last time.

She has been buried at the community of St Francis, near Rusape, where she had chosen to live.

Patricia's was a remarkable life. Having been raised in a middle-class family in rural Buckinghamshire, in her 30s she responded to an appeal to help in the community of St Faith's led by Guy and Molly Clutton-Brock. She went to live and work there, in what was considered, at the time, a radically egalitarian way.

Through many twists and turns, she stayed in Zimbabwe through UDI, the war, independence, and the terrors and deterioration of the later Mugabe years. Her two autobiographical books, *Grass Roots* and *Caught in the Crossfire*, tell the story in detail. She was quiet, unassuming, but in her very

gentle way presented a profound challenge to people of her own class and race, and an inspiration to virtually everyone who met her.

A memorial and celebration of Patricia's life has been scheduled for Saturday 5 November, 2011 in the village of Hambleden, Oxon. The celebration will begin at 1pm with a light bring-and-share lunch in the Hambleden village hall. At 2pm will be a memorial service across the street, in the church of St Mary the Virgin, where Pat worshipped as a child and young adult.

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## BOOKS

### 'Lozikeyi' (reviewed in the last issue)

Co-Author Marieke Faber Clarke writes: 'It was wonderful to see Barbara Nkala's appreciative review of my book in the latest Britain Zimbabwe Society mailing. But I was sorry that you did not include the UK distributor, who are African Books Collective. Please could you put a prominent correction in the next BZS mailing so that UK-based members know where they can get their copies from. ABC's details are on their website.'

Mary Jay of Africa Books Collective writes: 'All the details are on our Website at <http://www.africanbookscollective.com/books/lozikeyi-dlodlo> Price £29.95.'

Gender and land reforms in Zimbabwe  
and internationally:  
an overview

**By Dr. Susan Jacobs**

(Reader in Comparative Sociology, Manchester Metropolitan University)

*In this paper I focus on gender and land reform in Zimbabwe pre- and post-2000, highlighting women's experiences of redistributive reform. It is important to set the Zimbabwe example in*

*context of international experience as well as to discuss the specificity of the Zimbabwean example of gendered land reform. The section introduces comparative material, and subsequent sections discuss Zimbabwe.*

### **International experience : Gender and land**

Below I summarise 31 studies conducted within 19 countries in Asia, Latin America, eastern Europe and Africa<sup>1</sup>. The focus here is on *substantive* or empirical studies of 'household' models of land reform- where land is distributed to individual households - rather than papers discussing policy positions, which are more common. Like any policy, land reform programmes have both positive (that is, broadly beneficial) and negative impacts for women. (For a more detailed analysis see Jacobs, 2009, 2010).

Land reform has benefited (many)<sup>2</sup> women in three ways. The most important is that land reforms often (although not invariably) achieve the main aim of increasing production. Where this happens, most resettled households and people within them gain, and these usually extend to women within households. A second factor is an unintended consequence of planning procedures in many land reforms: most are formulated on the basis that families are small, encompassing two generations and are nuclear; studies indicate that many wives (and husbands) appreciate living in smaller family units away from extended families. In many studies of women and land reform, wives feel that their influence over husbands *increases* within nuclear families – although changes in family dynamics are complex, and this also implies that second or subsequent wives in polygynous households lose out. A third benefit is that in most programmes, female-headed households are allowed to claim land allocations. Their numbers typically tend to be small; nevertheless this is an important recognition of the need for land in households in which adult men are not present. Despite gains for women-headed households, detrimental aspects are more prominent for wives. This is because men as husbands, fathers or as sons usually receive land titles or

land permits as 'heads of household'. Often, this greatly increases their power within households as they become more able to act as free agents, with diminished family and community controls.

The burden of work typically increases for both men and women as households possess more land to cultivate. Women's workloads are proportionately greater, given their designation as responsible for household work and childcare. Relatedly, services are often poor or nonexistent, particularly at early stages within agrarian reform programmes. Clinics, schools, roads, markets, local government offices, and other facilities and services are often located a long distance from fields. Successful land redistribution programmes by definition attempt to build infrastructure and to provide services for residents; but great variation exists internationally in the time taken for provision and in its extent.

*Concerning women's own incomes:* Almost uniformly in studies covering Africa, Asia and Latin America, wives' own incomes as distinguished from household income, *diminished* with land reform and resettlement. Fewer opportunities existed to generate incomes; women sometimes lost land to which they had been entitled customarily, since the husband is designated as permit/title holder. In many societies, women lose trading niches and networks, at least on a temporary basis. This takes place partly because of the move to a different area; additionally in some schemes (such as Zimbabwe in the 1980s land reform) no employment outside agriculture is permitted. In general, pressure increases for wives to work on their husbands' (i.e. household) land; this can result in loss of women's own income and of status at the same time as increasing that of the household or men within it.

