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# **An investigation into the marginalisation of adolescent girls from the agrarian structure and its impacts on their livelihoods in Africa: Experiences from Zimbabwe**

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## Executive Summary

The paper provides a nuanced and grounded understanding of how young girls relate to agriculture with special emphasis on land ownership, labour, participation in agricultural policy making. In particular, it questions how agriculture can enhance young women's empowerment. It is based on research carried out in five districts across Zimbabwe. The study was initially a qualitative inquiry in Mazowe concentrating on in depth interviews, focus group discussions and life histories of adolescent girls. In the process of finishing this fieldwork there was an opportunity to increase the scope of the study to include four other districts across Zimbabwe. The research was done under the auspices of Ruzivo Trust from December 2012 to January 2013. This included a quantitative survey and qualitative case studies with adolescent youths in Gokwe South, Chimanimani and Goromonzi. Major findings of the study include the following:

*Ownership of land:* Young women lack access to land due to patriarchal norms and systems which privilege male ownership of land. Whilst official figures are scant on the age of beneficiaries a key informant at the Ministry of Lands indicated that women under twenty years constitute less than a percent of those who got land. Most young girls who got farms are daughters of political elite and their names were used a cover for multiple farm ownership.

*Skills and literacy levels:* Young women in rural areas are disadvantaged with low levels of education and literacy. This affects their livelihoods and options. In areas such as Mangwe majority of youths have migrated to neighbouring countries to look for menial jobs. Agricultural skills and education are instrumental in production, land management and farm management. Majority of young women in the study sites did not finish secondary school. There are thus very few who are attaining higher education and without ordinary levels most girls cannot get vocational training. Without education there is very little young women can do to escape poverty.

*Access to assets and financial resources:* Young women have fewer chances to obtain capital or credit and assets: Access to credit in rural financial institutions is often tied to availability of collateral (usually land) that young women do not have. Financing in rural areas has largely left out women in general although financial institutions are prohibited from discriminating against women in granting loans, most rural women are disadvantaged because they lack collateral security. Challenges in accessing rural financing are not peculiar to young women. It is a problem for all rural people

*Exclusion from decision making at all levels:* Adolescents are not involved in decision making from the household

to the national level. They are not part of any committees, associations or agrarian groups.

*Exclusion in policy discussions and instituted policies:* National policies rarely feature the concerns or issues of young people on the future of food, farming and development.

The recommendations provided in this report include: Investing in agricultural education and training of young women; Improve legal literacy on inheritance laws in the rural areas; Implement a gender sensitive policy which corrects the discriminatory nature of customary law; Ensure access to land for young females; Ensure access to finance and support services for young rural women.

## 1.0 Introduction

The paper provides a nuanced and grounded understanding of how young girls relate to agriculture with special emphasis on land ownership, labour, participation in agricultural policy making. In particular, it questions how agriculture can enhance young women's empowerment. It offers an analysis of the gender-food security nexus with particular interest in adolescent females in Africa. Africa's agrarian future is in its youth yet they remain marginalised from processes at all levels. With debates around the new scramble for Africa, climate change, new agrarian questions, rising food prices and bio fuels; the fate of adolescent girls in Africa has been neglected from the debates. Adolescent girls find themselves at the intersection of this marginalisation as they deal with disadvantages stemming from gender, age, geographical location and class. The main objective of the study was to document and analyse the marginalisation of adolescent girls from agrarian structure and issues in Zimbabwe and how this in turn impacts on their livelihoods. It questions how the marginalisation of adolescent girls from land ownership impacts on their livelihood.

This paper maps the roles and activities carried out by adolescent girls in agriculture. The paper ends by offering recommendations on how to secure livelihoods of adolescent girls by including them in agrarian structures. Contributions made by rural women should be understood within the social and cultural governance system of rural areas, in which patriarchy plays a key role in determining how and to what extent they should be involved in national processes of development. Structural and cultural discrimination continues to hamper the effective human development of rural women, and as such this requires some level of interventions at a national level. This can be evidenced by their lack of access to productive resources such as land, water, minerals and financial resources. Despite various laws and policies that are meant to benefit women, it is mostly urban, educated women who benefit from these laws.

## 2.0 Contextual background

Adolescents are not a homogenised group with similar interests and problems. However, girl adolescents have historically faced disadvantage across Africa because they are found at the intersection of age and gender which leaves them vulnerable to main things such as HIV infection. The World Health Organization (2008) defines adolescents as aged 10 to 19 years, an age span that overlaps with UN definitions of children (0 to 18 years) and youth (15 to 24 years). Adolescence is a term constructed by Stanley Hall in 1904 to describe the period between childhood and adulthood (Hall 1916). As a transition towards adulthood, adolescence is a very important as it shapes adulthood. How we treat our adolescents in terms of education, health care and equality determines not only their future but futures of communities and nations. Thus what happens in adolescence can either empower or hinder girls in adulthood. Adolescence for girls is therefore a transition into new realms of discrimination, vulnerability and risks but also, with the appropriate support, new opportunities (Bruce 2003).

Programs with the particular characteristics that are necessary to h adolescent girls are rare. Such programs recognize that adolescents are neither “large children” nor “mini-adults.” Instead, they are individuals in transition facing a complex constellation of challenges (Temin and Levine 2009). The statement below surmises the context under which adolescents in Africa find themselves in.

