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A village health worker speaking to visiting UNICEF officials at a new health centre under construction in Malawi.

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LIVELIHOODS IN CRISIS?

New perspectives on governance and rural development in Southern Africa

Editors: WILLIAM WOLMER AND IAN SCOONES

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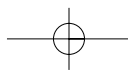
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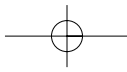
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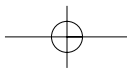
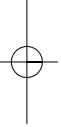
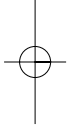
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Summaries

2. Livelihood Dynamics: Rural Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe

SLSA Team

Drawing on research carried out by the Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa (SLSA) programme, this article gives a brief overview of some of the diverse ways people make a living in harsh physical and economic environments in Zambézia province, Mozambique, Chiredzi district Zimbabwe and South Africa's Wild Coast. It describes the contexts of increasing vulnerability, including the impact of economic reform programmes, the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of extreme climatic events. It explores the livelihood strategies of rural people and the emergence of new institutional and governance arrangements that facilitate or constrain these strategies. It demonstrates that gaining access to natural resources continues to play, alongside a portfolio of other activities, a crucial part in rural people's livelihood strategies.

3. Wild Resources Management in Southern Africa: Participation, Partnerships, Ecoregions and Redistribution

William Wolmer and Caroline Ashley

In rural southern Africa, access to wild resources is critical to livelihoods and various attempts have been made by policy-makers to increase the income derived from them by poor communities. This article examines the existing and emerging institutional arrangements in the tourism/safari hunting and forestry sectors and assesses their impact on livelihoods. Case studies of wildlife and forestry management initiatives are drawn from the

Eastern Cape (South Africa), Chiredzi district (Zimbabwe) and Zambézia province (Mozambique). Four types of initiative are described: community participation; partnerships or joint ventures between communities and the private sector; ecoregional conservation and redistributive measures. A key trend is the emergence of a number of policy approaches that seek to link private sector tourism and forestry operations with community or local involvement, usually with an emphasis on "pro-poor" commercial investment. The danger is that these policies will constrain more than they enable poor people's access to resources and income and will benefit local elites, the private sector and the state more than the poor. However, where the state is willing and able to prioritise local issues when trade-offs arise and/or communities have firm legal or *de facto* rights over land with high commercial value, the new "pro-poor" policies for the management of wild resources do hold out some hope for improving rural livelihoods.

4. Politics and Water Policy: A Southern Africa Example

Alan Nicol and Sobona Mtisi

Drawing on fieldwork from the Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa programme – largely undertaken in Zimbabwe, with some additional material from South Africa and Mozambique – this article examines the politics surrounding water resources and policy change in southern Africa. It outlines the policy contexts of water reforms in the three countries. The article then investigates: the process of institution-building accompanying water policy reform and resulting complex and politicised institutional layering; the contested meanings attached to water by different stakeholders and their implications for new institutions and decision-making processes; and the significance of the "grey area" between domestic and commercial water usage to an understanding of the role of water in household livelihoods. It draws some conclusions as to possible policy development and implementation options that could address these critical issues.

5. Land and Livelihoods: The Politics of Land Reform in Southern Africa

Edward Lahiff

This article examines the politics of land in southern Africa and, in particular, current processes of land reform in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe. It argues that, despite the considerable attention given to land issues in the region over the past 20 years, fundamental reform that shifts assets and opportunities in favour of the rural poor have yet to be brought about. Across the region, the legacy of settler colonialism lives on in a dualistic agricultural system that has been perpetuated first by deliberate state policies and, more recently, by the forces of deregulated capitalism. Small-scale agriculture, which provides a precarious living to millions of poor rural households, remains severely neglected by policy-makers in all three countries. Only in Zimbabwe has substantial redistribution of land taken place since independence, but here, as elsewhere in the region, the rights of small-scale landholders remain vulnerable and the conditions for agricultural livelihoods highly unfavourable. Recent seizures of commercial farms and other land in Zimbabwe, and rising militancy among land activists in South Africa, suggest that demand for radical land reform remains strong among much of the rural population and shows how the land question has the potential to become critical in times of political or economic crisis.

