

Participatory Land Use Planning for Improving Customary Land Resource Productivity and Utilisation:

A Zambian Proposal

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1. Abstract

Community management of both natural and socio-economic resources is paramount in successful mobilisation of customary resources. Conventional methods involving surveys, classification, analysis and planning prior to implementation based on pre-selected themes are considered essential for 'sound/sustainable land resource management planning' to understand a particular eco-type. This involves dissecting and building together aspects necessary for making good judgement in the planning process for the affected land and community. Usually a lack of adequate consultation and appreciation of the totality of fabrics/linkages of both host customary and incoming alienated communities of the land use plan have been ignored.

Involvement of customary communities through participatory rapid appraisals (PRA) would help identify relevant holistic planning for long-term resource utilisation including an acceptable inflow of outsiders. At the same time an understanding of the intricacies keeping a host community, settling newcomers, and the resources around it together is imperative. In this way, the settling newcomers would live not at variance with local customs by allowing them to coexist with a beneficial independent productive life to the whole ecosystem.

The Zambia Agricultural Land Use Planning Program attempts to lay a foundation for achieving effective resource improvement and utilisation by designing a holistic approach. In the rural context it addresses demands and capacities for cropping land, grazing land for tame and wild animals, forestry land for woody products and gathering of a variety of resources including medicines, village siting of homes and community services, ancestral and heritage land, and where appropriate land for water-related resources. Initial community awareness and training, followed by community participation and integration at planning, implementation and maintenance stages will enhance productivity and management of resources.

The paper attempts to analyse this scenario as possible alternative for improving low productivity and lessening the land degradation that is sometimes associated with customary resources utilisation. Other issues discussed include need for land assessment, procedures for land alienation and resource allocation, effects of imposed restrictive legislation, sharing of collected ground rent and land value charges, need for field/village planning, and land heritage as part of sound community resource management. The agricultural, forestry, cultural, residential, commercial/artisanal, wildlife, medicinal, fishing zonations must be agreed upon to form the one land use plan.

2. Introduction

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF) offers a variety of services to the farming community in the form of agricultural and fisheries extension; it also provides services in agricultural research and related activities. This paper attempts to discuss ways of fostering better use of land within customary tenure by practising good land husbandry, i.e., the planning, management and care of our land.

In Zambia at independence, government initiated establishment of:

- animal dip tanks and fencing, etc. high-cost investment agricultural settlement schemes aimed at resettling peasant farmers provided with a basic road and water infrastructure, somewhat intensive extension programme, a well facilitated Scheme Organiser, production and housing inputs; and
- catchment conservation planning programmes that provided basic infrastructure in open customary areas in the form of rural roads, communal dams and water wells, communal

The development thrust was to improve the living standards of the rural people by offering a conducive or enabling environment that would foster increased production levels. Infrastructure and development work planned and executed by government agencies in traditional customary areas was regarded as government property even when the ultimate beneficiary was the local person. Consequently, when such works deteriorated or broke down government was expected to service them. This attitude became detrimental to government's good intentions. Such programmes had to be abandoned or redirected, for example, low-cost investment schemes.

Local communities did not integrate such developments as part of them. Even when Government created local committees to supervise and manage these facilities, they were still regarded as government property. Now community-based management of both natural and socio-economic resources has been recognised as paramount in successful mobilisation of customary resources and their utilisation.

3. The Place of Conventional Methods

Conventional methods involving surveys, classification, analysis and planning prior to implementation based on pre-selected themes are still essential for 'sound/sustainable land resource management planning' to understand a particular eco-type and must therefore not be ignored. They enable the dissecting and building together of facets necessary for making good judgement in the planning process for the affected land and its community guarding them against abuse and mismanagement.

While in the past, the locals were only hired for their labour, it becomes necessary to actively involve them from the planning phase. The local must accept the need and purpose of the survey. They must be aware and taught basic principles behind the survey as a long-term local capacity building process.

The Land Husbandry Section, through its participatory land use planning component, conducts initial field surveys, planning and development of farm lands and agricultural lands throughout the country. Its main activities include carrying out veldt and land capability surveys and assessments, topographic surveys, land demarcations and low order cadastral surveys, natural resources assessments, socio-economic and land use surveys and analyses. Its planning phase includes co-ordinating and participating in the preparation of regional/catchment conservation plans, farm

planning of individual and institutional farms, planning of agro-settlements, land consolidation/improvement/allotment schemes. Inventories related to land use and land development matters are also kept. It spearheads the development of necessary infrastructure on agricultural lands in the form of dams, water furrows, farm roads, fencing, soil conservation works, etc.