Worldwide adolescent girls are vulnerable and disadvantaged just because of who they are: girls who are adolescent. In many parts of the world, this is the time when girls are moved into the roles of wives and mothers – in Tanzania over 50 per cent of 19 year olds have a child. The majority have little or no education, little or no economic assets or opportunities, few friends or confidantes, and little chance to be the subjects of their own development. Thus, they become less and less visible, less and less connected with the mainstream of the societies of which they are supposed to be part. In time, they fall victim to the social outcomes that deliver negative biological outcomes, including HIV infection and AIDS (Phillips 2006).

Gregson et al. (2002) found that about 17 percent of 19-year-old girls in Zimbabwe were infected with HIV, compared with about 3 percent of boys their age. In terms of HIV and AIDS rural women in Zimbabwe have largely been neglected in the programmes, projects and plans initiated by the government since 2003 due to the financial constraints facing the country. Rural women between 16 and 24 are among most at risk population. The 2005/06 Demographic and Health Survey revealed an average prevalence rate among young people of age 15 to 24 of 11.25 percent among females and 4.45 percent among males. The number of HIV positive women in rural areas has been increasing due to migration as the

husbands go to search for employment in urban areas or across the borders in South Africa and Botswana, such that due to cultural and societal norms, the women cannot negotiate for safe sex when their husbands return during short periodic visits. The women also have the role of looking after the terminally ill especially grandmothers as most of the active population is perishing due to the pandemic and women constitute more than 95 percent of all the care givers involved in home based care (Jamela 2011).

## 3.0 Methodological Approach

The research was based on two tier process building up from a single case study of Mazowe district to cover five districts across Zimbabwe. The first study in Mazowe included a qualitative approach in which twelve in depth interviews, four focus group discussions, three life histories and eight key informant interviews were conducted. The participants were purposively sampled from Mazowe district. The power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich-cases for in-depth analysis related to the central issues being studied. It uses common sense and the best judgment in choosing the right habitations, and meeting the right number of right people for the purpose of your study. Mazowe district is made up of new resettlement areas (A1 and A2) and communal areas. The participants were drawn from both resettlement areas and communal areas. In resettlement areas the focus was mainly on adolescents living and working on A1 farms (children of farmers and farm workers). In the process of finishing this fieldwork there was an opportunity to increase the scope of the study to include four other districts across Zimbabwe. The research was done under the auspices of Ruzivo Trust from December 2012 to January 2013. This was part of a wider study focusing on the gender scoping of the agricultural sector. The data collected in the quantitative survey was thus not specific to young girls although many issues about youths were included. There was however a special focus on youths when conducting the qualitative aspects of the study. Such an approach allowed for a wider coverage of the country which has multiple agricultural zones. The five districts were chosen based on the following:

- Agro ecological regions<sup>2</sup>: Region I (Chimanimani); II (Mazowe, Goromonzi); III and IV (Gokwe South) and V (Mangwe)
- Farming systems and farmer type (large and small) in at least tenure regimes (A1, A2 and Communal) being practised in Zimbabwe;
- Widespread provincial focus as the districts selected relate also specific provinces.

A total of one thousand five hundred questionnaires were administered to men and women of various ages in the five districts. The qualitative methods focusing on young women achieved the following in each district: two in depth interviews; two focus group discussions

Figure 1. Map of Zimbabwe



and two life histories. This was enhanced with interviews with key informants at district level. In addition to this fieldwork, national level interviews were conducted with various stakeholders based in Harare. Among these were key ministries, farmer unions and other stakeholders (See Appendices). A comprehensive desk review was undertaken and this assisted in establishing a clear understanding of status of girls in agriculture in Zimbabwe. The secondary data collected and analysed includes but not limited to policy and programme documents, project documentation, internal and external reports in government, analysis of legal documents e.g. Agricultural related legislations, Rural District Councils Act, Traditional Leaders Act, Communal Lands Act, among others.

#### 4.0 Conceptual Framing

The paper uses Intersectionality Theory (Crenshaw 1991) to understand the “invisibility” of young women which is exacerbated by cultural traditions of low status, stigmatization, and gender stereotypes. These stereotypes are used to justify the nature of their work and livelihoods, their enforced seclusion and, at times, even their detention. Intersectionality Theory allows for an understanding of how age, gender, class, ethnicity, religion and race intersect to create unequal conditions for adolescent girls. Adolescence is an important time in the development of human being. Policy debates, programming, discussions and research in Africa have tended to concentrate on young girl children and women. The decade of adolescence largely marginalized yet it offers a critical opportunity to intervene in girls’ life and change the course of their lives. For example if we

manage to delay marriage, reduce work burdens and increase equality; we can increase chances to continue with education and help better their lives. Without removing structural obstacles that force adolescent girls to the margins we only promote a passage of poverty and disadvantage to the next generation.

Crenshaw provides a theoretical orientation that explains the interplay of various factors in explaining an individual’s position. Intersectionality is a term used to describe the multiple oppressions that women and people of color face (Crenshaw 1991). The theory of intersectionality stresses complexity yet not all categories are necessarily mentioned and researchers choose which ones are important within their context. The theoretical basis of Intersectionality approach involves viewing societal knowledge as being located within an individual’s specific geographic and social location. This theory also analyzes how various social and culturally constructed categories interact on multiple levels to manifest themselves as inequalities within society. Female adolescent experiences in Africa are shaped by an intersectionality of various factors such as education, employment status, class, age, physical condition, nationality, citizenship, race and ethnicity. These factors can be spatial and temporal producing differing experiences of gendered and aged lives. Intersectionality holds that the classical conceptualizations of oppression within society, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and religion-based bigotry, do not act independently of one another; instead, these forms of oppression interrelate, creating a system of oppression that reflects the “intersection” of multiple forms of discrimination (Knudsen 2006). Systems

of oppression are thus interlocked and policy needs to respond to this intersection of marginality.