6. The Rural Poor, the Private Sector and Markets: Changing Interactions in Southern Africa

SLSA Team

Drawing on case study material from the Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa programme, this article examines the turn to strategies for development in southern Africa, which seek to boost the access of the rural poor to new markets and investment opportunities. It investigates the prospects for “pro-poor” engagement with the private sector, and lists a number of policy measures needed in order to make such initiatives work for the benefit of rural livelihoods. Markets are highly politicised, the playing field is uneven and, without regulation and protection, poor communities are vulnerable to

potential exploitation. Without concerted attention to improving the capacity of poor people to enter and engage with markets and to the distribution of benefits – through active state support and redistributive measures – the ideals of “pro-poor growth” and “private sector partnership” for development will remain more rhetorical gloss than reality.

7. Decentralisations in Practice in Southern Africa

SLSA Team

Different forms of decentralisation are occurring in parallel, often in ways that cause confusion, ambiguity, high transaction costs and conflict, in southern Africa. Case studies in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe show how political authorities with downward accountability to electorates co-exist and sometimes conflict with decentralised service delivery (through line ministries, NGOs or donor projects). Multiple decentralisations have also brought conflicts between new local government authorities and “traditional” authorities – often further complicated by party-related affiliations. Rather than relying on idealised notions of decentralisation, the case studies suggest that efforts should be made to avoid the creation of parallel authority structures. Local government reform must take account of existing social and economic complexity and local power dynamics and not wish them away in the development of new systems of local governance. And, without providing adequate resources, and attempting to build capacity beyond councils, new elected authorities may quickly lose legitimacy, and fail to provide the development benefits they claim.

8. Rights Talk and Rights Practice: Challenges for Southern Africa

SLSA Team

Rights are increasingly enshrined in legislative frameworks in southern Africa and rights-based approaches are increasingly seen as a core component of development. But how can rights be made real for poor people in rural areas? Research in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe sheds light on the practice of rights claiming on the ground, in the context of “legal pluralism” and complex, politicised institutional settings. Rather

than an emphasis on rights in abstract legal or constitutional terms, the research has explored instead the practices of rights claiming and the complex politics of actors and institutions that affect this. In the southern African context, rights are formulated and claimed in a very unlevel playing field and are highly contested. In practice, rights are realised through complex negotiations about access to resources at a local level. Broader rights frameworks enshrined in the constitution, in legislation and in policy can – despite their progressive nature – be irrelevant, unless the local institutional context is conducive to encouraging effective rights claiming by poor people. A rights-based approach for sustainable livelihoods must therefore concentrate on institutional mechanisms for gaining access to resources, rather than only on establishing universalised legalistic rights frameworks.

9. Endpiece: The Politics of Livelihood Opportunity

Ian Scoones and William Wolmer

This brief article draws together some of the conclusions of the Sustainable Livelihoods in

Southern Africa programme. This research has sought to move beyond simple technical/managerial “good governance” solutions to sketch the contours of a realistic, but politically sophisticated, sustainable livelihoods approach. The key policy challenges include: instituting real redistributive reforms, particularly of land; redressing imbalances in market entry and engagement; making decentralisation really work to poor people’s advantage; and realising rights increasingly enshrined in progressive legislative frameworks. These face formidable obstacles – and a sustainable livelihoods approach must be rooted in an understanding of the historical legacies and contemporary political/administrative and economic contexts in southern Africa. Such an endeavour would, for example, support mobilisation, lobbying, civic organisation and new alliances around a pluralist and activist politics for livelihood improvement and create links to party-based democratic politics; build on and transform forms of patrimonialism and establish strategic linkages between elites and the poor; and abandon the artificial and misleading separation of public/private, state/non-state in both analysis and prescription.

Notes on Contributors

Caroline Ashley has been a Research Fellow at the Overseas Development Institute since 1998, where her work has been focused on rural development, pro-poor tourism and sustainable livelihoods. She coordinated the research on wild resources for the SLSA programme, looking at the interaction between the growing role of private enterprise and evolving local management of forests, wildlife and tourism assets.

Joseph Chaumba has worked as a researcher for several governmental and non-governmental organisations that deal with rural development. His work for the SLSA programme has focused on land reform in Zimbabwe. He is interested in various land reform institutions and their impact on rural people's livelihoods. He currently undertaking postgraduate study on land reform at the University of the Western Cape.

Ben Cousins is the Director of the Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies at the University of the Western Cape. He has worked extensively in Zimbabwe and South Africa. His main research interests are in common property management, land tenure reform, communal rangeland dynamics and rural social differentiation.

Edward Lahiff is a Senior Lecturer at the Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies at the University of the Western Cape. He was previously a Land Reform Activist and Researcher with the Nkuzi Development Association. He has a particular interest in land reform and alternative models of rural development that challenge current orthodoxy.