*Family structure and relations:* In contexts in which the patrilineal principle is strong (e.g. south, east and parts of southeast Asia and elsewhere) male bias may be *strengthened* as

an effect of the 'repeasantisation' entailed in land reforms. Examples would include increases in extent of polygyny and of son preference. Most studies report a loss of decision-making powers for wives, despite the perception of an increase in wives' *influence* within nuclear families (see above). Very strong 'moves' reflecting both policy and preconceptions push women into 'housewife' roles. These have taken place even in African contexts in which women's traditional roles encompass agricultural and other extra-household economic work. This derives in part from assumptions about the nuclear and one-generation family, but another impetus is from smallholder economies which often require family and women's labour for successful production.

Overall, in redistributionist household-model land reforms, wives have lost out while husbands have gained materially and in terms of power. In this way – and often, inadvertently, the democratic potential of land reforms is squandered.

How do these these general points about the gendered impact of land reforms in the individual household model relate to the Zimbabwean situation?

### **Zimbabwe: Gender and land resettlement - The first phase**

I first discuss findings of my own research in the 1980s, also making reference to later studies of pre-2000 land reform and then compare with several recent reports of post-2000 Fast Track land reform.

In 1983-84 I carried out fieldwork for a D.Phil; this was mainly in Mt. Darwin and Hoyuyu Resettlement Areas, with some work in other parts of Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central, and Manicaland. While carrying out the research, I also worked as a Research Associate for the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs. The research included structured interviews (questionnaires) with 201 people on Model A

(individual household) schemes.<sup>3</sup> Twenty-five focus groups were also held, at which approximately 650-700 women were contacted; other methods included in-depth interviews.

The case of Zimbabwe in the 1980s with regard to the impact of land resettlement on women differed somewhat from the general picture discussed in the section above. Women interviewed in the study did report a number of negative factors; however, the land reform pre-2000 presented a more positive scenario than that outlined in many studies elsewhere.

Negative factors included great hardship and poverty for women-headed households; poor services, although these were improving at the time; and greater work burdens. In terms of household relations, many married women felt that greater surveillance by the husband existed in Resettlement Areas as he was more continually present, and a number noted loss of autonomy within the household. It should be noted that clear differences among different strata existed; e.g. loss of autonomy was less pronounced for poorer resettled women who - against regulations - worked on others' farms for wages.

Many positive factors were noted, however. Below I outline the main ways that Zimbabwe differed from the general and rather negative picture discussed above.

i) In my study, wives reported that their *own* incomes rose with resettlement. This was for several reasons, of which the most important was the rise in household incomes and a degree of redistribution. Allison Goebel's later study (1999) confirmed the finding that women's own incomes rose within resettlements.

ii) Early regulations in Resettlement Areas meant that no employment outside RAs were permitted, or formally permitted. This 'repeasantisation' had several repercussions on work patterns, family life and women's empowerment; some of these were negative, as noted above. However, at the same time, men's

presence also meant that the family unit became stronger and couples felt themselves to be more mutually interdependent. A factor here is that extended families were further away and many wives (as well as husbands) appreciated this. In my study it was sometimes said "we work together here as a unity"; in Goebel's, similarly: "Here it is our land, the two of us" (Goebel, 1999). However, a longitudinal survey of resettled households (Kinsey, 2004) finds that extended families/patrilineages have reformed within longer-established resettled communities, so that the above may have been a temporary phenomenon.

iii) An effect of smaller family units was that husbands sometimes took greater responsibility for childcare and occasionally, domestic labour. Although women continued to do nearly all housework, some shift was evident with regard to (the more rewarding work) of childcare. Men also did far more fieldwork than previously, and this is reported in several other studies.

iv) Lastly, until 1999/2000, Resettlement Officers (ROs) administered Resettlement Areas in Zimbabwe and had quasi-judicial powers. This was an authoritarian arrangement, but in practice appears to have benefited many wives. In my study a large percentage of wives said that their husbands had become 'good husbands' in the RAs and attributed this in part to the need to maintain 'good behaviour' within the Resettlement Areas. I learned of a number of cases in which ROs adjudicated in favour of wives' claims in cases of disputes. This was particularly the case in two instances: cases of [severe] violence against women/wives, and instances of dispute between widows and husbands' families over property at the death of the husband. Gaidzanwa found that by 1995, 15% of resettled households were woman-headed (Gaidzanwa, 1995). This occurred because over time, the practice in (many) Resettlement Areas was to suspend customary law with reference to inheritance matters so that widowed women 'inherited' permits to land

and remained on the land (Goebel, 2005a). This was never enacted into law; nevertheless the practice benefited many wives. It is also of note that the suspension of customary law never went so far as to guarantee the rights of divorced women, in social situations in which the incidence of divorce and desertion was high: divorced wives were expected to leave Resettlement Areas even if they had no other means of subsistence. (For fuller discussions, see e.g. Jacobs, 1995; 2000, 2003; 2010 and Goebel 2005a).