## 5.0 Zimbabwe's Agrarian Structure and Adolescent Girls

The agrarian structure in Zimbabwe is made up of different tiers of land ownership and administration all of which are dominated by men (and a few older women). Women generally have little control over land yet they constitute an estimated 86 percent of those who work the land (Manjengwa and Mazhawidza 2009). Agrarian structure is made up of communal areas and newly resettled areas. Matondi (2012) describes communal areas as land under customary tenure where land rights are acquired and held in terms of customary law which means that land is effectively state land, because it is held in trust by the president, with management rights given to the Rural District Council and traditional leaders. Women's entitlement to land in the communal lands comes only through marriage (Chakona 2011). Young women thus can only have some form of usufruct rights upon being married whilst young men get land from their fathers when they get married and start families. Zimbabwe has a dual legal system which recognises customary law within communal areas. Chakona (2011) shows that women are not customarily allocated land in their own right, although some divorced women may be granted fields after returning to their natal home. Women's land rights are deprived under customary where inheritance and property distribution after divorce heavily benefits males (Tsikata 2001). Yet men remain central heirs and holders of land rights particularly in patrilineal communities under customary land tenure regimes, as well as in more 'modern' formalised property relations.

There are old resettlement areas which were created in the 1980s. Chiweshe (2011) notes that Zimbabwe government embarked on land reform programme at independence. This is now known as Land Reform and Resettlement Programme – Phase 1 (1980-2001) which led to the redistribution of 3.6 million hectares to 76,000 families. The beneficiaries were allocated land in four resettlement models of varying sizes and land use. The beneficiaries included landless poor, graduates of agricultural colleges, and individuals with established

farming experience, and to other disadvantaged groups such as women. Only 5 percent of women benefited during this earlier phase of land reform. After Fast Track Land Reform Programme in 2000 there were two resettlement models that were adopted namely A1 and A2. The A1 model provides smaller plots to communal areas residents and others who lack the capital or expertise to qualify for the A2 scheme. Under A1 Model each household is allocated 6 hectares of arable land<sup>3</sup>, a stand to build a house (in a village), communal grazing land, woodlots and water points. A2 Model scheme is composed of individual plots of land that are classified as small, medium and large-scale commercial schemes. This was a way to increase the number of black commercial farmers. The plots are big and at times whole farms were taken over by individual. By 2010, there were 16,386 beneficiaries of which 12 percent were women.

Small Scale Commercial Areas (SSCAs) have farms with an average size of 125 hectares. There are 8,500 farms and a population of 170,000 (Matondi 2012). The farms are owned freehold tenure but still dominated by males. Young women have little access because of the land prices and inheritance systems that prefer male heirs. Yet young women are an integral part of these communities through providing productive and reproductive roles. There are also large scale farming sector in Zimbabwe. This has largely been disrupted by the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. It now consists of a few remaining white farmers occupying an estimated 1 million hectares and black commercial farmers who bought commercial farms after independence. The majority of these farmers are members of the Zimbabwe Commercial Farmers Union. The sector is male dominated with an only a few older women involved. Young girls are sidelined and are only involved as farm workers offering cheap labour.

## 6.0 Findings

### 6.1 Experiences of young women in rural Zimbabwe

Girls take over many roles within rural areas with the most important being the provision of unpaid domestic and farm labour. Labour is an expensive aspect of all farming activities especially where farmers lack mechanisation. Children become an important source of labour for parents who depend on their own labour.

**Table 1: Source of labour**

	Gender	
	Male (%)	Female (%)
Own labour	80.9	76.2
Children	26	30.5
Relatives	3.4	5.9
Casual labour	31.6	28
Friends	2.7	3.4
Work parties	9.4	4.4

Findings from the survey show that the majority of male and female respondents (80.9 percent and 76.2 percent respectively) use their own labour (Table 1). Children also form an important part of farm labour force as 26 percent of male and 30.5 percent of female respondents use them for agricultural activities. They provide unpaid labour and in cases where mothers are fully involved in agriculture adolescent girls take over all domestic chores.

The importance of girls to agricultural labour within rural Zimbabwe is difficult to quantify as they take over many roles which include cooking, cleaning, caring for children, sick and elderly, fetching water, digging, weeding and harvesting. They are however rarely involved in marketing or decision making activities. It is household heads (both male and female) who make decisions about where and what to market.

At local levels in communal areas there are traditional and developmental structures responsible for land administration and social issues. There are many competing agencies of authority in communal areas including local councillors, traditional leaders (including chiefs and kraal heads), district administrators and various other state agents. In the resettlement areas this includes the Lands Officer and the District Lands Committee, and these claim a level of control over the rural farmer. In large part, Zimbabwe has three formal hierarchies of governance, namely a customary chiefly system, a multi-sectoral hierarchy of government ministries and local government, namely, rural district councils. In all these various institutions representation of adolescent girls is zero. There are not on committees, their interests are not represented by anyone. Age influences not only access to physical resources but also engagement in social networks and decision-making positions.

In communal areas, village development committee (VIDCOs) lack a female youth representation similar to the committees of seven on A1 farms. There is a gender representative in all these committees who is usually an older woman whose interests coincide marginally with young girls. At higher levels within district, provincial and national structures young girls are not seen as older enough to occupy any positions of authority. Whilst this may be true there is also no mechanism to ensure that their voices are included in policy making. In Zimbabwe there is a Ministry of Youth and Indigenisation but adolescent girls in all five districts have not received any assistance from them. The ministry seems preoccupied

with an indigenisation of foreign owned mines and major industries at the expense of rural youths. The interests and challenges facing young women are not an important consideration within the ministry. In the five districts there is a lack of youth oriented civil society organisations geared towards youth participation. This paints a picture of a rural female youth population at the periphery of decision making structures without any way of having their voice heard.