Zefanias Matsimbe is a Junior Lecturer at the Eduardo Mondlane University and is currently conducting postgraduate studies at the University of the Western Cape. His particular interest in this work has been in discovering how policy processes and their implementation in Mozambique get interpreted at a local level, how they conflict with local norms or the "rules of the game" and the impact of this on people's livelihoods.

Lyla Mehta is a Sociologist and member of the IDS Environment Group. Her past research has focused on local and state perceptions of water scarcity in India. Her current research focuses on the gendered dimensions of forced displacement and resistance around large infrastructure projects, and on global debates around the "public" and "private" nature of water. She uses the case of water to explore questions concerning knowledge/power linkages and social differentiation in natural resource management and how uncertainty and competing forms of governance shape people's rights and access to resources.

Kgopotso Mokgope was formerly a Researcher with the Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies at the University of the Western Cape, working on issues of land reform and rural livelihoods in the Eastern Cape. She continues to work on rural development issues in South Africa.

Solomon Mombeshora is a Lecturer in sociology at the University of Zimbabwe. His major areas of interest include economy, society and governance, rural development, and race and ethnic relations. He has research experience in rural Zimbabwe and Tanzania. He was the Country Team Leader of the SLSA programme for Zimbabwe, with special interest in water, governance and livelihoods in the southeastern lowveld.

Sobona Mtisi is a graduate from the University of Zimbabwe. His research interests within the SLSA programme include water sector reforms in Zimbabwe, their impact on rural people's livelihoods and institutional processes that set parameters of access to water. He is also focusing on the emerging relations between private and public spheres in natural resources management. He is currently working towards his PhD.

Isilda Nhantumbo is the Country Programme Coordinator for IUCN Mozambique. She is a forester by training, with a strong focus on economic and policy issues. Within the SLSA programme she has had a particular interest in forestry issues and in whether and how policies can create an environment for poor people to increase their benefits from natural resources.

Alan Nicol is a Research Fellow at the Overseas Development Institute. He has a particular interest in water resources and the relationships of availability, access and use to ensuring sustainable livelihoods in Africa and Asia. Of key concern are institutional and policy barriers hindering access for poor communities and households, including issues of gender, power and social exclusion. At a wider level he is interested in the connections of these processes to global policy shifts and a range of related issues including conflict/resources, community financing and changing notions of “good” governance.

Simon Norfolk is a freelance consultant based in Mozambique. He is currently working on natural resource use policy, with a focus on the registration of statutory land rights. In this he draws on 12 years experience of land reform in Southern Africa, in both the NGO and government sectors. He has a keen interest in the potential of securing land rights as a means of improving livelihoods for poor rural people.

Zolile Ntshona works for Umsobomvu Consulting in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province, and was previously a Researcher at the Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies at the University of the Western Cape. He has recently completed his MPhil on rural livelihoods and communal rangeland resource in the Eastern Cape. During the SLSA programme he engaged with a number of different institutions, government departments, NGOs and people at a local level. His particular

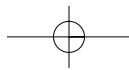
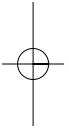
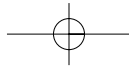
interest is in discovering how the sustainable livelihoods approach can inform the shape of broader rural development in South Africa.

João Pereira is affiliated to UFICS at the University of Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo. His key interest is in analysing the decentralisation process that is underway in Mozambique from the perspective of the poor. His role in the SLSA programme was to focus on the new institutional arrangements and their relation to natural resources management, bringing to this analysis his research experience of the last three years. He is currently working on his PhD at the University of Cape Town.

Ian Scoones is a member of the IDS Environment Group and coordinates the Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa programme. He has worked at IDS for seven years, focusing on institutional and policy issues around natural resources, especially in southern Africa. His particular focus has been Zimbabwe, where he has worked for 15 years.

Shaila Seshia completed an MPhil at IDS and has since worked with the Environment and Governance Teams there. She became involved in the SLSA programme through work exploring the links between rights-based and livelihoods approaches, and decentralisation and livelihoods. Her research interests focus on how rural people gain access to and use natural resources in a context of global economic and regulatory change.

William Wolmer is a Social Scientist and member of the IDS Environment Group. He established links with the SLSA programme through his work in Ethiopia, Mali and Zimbabwe on crop and livestock integration and research in rural Zimbabwe for his PhD. His research for this project has focused in particular on land reform in Zimbabwe and wild resources management and transfrontier conservation initiatives in southern Africa.