Together, these factors indicate that the gendered effects of land resettlement pre-2000 was relatively positive for wives in comparison with other cases of land reform.

### **Gender and land reform: recent studies post-Fast Track**

Several studies of women's and land rights and claims within post - 2000 have now been published, and these add to our understanding of the gendered processes involved; these also mean that Zimbabwean land reform is one of the better-studied in comparative terms.

Before discussing specific studies, a general question is that of the extent of land allocation within Fast Track. Precise figures cannot be given as there has to date been no audit of land ownership, despite calls for this.

However, several studies have given estimates or else have given percentages for allocation to women within particular sample. The Utete Report (GOZ, 2003) reported that 18% of land within Fast Track was held by women. Scoones *et al's* large study in Masvingo reported a lower figure; 13-14% of people holding land were female within A1 schemes (Scoones *et al* 2010: 55). Mutopo cites the figure of 20% women holding land (see below).

Thus, an approximate estimate is that 15-20% recipients of land are women holding land on their own account (see also below).

Gaynor Paradza's recent (2011) study of single women's access to *matongo* fields within communal areas is of some relevance although not focussing on land reform. Paradza found that single women were often able to access land though using vacated or temporarily abandoned fields, with the consent of village leaders. Women with natal links within villages were best placed to access land. However, even with such links, access was extremely fragile and precarious. Thus temporary access helped single women and their families to survive but offered little security.

The remainder of this section outlines two recent fieldwork-based studies of gender relations and women's positioning within the Fast Track programme.

Patience Mutopo has undertaken an ethnographic study of women's livelihoods in Merrivale Farm, previously a cattle ranch in Mwenezi District, Masvingo, as part of her PhD research. Since 2000, Merrivale has been a 'villagised' farm resettled in the A1 model. The account here is based on an article (Mutopo 2010) and on the talk Patience gave, for which I was discussant, at a Royal Africa Institute talk in April, 2011 (Mutopo, 2011).

Regarding access to Fast-Track land, Mutopo found that land continued to be allocated disproportionately to men, but 20% of women had land allocated in their own right. Others women depended upon links with men, usually their husbands, as in communal areas. Although patrilineal norms with regard to landholding persisted, the administration of resettlement areas shifted to local land committees. She comments that only 'well-behaved' and fertile women (that is women with dependent children) are able to receive land offers.

Despite the challenges of farming in an arid area and in the recent circumstances of rural areas (e.g. poor services), women in this study showed themselves to be dynamic and enterprising. They cultivated crops such as

ground nuts and round (*bambara*) nuts, among others, and a number of women owned livestock. However, most settlers are not able to sustain livelihoods only through agriculture and raising livestock; a number of women in this study availed themselves of the area's proximity to South Africa and travelled across the border to trade Mopani worms, round nuts and other goods. Mutopo terms these 'mobile livelihoods' and outlines the cooperative strategies that many women use to assist one another within trading networks. Despite difficult circumstances, then, livelihoods have not collapsed – at least at Merrivale – and women's work is a core component of this resilience.

Mutopo also raises the feminist question of how household gender dynamics alter or persist in relation to women's livelihood strategies. Household dynamics have (often) altered so that husbands are more likely to assist with childcare and housework. This is both because women are physically away pursuing trading activities and because they bring resources into the household.

Here, I would comment that it is notable that the source of greater independence lies 'outside' the agricultural sphere, in women's work as traders. Women's livelihood strategies bring a measure of empowerment. Of course – as Mutopo's account also emphasises -- women then encounter other sources of discrimination and oppression outside the household, in the forms of immigration officials, popular discrimination against migrants in South Africa and generalised denigration of women...

Another contemporary study by Phides Mazhadwidza and Jeanette Mangagwa (2010) is based on interviews with 40 women in A1 and A2 resettlement areas in Goromonzi and Vungu-Gweru districts. The authors note that the current implementation of Fast Track continues to privilege men as primary recipients as well as enhancing the emerging roles of traditional authorities in the process. "Little is known about women's roles in *jambanja* and even less is known about what happened afterwards." (2010: 10) They write

that no sound mechanism exists to date to ensure that women benefit from land reform; this was noted as well by the Utete Commission (GOZ, 2003) which found marginalisation of women in decision-making processes.