Interviews with two major farmer unions indicated how they lack youth wings. The youth are not seen as an important constituent within the agrarian structure. A representative from the Zimbabwe Farmers Union noted that they have a gender wing but nothing for the youth. Women are defined as a homogenous group yet they differ in the context they find themselves under. Whilst I could not access ages of members of farmer unions, it is clear that no youths are involved given the need to pay a subscription fee. From the survey only 3.7 percent of the respondents belonged to a farmer union. Thus even the older farmers are not joining farmer unions. Farmer unions are doing very little to attract younger women who are left without any organisation to represent their views. In the five districts youths are doing very little in terms of organising for agriculture. There are no youth cooperatives, commodity groups or associations. Female youths have no spaces to meet and share experiences. They are not organised in a way that ensures they have a body to represent grievances and advocate on their behalf.

The story for most young girls growing in rural Zimbabwe is bleak. Young girls have little access to education, skills and productive assets such as land. Across the districts the storyline is similar for girls coming from poor households. Marriage is the only 'option' and in some cases it is to older men in polygamous situations. The quality of education and schooling is so poor which means that the few that continue with school do not pass the national examinations. Informal discussions with adult males and females during the research indicated how marriage was the only path for young girls to follow. Even the majority of girls targeted in this research did not look further than marriage. They had no dreams or hope beyond becoming housewives. Box 1 below is a story told by a teenage girl in Mazowe about how her mother and aunts have consistently told her about marriage since she was eight or nine.

#### Box 1: Experience of a teenager in Mazowe

Growing up my mother has always told me that I need to be a good girl to find a good husband. Being a good girl means doing all the household chores and working very hard in the fields. School was not a viable option as my parents could not afford to keep in school beyond primary school. Getting a good husband from a family with resources will be the best thing for me and my family. My aunts keep telling me that it is the destiny of every girl to get married and have her own family. I do not have any relatives in town where I can go and hope to find work. There is no one giving us loans or training to start small projects. The only way to survive to get married. We are just waiting for marriage.

Source: Fieldwork 2012

In Gokwe South participants in the focus group discussions indicated that girls started to get married aged 13. This poses serious risks in pregnancy and social development of children. The men indicated that whilst they would cut portions of land for out of school sons they did not do the same for girls because they were too weak to handle the work. Yet our survey shows that young women are spending many hours in the fields. Another elderly woman in Chimanimani indicated that girls would eventually get married thus there was no need to give them land whilst in Goromonzi people cited shortage of land as the reason for refusing young women land. The idea of marriage was universal to all the study sites. Marriage is viewed as the ultimate goal for all girls. Without empowering young women with access to productive assets and resources they will continuously be married off and the cycle of poverty continues for their children.

One of the biggest challenges facing rural adolescents is the lack of skills and low educational levels. Agricultural skills and education are instrumental in production, land management and farm management. Majority of young women in the study sites did not finish secondary school. There are thus very few who are attaining higher education and without ordinary levels most girls cannot get vocational training. Without education there is very little young women can do to escape poverty. The national ordinary level results for 2012 had only about 18 percent of those who wrote nationwide passing. In the rural schools it is rare to find any with the required passes to proceed to advanced level. On fast track farms the situation is even worse given the lack of proper schools and social services in these areas. In any land reform programme, the provision of social services such as schools, health facilities, transport and social welfare is critical. However, the government of Zimbabwe adopted a resettlement first, services later approach. There was no concerted effort to provide the new communities with social services in terms of water, health, education and sanitation. The schools were established in farm houses, tobacco barns and farm shades. There are no books or proper educational infrastructure. The teachers are not qualified and are in shortage. Given the state and quality of education it is difficult to expect passes from such schools.

Failure by these schools to produce good passes means that rural girls do not get the necessary qualifications to apply for places at agricultural colleges. On farm skills development tends to concentrate on older farmers for example beneficiaries of training programmes in Gokwe and Mazowe were all above twenty seven years. When people talk of capacitating farmers, they invariably mean those who are male and old. Young women are not defined as farmers yet it might be worthwhile to invest skills in their young brains. Youths are still energetic and enthusiastic thus are better placed to receive and understand training. In all the five districts, the extension officers noted that there many a few organisations who come to train farmers on various aspects of agriculture. The trainings are for a few days and it is difficult to

ascertain how and if they have improved farmers. Such training sessions however only involve very few youths.

## **6.2 Exclusion of young women from finance and marketing roles**

Rural entrepreneurship and financing is critical to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. Financing in rural areas has largely left out women in general although financial institutions are prohibited from discriminating against women in granting loans, most rural women are disadvantaged because they lack collateral security. Challenges in accessing rural financing are not peculiar to young women. It is a problem for all rural people as noted by an extension officer in Chimanimani who said that, 'communal farmers have no access to any form of capital or support. They rely on their own finances and help from remittances.' Without collateral, most farmers cannot borrow from financial institutions. In the survey the majority of small holder farmers are in the communal areas where land is communally owned. They do not have a legal claim to the land thus they cannot use it as collateral. This is the same for A1 farmers who and the majority of A2 farmers who have offer letters but no leases or title deeds. The land is thus essentially dead capital.