4. Recognition of Community Needs

Consultations with local communities are equally important to ensure that their side of the planning and development process is well integrated. In the past, lack of adequate consultation and appreciation of the totality of fabrics/linkages within the customary set-up of both host customary and incoming alienated communities has been ignored. Development plans have been imposed on the people.

Involvement of customary communities through participatory rapid appraisals reveals situations that tend to be left out yet they affect long-term resource utilisation. From the case studies, it may not be possible to carry out an effective land husbandry campaign for instance without addressing immediate common problems facing a community, like is illustrated below.

Table 1 Common Community Needing Immediate Solutions

Problem	Kaunga	Chitungulu	Chipuka	Simon Nyundo	Kisalala
Food Shortage	x				
Domestic water supply	x		x	x	
Clinic	x		x	x	x
Low hectarages due to hoeing cultivation				x	
Intake facility	x				
Health insurance	x				
Transport/Communication	x	x	x	x	x
Rodents	x				
Cost of milling/ Hammer mill			x		
Senior secondary/ Education	x		x		x
Tractor hire	x	x			
Post office	x		x		
Shops/Market	x		x	x	
Non availability of early maturing crop varieties/ Agriculture		x	x		
Wild animals destroying crops		x			
Non availability of fertilizers		x		x	
ADMADE			x		
Lack of loan facilities				x	
Destruction of crop by goats and sheep				x	

Table 1 shows key problems identified from 5 case studies selected to illustrate the importance of community participation. Prior to successful land husbandry, these identified problems will have to be tackled. Some of the concerns are common and pertaining for government to look into. Other problems can be solved by the community once guidance is given while others require joint participation. More details are given in the case studies summaries.

5. Participating with Local Communities

The Zambia Agricultural Land Use Planning Program attempts to lay a foundation for achieving effective resource improvement and utilisation by designing a holistic approach that in the rural context addresses demands and capacities for cropping land, grazing land for tame and wild animals, forestry land for woody products and gathering of a variety of resources including medicines, village siting of homes and community services, ancestral and heritage land, and where appropriate land for water-related resources and use. Initial community awareness and training, followed by community participation and integration at planning, implementation and maintenance stages will enhance productivity and management of resources.

The role of the Land husbandry sub-sector is to ensure improved and sustainable productivity of agricultural lands, whether of statutory or customary tenure. Our land is our heritage and once destroyed it can never be retrieved and therefore the need for us to husband it properly. From a land husbandry viewpoint, as much as the problems of land degradation and low productivity may be explicit, the local community may not have the same perception. A long relationship may have to be built with such a community to create such awareness prior to implementation of a plan of action.

While land tenure in Zambia is classified into two categories namely; statutory and customary it is critical to win local confidence when pursuing land use planning strategies. Statutory land holding is based on renewable leasehold titles of up to 99 years administered by the Commissioner of Lands. This tenure is usually associated with employment of conventional survey and planning methods that those in the traditional sector have treated with suspicion and associated with land alienation.

Customary tenure is administered by traditional rulers, i.e. Chiefs and their Village Headmen who control land allocation and to a large extent land utilisation. Local communities need to be convinced that employment of conventional survey and planning methods would not alienate their land rather enhance its productivity. Generally once an individual has been allocated a parcel of land ownership is claimed by clearing, cultivating and continued use for other activities including fallow of that land. It can also be retained and passed on to descendants upon death of the original owner. Within this context other customary rights are recognised and now backed by law. The traditional leaders play a vital role in assisting these individual owners plan better use of their land right from the time one is granted permission to settle in their areas.

6. The Village Land Use Plan

Customary rights for water, fish, wildlife, and forests are closely tied to systems of land tenure. In cases where clear negative externalities existed under the traditional systems, such as the preservation of wildlife and forests, this trend has had a beneficial effect on natural resources use where the law has prevailed. However, in many cases, the transfer of property rights from local resource users to the central government has resulted in de facto open access and consequent overuse of these resources. It becomes important to ensure that such misuse and wanton destruction of available resources are avoided. Local empowerment of natural resources is one way yielding positive benefits.