Mazhadwidza and Mangagwa's study indicates more continuity with gendered land reform processes pre-2000 than might be expected, as well as some changes. The authors echo other studies in noting a lack of data concerning women's landholding within resettlement; however, in the A1 schemes they studied, it did not prove possible to make up samples of 20 as originally intended. The women they located within Fast Track in Goromonzi and Vungu-Gweru tended to be well-qualified and some previously held positions in (local) government. However, this was not the case for all women settlers, particularly widows. In terms of production, they discovered a mixed picture. In A2 small commercial farms there were problems of viability due to partial mechanisation, delayed planting and lack of access to finance. However, in the A1 smaller farms, many in the sample reported increased food security, indicating continuity with the earlier programme. Despite this positive feature, problems with services were even greater than previously, with no clinics and few schools and roads being provided. Shortages of inputs were common.

The study also explored power within households. According to married women in this sample, single women were better-off (2010: 30). A number of wives complained that their husbands controlled the land, made decisions about marketed produce – including that belonging to women. Women also referred to discrimination at community level and some felt 'bitter' about discrimination in respect of agricultural support, allocation of equipment and of inputs. Allegations of corruption were also noted (2010: 35). A senior government official noted that women with land were often subject to sexual harassment, to rumours and were victimised in

other ways in order to make them leave their plots.

This phenomenon is not specific to Zimbabwe; harassment of and attacks on women claiming or holding land have taken place globally (Jacobs 2010).

### **Changes?**

If the marginalisation and harassment of married women's land rights occurs across many societies, then it is also the case that such marginalisation is likely to be increased by the less-regulated environment that has existed since 2000. Appeals to ancestral claims or to populism are not usually positive for women. However, here the earlier caveat about differences and divisions among women is relevant: some women are better placed by ethnic, social class and other positioning than others, to benefit from Fast Track land redistribution. These may figure strongly among the 15-20% of female beneficiaries within the new programme.

There are aspects of the Fast Track programme that are, however, straightforwardly positive for most women. In particular, where couples are married, spouses' names are meant to appear on invitation letters.<sup>4</sup> Another is that District and Land Committees have some jurisdiction to resolve disputes, and this (at least potentially) more inclusive a forum than the Resettlement Officer system. The Land Committees in some study areas were reported as being gender sensitive.

### **Conclusion:**

It appears that the 'mixed picture' of gender within Zimbabwean land reforms continues post-2000. Despite the fraught context, some gains have been made including listing wives' as well as husbands' names on offer letters. The number of women holding land themselves appears to be about the same or slightly greater than in the first wave of land reform; are though a number are relatively privileged, at least a proportion are poor.

The overall context is of importance, evidently. Although livelihoods may not have completely collapsed, they remain constrained. Here, women's ability to use non-agricultural livelihoods strategies contributes to survival and sometimes, to more stable livelihoods. The context of political violence is of relevance, and many rural women women have suffered political as well as 'everyday' violence (see Jacobs, 2000; 2003; Goebel, 2005b). Contexts in which violence is common are unlikely to be ones in which women are empowered.

The Zimbabwean authors cited above, suggest some of the following as measures that might benefit rural women.

- enhancing security of tenure for women and lobbying for women's issues to be included in a land audit;
- ensuring that state and NGO programmes are gender sensitive;
- enhancing women's capacity to organise collectively and autonomously.

I would add two points: it is unusual for women to be able to organise collectively in the absence of ability of social movements to organise more generally. And measures against violence against women (VAW) are crucial to ensure land as well as other rights. Such measures may await a wider transition.

### **Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> Land reforms can either distribute land to collectives or to individual households. With regard to the 'household' model studied here, the number of empirical case studies are relatively few because gender within agrarian and land reforms are little-studied. The 31 cases cited cover the following countries: Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile; China, El Salvador; Ethiopia; Honduras; Hungary, India, Iran, Kenya, Libya, Mexico, Nicaragua; Peru, South Africa, Tanzania, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.

<sup>2</sup> 'Women' are not a unified category but as is well-rehearsed, are divided by social class, social status, 'race' and ethnicity; religion, sexuality, generation and other. However, here I sometimes refer to women as a generic group due to lack of space for elaboration.

<sup>3</sup> The 201 people in on Model A (individual household) schemes interviewed in my study consisted of 99 wives,

62 husbands (of the women sampled) and 40 widows/women household heads. As well as the 25 focus groups mentioned, interviews were also conducted with 15 key informants. An additional 20 in-depth interviews /discussions were held with resettled women and men. Another 120 people on Model B (production cooperatives) were interviewed; however not included here.

<sup>4</sup> At the same time, in the sample the Mazhawidza and Mangagwa (2010) sample, most women did not believe that the offer letter indicated security as these could be overridden by local forces, and particularly, by chiefs.

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