Young women are seen by financial institutions as high risk as they do not have any formal form of income activity or assets. The financial needs of adolescent females require an innovative programme that builds their capacity to repay loans. Another challenge associated with finance is the ignorance surrounding financial matters of most young people. Financial literacy is very low and there is a lack of trusted sources on financial matters. One young woman in Goromonzi noted 'we do not know where and how to look for financial help. No one comes here to tell us anything. The procedures are not explained to us at all.' Young girls are thus neglected from any news concerning financial issues. Discussions with officers at the Ministry of Youth and Indigenisation showed that whilst there have been many programmes to provide seed funding to youths, the majority of beneficiaries are from urban areas. The loans are given through banks and require project proposals. Rural youths have little knowledge about these programmes and do not have the capacity to produce proposals. Travelling to banks to apply for the loans is also challenging given the costs involved.

Experiences from the study sites showed that young women are not involved in decision making about marketing of produce. In an interview with a young woman in Gokwe she noted the following: 'we are children and as such no one consults us on anything. We only wait to get fed and go to school.' Table 2 below indicates that from our sample young children are never involved in decisions on small or big livestock. It is fathers who make decisions on big livestock (59.5 percent) on big livestock which fetch high prices for example average prices for cattle ranged between US\$200 to US\$300 per cow at the time of our study. This is because in terms of

**Table 2: Decision making on livestock marketing**

Decision maker	Small livestock		Big livestock	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Father	476	31.7	892	59.5
Mother	679	45.2	408	27.2
Commodity group	16	1.1	194	12.9
Relatives	5	0.3	2	0.1
Adult children	15	1.0	4	0.3
Both mother and father	50	3.3	0	0
Not answered	259	17.3	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Ruzivo Survey (2013)

ownership there were no young girls in all five districts owning any form of livestock. Without ownership there is no authority for decision making.

The lack of authority extends to control of income from marketing. In both male and female headed households it is adults decide on what to do with income. In 37.9 percent of the cases the decision is taken by both parents (Table 3 below) on what to do with income. In Goromonzi one elderly noted that, 'financial issues are beyond the scope of children as such we do not involve them. I am the parent, why should I ask my daughter for advice. The voices of young children are thus not sought in deciding what to do with income. This is why most needs of young girls are rarely met as most parents (especially male) have little idea about what they require. In interviews with young girls in Mazowe there was disappointment in how their needs especially around sanitary ware were not being met. One girl noted that 'my father is the one who goes to the market. He gets all the money but does not even know that I and my sister require sanitary pads. If he had his way we would not even attend school.' Many young girls leave school at early ages. In Gokwe, the education officer estimated that at least half of girls of school going age are not in school and that very few get to finish school.

In Mangwe young girls have followed footsteps of their male counterparts in migrating to South Africa and Botswana. With very little in terms of opportunities, the majority of young people are opting for menial jobs across the borders. This has led to a missing generation within the Matebeleland regions. Agrarian based livelihoods in this dry region hold very little promise for young people leading to a drain in domestic labour. According to one

parent, 'there is nothing for youths in this place. The schools are bad and no one passes, it is better to go find a job outside the country or else to go and become *mukorokoza* (gold panner)'. Migration has become a survival strategy of young men and women. The age of those migrating is as young as eleven which leads to questions about the safety and abuse of young migrants who mostly migrate without proper documentation.

### 6.3 Fast track land reform and marginalisation of young women

Sadomba (2008) notes that unemployed youths were part of the movement that participated in the land occupations but this is not expressed in the land ownership patterns that emerged post land reform. This clearly highlights that age is an important factor in social organisation and it affects the social capital one can acquire within the community. Patriarchal cultural practices have been replicated in the newly resettled areas. Land ownership and control in Zimbabwe is gendered. Women (especially young women) have remained at the periphery of the land issue as the events of 2000 (land occupations) involved mostly men and a few women because of the perceived violence involved. A radical programme such as the one carried out in Zimbabwe offered a chance for the reorganisation of gender patterns in land ownership. Unlike in communal areas where the land is traced to the husband/man's lineage, land in the resettlement is effectively state land. My interest in women's relationship to the land went beyond mere numbers of how many owned land but analysed the various relationships women in different

**Table 3: Control of the income from marketing**

Who controls proceeds	Frequency	%
Father	496	33.1
Mother	436	29.1
Both	568	37.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Ruzivo Survey (2013)

**Table 4: Summary of all provinces: Allocation patterns by gender per province**

Province	A1				A2 <sup>4</sup>			Total %
	No of males	%	No of females	%	No of males	%	No of females	
Midlands	14800	82	3198	18	338	95	17	5
Masvingo	19026	84	3644	16	709	92	64	8
Mash Central	12986	88	1770	12	1469	87	215	13
Mash West	12782	81	5270	19	1777	89	226	11
Mash East	12967	76	3992	24	*	*	*	*
Mat South	7754	87	1169	13	215	79	56	21
Mat North	7919	84	1490	16	574	83	121	17
Manicaland	9572	82	2190	18	961	91	97	9
Total	106986	82	22723	18	6043	88	796	12

Source: The Presidential Land Review Committee Report (TPLRCR), 2003

circumstances have with land. In my case it was the age of the women land owners. Whilst official figures are scant on the age of beneficiaries a key informant at the Ministry of Lands indicated that women under twenty years constitute less than a percent of those who got land. Most young girls who got farms are daughters of political elite and their names were used a cover for multiple farm ownership.