Preface

Southern Africa is in the midst of a major food crisis. Fourteen million people are reported to be at risk. Most commentators agree that since around 1990, livelihoods have collapsed in many areas, with an increasing number of people, particularly in rural areas, vulnerable. But this is 2003, following decades of post-independence development assistance and once-great hopes for the region as both the food basket and economic motor for the continent. What has gone wrong? Has “development” failed? Do we need to radically rethink the paradigms for development in the region?

This *Bulletin* explores some of these questions, drawing on a large body of detailed empirical material from research conducted under the auspices of a three-year collaborative project: the Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa (SLSA) programme, carried out by research partners in Mozambique, South Africa, UK and Zimbabwe, in a series of case study sites. Three broad themes were explored by the research:

- How do poor people gain access to and control over land, water and wild resources and through what institutional mechanisms?
- How do emerging institutional arrangements – in the context of new rural development initiatives – affect poor people’s access to land, water and wild resources? What institutional overlaps, complementarities and conflicts enable or limit access? What new governance arrangements are required to encourage a livelihoods approach to rural development?
- How do the livelihood concerns and contexts of poor people get represented in policy

processes concerning land, water and wild resources in local, national and international arenas? What are the challenges for participation and accountability in the policy process?

This *Bulletin* draws together the research carried out under the SLSA programme, attempting to pull out some of the emergent themes from the mass of detailed empirical material produced during the research process. In addition to a series of background and mapping papers, 20 case study research papers have been produced. These are listed on page 116 of this *Bulletin*, and all are available at www.ids.ac.uk/slsa. The nine articles in this *Bulletin* are interlinked, and grouped into three parts – Part I: Contexts and Debates; Part II: Resources and Policies and Part III: Livelihoods and Governance.

The first article sets the project research questions in the broader context of debates about rural development, and, in particular, the concept of “sustainable livelihoods”. The article argues that previous framings of rural development have been too narrow, and potentially have contributed in part to the livelihoods crisis currently unfolding in southern Africa. It argues that issues of governance need to be at the centre of rural development approaches, requiring a political analysis of how people gain access to and control over resources for their livelihoods. The second article provides some background on the case study countries and research sites, looking at livelihood patterns and trends since around 1990. It highlights the factors that have resulted in increasing levels of vulnerability, including structural changes in the economy, resulting from economic reform policies; the HIV/AIDS epidemic and climatic events.

The next three articles in Part II look at access to three key resources for rural livelihoods: land, water and wild resources, examining how institutional and policy influences affect the way that poor people are able (or not) to construct their livelihoods. The three articles that follow in Part III then examine different ways of looking at policy: each, in different ways, offering a solution to how to improve resource access, and so livelihood sustainability. Thus, for some, livelihoods may be improved through market-oriented and private

sector-led initiatives; for others through rights-based approaches and for others through decentralisation of various sorts. Each of these policy thrusts have been significant – often in combination, or in different periods – in different countries and in different sectoral areas in southern Africa. The articles examine this experience using the localised case study information, looking from the ground up at these policies, with the aim of getting to grips with what such policy framings really mean in practice at the local level.

The final article of this *Bulletin* then pulls some of the themes raised and asks what are the main governance challenges for improving livelihood sustainability? The article, in particular, points to the importance of redistributive measures as a prerequisite, alongside the need to secure rights over resources, and in particular land.

Acknowledgements

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the project, as did the review team assembled by the programme. While coordinated by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), the programme was very much a collaborative venture, involving research parties at IUCN (the World Conservation Union) and the University of Eduardo Mondlane (Mozambique), the Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (South Africa) and the University of Zimbabwe, and the Overseas Development Institute (UK). The research team as a whole was made up of 16 people in all, five based in the UK and 11 in southern Africa. The overall programme was ably supported by Environment Group Administrators Annette Sinclair, Kate Hawkins and Oliver Burch, as well as Jo Zaremba, Shaila Seshia and Aaron DeGrassi (IDS) and Tom Slaymaker (ODI), who worked as Research Assistants at various stages of the project. The SLSA programme also benefited from advisory inputs from Melissa Leach, Jim Manor (IDS) and Frank Ellis (UEA) and consultancy from Anna Spenceley (Institute of Natural Resources, Pietermaritzburg). The research reported in this *Bulletin*, however, in no way reflects the views of DFID, or any of the host institutions, advisors or review committees. The views expressed are those solely of the authors.