Each village must take stock not only of its people in the form of a frequently updated register but also its available natural resources; i.e. land, water, forests and wildlife potential. It must also be able to physically define and map its land boundary with the next village. Based on these matters, it should then be possible to design a village land use plan, among other things zoning and parcelling land for agricultural purposes, forest reserves, wildlife sanctuary, tourism and settlement zones, and also for individuals/corporate bodies wishing to settle in the village. In order to avoid creation of a landlessness situation, land must be identified and reserved for farm block development in the village or Chiefdom where all those wishing to acquire statutory leasehold tenure can go to once the local community has granted approval. Dues accrued from

use of such lands must not only go to government but shared directly with relevant local communities through a local development fund. These funds accrued from charging ground rent and land value from statutory blocks must be shared with the local communities through management of an accounted and audited local Chief's Area Development Fund.

7. Village Development Committees

Customary land and its forest and wildlife resources in uncultivated areas are communally utilised while resources in cultivated areas may temporarily be communally utilised during periods between cultivations, especially for grazing among pastoral societies. These customary tenurial arrangements pose an obstacle to individuals who may want to invest in land improvements or tree planting activities.

Establishment of village development committees to guide and spearhead general village developments is necessary. Such a committee may also be trained to undertake certain assessment responsibilities to guide the village in decision making without always having to wait for an expert from outside the community. Traditional leaders may open land allocation and boundary registers including maps of all their people's lands duly approved kept at the Palaces with copies sent to the local council for records. The committee would facilitate the development of local land use plans. It must agree to zone its agricultural, forestry, cultural, residential, wildlife, medicinal, and fishing grounds whether for commercial or village-style use as part of the one land use plan.

These plans developed would guide not only the village but its members to determine better use of their resources, for example, working out potential benefits for a particular selected line of activity. Individuals would also be encouraged to keep their own written records of production and resource allocation.

8. Individual / Farmers Participation

Farmers or individuals in the village must assume increasing responsibilities for developing and disseminating improved technologies within their communities. By so doing they will be increasingly seen as the de facto custodians of agricultural land, being responsible for improving its productive capabilities while at the same time attempting to correct harmful practices. There is therefore dire need for intensive farmer training to enable them meet the required challenges of effective land use planning and implementation. Here again, one sees the important role that our traditional leaders play in moulding their subjects for effective participation in programmes designed to enhance the land resource. The traditional leaders need to enforce, like before, local regulations that enhance good land husbandry. Public awareness and education as well as dissemination of appropriate information become important for leaders but also ordinary members.

9. Government Participation

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries will contribute to increased productivity by enhancing farmers willingness to invest in land husbandry measures following more secure tenure conditions. In addition, farm and field planning services will help to make the use of both existing and new agricultural lands more optimal from economic, financial and environmental viewpoints. Under the Land Husbandry Service, MAFF is keen to support the promotion of participatory agricultural land use planning in farming areas and communities to enhance sustainable productivity and an increase in production. It endeavours to promote optimising

return on investment while minimising loss of good agricultural land, reducing pressure to extend agriculture into marginal soils, and to link agricultural development with other uses.

As an entry point into a suspicious traditional sector, it becomes important for government and local communities alike to build confidence and trust. The PRA approach offers such opportunities addressing preliminarily the major problems being faced. Thereafter, it then becomes possible to build a relationship that would allow the implementation of the anticipated but somewhat flexible plan.

There is no doubt that MAFF will continue to seek to work with local communities in planning and implementing good land husbandry activities and to promote a sense of ownership of development effort and thus cultivate community maintenance. Some of the implementation activities are as follows:

- carry out relevant resources surveys [land and water assessments, socio-economic surveys, field engineering surveys and studies, etc], analyses [classifications, environmental, etc], and farm and field planning [parcelling, re-allotment, design, etc];
- carry out environmental impact assessments to guide the implementation of land development activities;
- promote catchment regional conservation planning [sound watershed management, resource-use allocation, zoning, farm/village planning];
- encourage implementation of holistic land use plans [micro-projects, community based maintenance, etc]
- train farmers in land use surveys, and participatory methods and tools for planning, designing and implementation of community-based programmes;
- encourage executing agencies to plan and implement activities with the local communities;

- involve and encourage active participation of women, traditional leaders and the youth in planning and implementation of community-based programmes and the adoption of good land husbandry practices, without disregarding the gender aspects; and support establishment of community-based infrastructural maintenance.

10. Conclusion

Conventional and participatory appraisals must not be seen to be at variance but to complement each other for effective realisation and protection of development effort.

11. References

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