The Fast Track Land Reform Programme had the potential to ensure radical changes to women's ownership of land as people settled on formerly white owned farms with little patriarchal claims. Yet land reform in Zimbabwe mainly privileged men as primary recipients of resettlement land, and the involvement of traditional authorities in the land reform process continues to marginalise women (Goebel 2005). Patriarchal cultural practices have been replicated in the newly resettled areas. Land ownership and control in Zimbabwe is gendered and aged. Women have remained at the periphery of the land issue as the events of 2000 (land occupations) involved mostly men and a few women because of the perceived violence involved. A radical programme such as the one carried out in Zimbabwe offered a chance for the reorganisation of gender patterns in land ownership. Unlike in communal areas where the land is traced to the husband/man's lineage, land in the resettlement is effectively state land.

Goebel (2005:10) argues that the tenuousness of women's relationship to resettlement land must be understood through the lens of culture and ritual, particularly through the ways in which tradition 'is being deployed in the resettlement context.' Kesby (1999:29) adds that the linkages between land and tradition are profoundly about the construction and reconstruction of masculinity. Men have dominated the land reform process since independence in Zimbabwe. Generally the resettlement policy has maintained the approach to land which is commonly associated with Shona custom. This approach prevents married women from gaining access to land in their own right. Table 1 above indicates that under A1 women got 18 percent and under A2 only 12

percent. This marginalisation of women is disturbing in Zimbabwe given that they constitute more than 52 percent of the total population of Zimbabwe (National Gender Policy of Zimbabwe 2004) and more than 60 percent of the women in Zimbabwe depend on farming (Matondi 2008:45).

Much has been written in the literature around the negative impacts of the program on farm workers (Sachikonye 2003; Magaramombe 2004; Masiwa and Chigejo 2003; Marongwe 2002). Marongwe (2002) highlights that land reform led to loss of jobs and income, while provision of services such as health and sanitation, HIV counselling and Home Based Care (HBC), and the construction of Blair toilets by advocacy nongovernmental organisations such as the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe were curtailed. The farm worker community in the region where the current research was conducted is predominantly female with over thirty percent being of foreign descent. These are mostly second- or third generation immigrants whose parents or grandparents had moved to Zimbabwe (or the former Rhodesia prior to independence in 1980) as migrant labourers from Malawi, Zambia or Mozambique. Prior to the introduction of the Citizenship Amendment Act (2001), many of these 'foreign' farm workers had been entitled to Zimbabwean nationality under the country's Constitution and the Citizenship of Zimbabwe Act. Indeed, many of them had lived in Zimbabwe their entire lives and had no formal links with the countries of their ancestral origin (Ridderbos 2009). This lack of citizenship makes it impossible for them to obtain national identity cards or birth certificates which are required to register into treatment programmes.

Within the farm worker community there are girls as young as fourteen who are already mothers and wives. These young mothers and wives, because of their age, appear to be more vulnerable to HIV because they are physically and economically less powerful than all other groups. They cannot negotiate for safe sex and their livelihoods depend on men who use this to their advantage. One such young wife indicated that:

My husband is the one who decides when and how we have sex. I got married when I was twelve, four years ago. I do not know the age of my husband but I think he is forty years old. When he wants sex here is nothing I can do even if I have heard stories of him sleeping with other women in the compound. You do as you are told.

There was never any discussion of condoms or safe sex. Older women noted that they have known women who have been beaten up for demanding safe sex. Whilst there are a multiplicity of issues affecting vulnerability and lack of access to treatment of farm worker women, the lack of access to antiretroviral therapy remains an important factor. Young girls born within farm worker communities have limited opportunities to escape poverty, sexual abuse and early marriages. They do not have access to education or productive assets thus depend on men for survival.

#### 6.4 Land, ownership, governance, inheritance on fast track farms

All land conflicts pertaining to A1 farmers and in some cases A2 farmers are heard and deliberated upon by the District Lands Committee (DLC). The committee is made up of District Administrator, Mazowe Rural District Council, representatives of key line ministries such as resettlement and agriculture, police, army, party officials (ZANU PF), agricultural extension department and chiefs. The various components that make up this committee however work in isolation in land administration without knowledge of other members. For example chiefs are resentful of this arrangement since they consider themselves and are recognised by law as the custodians of the land yet in reality they do not have any power to make decisions over land. This has led to situations where chiefs have acted alone to demarcate farms and give them to new beneficiaries without knowledge of the DLC. Most A2 conflicts are dealt with by the Provincial Lands Committee (PLC) which is chaired by provincial governor and is composed of provincial level government leadership, district administrators, war veterans, police, Central

Intelligence Organization and the ZANU PF. The PLC can make decisions at provincial level which can be enforced at district level.

Land governance structures remain male dominated with only a few elderly women involved in decision making positions. Decisions over land remain steeped in patriarchal norms and values over land which disadvantage women (especially young women). As such women are mostly disadvantaged as by decisions which are based on patriarchal norms on land ownership. Such norms include the belief that widows or daughters cannot inherit land as they can be married and the land will be lost by the clan forever. DLC remains an ad hoc committee without any backing of a statutory legal basis. Given that there was no legal statutes guiding their decision making process they had to rely on their own judgment and some directives given from the central government on what they needed to do. It is on this basis that the committees were accused of being corrupt, unaccountable, unfair, and discriminatory (Matondi and Dekker 2010).

Findings from the survey indicate that the majority of male (73.7 percent) and female (72.7 percent) prefer to leave land with their sons (see table 5 below). Male child inheritance is a cultural and patriarchal phenomenon validated by the now infamous *Magaya vs. Magaya* case of 1999 the Supreme Court ruled that it was not discriminatory for the court to rule that an African woman had no right to inherit property from her late father since the Constitution permitted this discrimination. Only 6.7 percent of the total population would want daughters to inherit their land. This was summed up by one woman in Gokwe who noted, *'leaving my land with my daughter would mean that when she gets married the land will be lost to vatorwa (strangers) as her husband will assume control.'* Land is seen as belonging to the patriarchy including ancestors thus it should not be lost.

The issue of inheritance elicits very emotional debates in patrilineal societies such as Zimbabwe. This is more intense in the newly resettled areas where the state is not sure of what tenure to provide the new beneficiaries given the different customary systems of people who

**Table 5: Who inherits land after death of landholder?**

	Sex of household head				Total	
	Male		Female			
		%		%		%
Son	805	73.7	296	72.7	1101	73.4
Daughter	56	5.1	44	10.8	100	6.7
Relative	33	3.0	27	6.6	60	4.0
Give it back to government/village head/chief	11	1.0	3	0.7	14	0.9
Spouse	131	12.0	18	4.4	149	9.9
Not answered	57	5.2	19	4.7	76	5.1
	1093	100	407	100	1500	100.0

Source: Ruzivo Trust Survey 2012

## Box 2: Mother versus son inheritance conflict

In many instances male plot holders feel that when they die the land should remain in their families and avoid the risk of losing the land if their wives ever remarried. Patriarchal values dictate that the first born son inherit the father's property to keep it within the family. At Kia Ora farm in Mazowe there was a case between a mother and son after the death of the father. The son managed to remove the mother but was later removed by another farmer. The District Lands Committee then resolved to give the son another plot. The mother was left landless and she had little recourse as the committee failed to hear her case. Women in the newly resettled areas remain isolated and ignorant about land inheritance issues. The son was a preferred heir as according to custom the land would remain within the husband's clan. In the event of death of the plot holder the committee requires the death certificate to change name on the permit. As such women who fail to acquire such documents may fail to register their names on the offer letter. Daughters are rarely part of any discussions on land inheritance.

benefit from resettlement land. Offer letters given to A1 farmers and permits given to A2 farmers provides limited rights to farmers which means that it is impossible for example in the case of divorce to sell the land and share the proceeds. The land remains state land thus inheritance issues associated with this land is complex and requires clearly outlined policy which protects women and children. The cases outlined below a cross section of some of the experiences with land inheritance within the newly resettled areas. They are a microcosm of what is prevailing in Zimbabwe where there is uncertainty over tenurial rights and the lack of a clear land policy has led to many women losing access to livelihood assets.

## 7.0 Discussion

The intersection of various interlocked and multi dimensional factors allows for a better understanding of the spatial and temporal neglect of adolescent girls within Zimbabwe's agrarian structure. In analyzing the experiences of young women in rural Zimbabwe, I focused on three key factors namely age of adolescence; gender and location. Age is an important indicator of hierarchy across Africa. Adolescence in both patriarchal and patriarchal societies is a stage where one is neither a child nor an elder. In addition to their rural location, girls suffer disadvantages because of their gender. This can be even more pronounced in rural areas, where social and cultural norms affecting gender roles are often most strongly entrenched. While boys are often coveted because of their expected roles as household heads and providers, girls may be seen as temporary family members because they join another household when they marry. When family resources are strained, boys are often seen as more valuable and worthy of investment. Location is important in determining the chances of adolescent girls for example a girl living in Manhattan, New York has better chances of education and a future than a girl in rural Sudan. In developing countries rural areas are primarily the realm of the poor with approximately 283 million of the developing world's 515 million adolescent girls (defined for this report as girls from ages ten to nineteen) live in rural areas. Location

relates most importantly to race and class. Majority of young women in Africa are black, poor and rural. In many parts of Africa affected by conflict young girls suffer the brunt of war with rape rapidly becoming a weapon of war

There are multiple intersections of oppression for adolescent females. The complex nature of inequalities can be explained by these overlapping and correlating factors lead to the marginality of young women across Zimbabwe. Adolescent females are located in differing contexts and are involved in a multiplicity of relations of subordination. Different forms of social inequality, oppression and discrimination interact and overlap in multidimensional ways. Intersectionality in this way can be used to analyse how social and cultural categories intertwine. In my analysis I view societal knowledge as being located within an individual's specific geographic and social location thus context matters when understanding various vulnerabilities of adolescent girls in Africa. Transcending these diverse intersectionalities is important in creating our understanding of various dimensions of marginality and vulnerability. The agrarian sector has marginalised young women from all structures and they have been reduced to providers of cheap labour.

## 8.0 Recommendations

### 8.1 Agricultural education and training

There is need for increased support in agricultural education and vocational training for young women. Such an education should be context specific, innovative and practical. Related to this is the need to increase the number of young women in higher education. Rural girls need access to training in business, marketing, finance, policymaking and engineering, to create new generations of professionals who can build Zimbabwe's agro-industrial capacity. Educating young girls should be a priority for the future. Without education, young girls will remain trapped in poverty.

## 8.2 Legal literacy on inheritance laws

Women and men in newly resettled areas are largely lack legal literacy to understand how various forms of marriage interrelate with the diverse baskets of rights entailed in the tenure system post Fast Track Land Reform Programme. Zimbabwe is party to various international and regional instruments such as CEDAW and SADC Protocol on Gender which seeks to protect the rights of women. The government has put in place various programmes and measures to improve the person of women through the Ministry of Gender and Community Development. There is however still a disconcerting gap between all these policies and customary law. Land inheritance through traditional leaders who are part of the male dominated DLC has largely neglected women's concerns. The land policy needs to mainstream gender in land governance structures and promote a 50/50 setup to ensure women are involved in decision making. These international protocols need to be domesticated and turned into action. They have largely remained on paper without any follow up action on the ground. More needs to be done by government to protect young women in inheritance laws.

## 8.3 Gender sensitive land policy in newly resettled areas

The current tenure system in both A1 (offer letter) and A2 (leases) is not responsive to young women's needs. For example the land cannot be sold and it cannot be cut in equal share in case of divorce thus women tend to lose out. In Mazowe the DLC has tried to deal with cases by offering extra land which is not a policy response but a stop gap measure which cannot be sustained. Improving women's access to land is not only about giving women land in their own right but about protecting all women's access to land in different circumstances as wives, daughters, land owners and workers. Land is a key livelihood asset in largely agrarian societies such as Zimbabwe. As such engendering land policy is a key requirement to secure livelihoods of the majority of women who are domiciled in the rural areas. The Fast Track Land Reform Programme did not benefit men and women equally however are imperative that a new land policy would enforce equal benefit of men and women for all future resettlements.

In creating the land policy, young women should be involved in a participatory process and their lived experiences should form the basis of any land governance framework. The land policy should speak to the needs and concerns of women and should ensure that all provisions are effected on the ground. This means coming up with targets and indicators to ensure that all gender sensitive issues are implemented and monitored. The influence on patriachial and customary norms on land ownership which favour men requires constant

monitoring by authorities to ensure that official policy that seeks to protect women is not circumvented.

## 8.4 Access to land

It is surprising that young people who have the energy, zest and innovation are locked out of land ownership in Zimbabwe. The government must ensure equitable access to land for young women. Government has the mandate at policy level to change laws that deny young women access to land. They have the means to enforce the laws and sensitize traditional leaders on the need to change customary laws that deny young women access to land. At the household level there is need ensure young women get pieces of land of their own so that they are not seen as unpaid family labor, rather than as farmers in their own right.

## 8.5 Access to finance

Promoting entrepreneurship amongst rural female youths requires a huge investment in cheap loans and capital. Youths are often seen as high risk borrowers without any form of collateral thus most private institutions tend to shun them. A fund to promote youth girls projects should be unveiled through the Ministry of Youths and Indigenisation. There is no doubt that the power of young people in Africa's agriculture can be unleashed if the institutional structures and policy instruments are put in place to provide the necessary training, advisory service, and access to finance and mentoring that could help influence their visions of agriculture as an economic activity with potential to assure viable incomes and good quality of life.

## 9.0 Conclusion

Young women in Zimbabwe have for long been marginalised from the agrarian structure. Adolescents have largely been seen as unpaid domestic labour and not as farmers in their own right. The foregoing discussion has shown how in various spaces such as decision making, skills development and inheritance laws, young girls have been disadvantaged. The paper argues that without proper investment in education, skills development and empowerment of young girls, Zimbabwean women will remain steeped in poverty. Using the theory of intersectionality, it highlights how age, gender, location and culture intersect to influence the disadvantaged position of female youths in Zimbabwe. Investing in rural young women is critical to enhancing agricultural productivity and food security, creating employment and boosting our rural economies. It is time for Zimbabwe to have a proper plan of integrating young women into agriculture through providing land, loans and support. The paper ends by offering recommendations to ensure the full participation of young women in agriculture.

## END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Post doctoral Fellow, Rhodes University, South Africa; manasekudzai[at]gmail.com
- <sup>2</sup> Zimbabwe's agriculture is largely dependent on natural factors (land, soil, and rainfall). In the 1950's, Zimbabwe's agricultural potential was classified into 5 agro-ecological zones based on the natural endowment based on soil type, rainfall patterns, climatic conditions and agricultural production potential. Before the Fast Track Land Reform Programme, the agro-ecological regions (AERs) were broadly and loosely characterised by distinct farming systems: communal lands (AERs III, IV and V); small-scale resettlement farms (AER III); small-scale commercial farms (AERs IIb, III and IV); and large scale commercial farms (AERs I, IIa and IIb). There were, however, some large scale commercial farms located in AERs III, IV and V, predominantly livestock and game ranching farms.
- <sup>3</sup> This varies by district as in some areas people have as high as 10 hectares.
- <sup>4</sup> A2 Model scheme was meant to indigenize commercial farming through providing opportunities for previously disadvantaged black people.

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## Appendices

Organisation	Information sought about youths
<b>Government</b>	
Ministry of Agriculture	Overall agricultural issues concerning production, marketing and various other sectors
Agritex	Chief Extension Officer
Ministry of Lands	Land ownership, control, access and administration
Ministry of Women's Affairs	Women's roles in agriculture, decision making and access to resources
Ministry of Youth	Indigenisation policy and youths
Ministry of Economic Planning	Agricultural and rural financing pertaining to women
Ministry of Local Government	Infrastructure, decision making and leadership at local levels
Mazowe Rural District Council	Access to services
<b>Farmer Unions</b>	
Zimbabwe Farmers Union	Gender representation and leadership
Indigenous Commercial Farmers Union	Women's farmers issues, experiences and challenges
<b>Private Sector</b>	
Bankers Association	Agricultural financing
ZAMPH	Agricultural financing
Kingdom Bank	Small holder farmers' access to loans
Business Council of Zimbabwe	Agricultural planning
<b>Civil Society</b>	
Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre Network	Women's farmers issues, experiences and challenges
Women and Land in Zimbabwe	Gender equity in land access and control
FAO	Food security
Women's Action Group	Gender, decision making and leadership roles
Youth Council of Zimbabwe	Youth activities

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