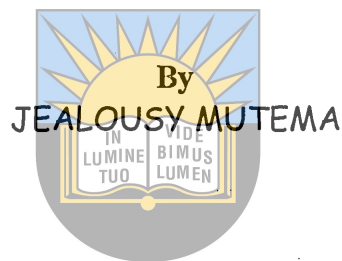


University of Fort Hare
Faculty of Management, Development & Commerce
Centre for Development Studies

**THE DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS
IN BIKITA, ZIMBABWE**



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SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE
MASTER OF SOCIAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT
2003

Supervisor: Professor O.Oloyede

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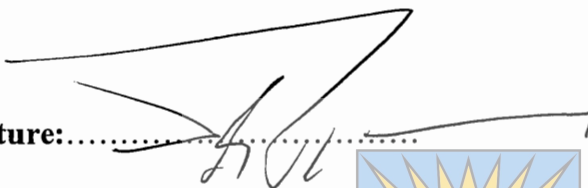


Dedicated to Nyaradzai, Rossana, Elizabeth and Ambrose.
For all those reasons they know so well.

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Declaration

I, Jealousy Mutema, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work, except where so indicated, and that it has not been submitted for a degree in any other university.

Signature:.......... Date:.....05/11/04.....



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I am deeply indebted to Professor Oloyede, who took me through the paces and guided the research work through all stages of development to ensure successful conclusion. Thanks are due to Professor Rahim and my colleagues for reading the unfinished document and providing valuable comments and suggestions.

The active help of Mr. Mupamhadzi, Chief Executive Officer of Bikita Rural District Council, and Mr. Machote, the Executive Officer – Planning and Works, in facilitating the fieldwork and providing some necessary logistical support is gratefully acknowledged. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. Hwata for acting as my guide and introducing me to villagers in Bikita.

I would also like to thank the Government of Zimbabwe who funded not only this study, but my entire degree programme.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the huge debt I owe to my family who had to endure the trials and tribulations of living without a father and husband while I pursued this work. I hope it was worth it.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AGRITEX	Agricultural Extension Services
CEO	Chief Executive Officer.
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization.
CSO	Central Statistical Office.
DA	District Administrator.
DDC	District Development Committee.
DDECC	Directorate of Development of the European Community Commission
DDP	District Development Planning.
DFID	Department for International Development.
DPP	Department of Physical Planning.
DWD	Department of Water Development.
EHT	Environmental Health Technician.
EO	Executive Officer.
GNP	Gross National Product.
ILO	International Labour Organization.
LDCs	Less Developed Countries.
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change.
MoHCW	Ministry of Health and Child Welfare
NEPC	National Economic Planning Commission.
PA	Provincial Administrator.
PAO	Provincial Administrative Officer.

PC	Provincial Council.
PDC	Provincial Development Committee.
PPMESC	Provincial Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Subcommittee
PSIP	Public Sector Investment Programme.
PTC	Post and Telecommunications Corporation.
RDCCBP	Rural District Councils Capacity Building Programme
RDDP	Rural District Development Planning (also simply DDP).
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
VIDCO	Village Development Committee
WADCO	Ward Development Committee
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union.
ZESA	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority
ZINWA	Zimbabwe National Water Authority

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Abstract

The establishment of Rural District Councils as basic development planning and administration units was intended to alleviate poverty in the Council areas by mobilizing local potentials to solve development problems. It was also expected to make the development of the country broad-based and more participatory in decision-making and therefore take cognizance of people's felt needs.

This study evaluates the district development planning process in Bikita, Zimbabwe. The evaluation was done through a month of observation, interviews and content analysis of Bikita Rural District Council's planning documents.

The study found that issues such as inadequate decentralization seriously hamper the planning process for example Councils have had to depend on central government grants because of lack of finance and other resources. Personnel from central government institutions and non-governmental organizations do not lend themselves well to being coordinated by Council. There are deficits in the staff complement and required skills pool.

The study also found that participation and awareness of development issues by the people in the district had increased. However the RDC still has to face up to existing challenges for example the establishment of a workable revenue collection policy, as the current over dependency on central government and donor grants is untenable. There is need for improved communication and the establishment of a common development database for all stakeholders in the district; a monitoring and evaluation subcommittee should be established to take over from the ineffective and cumbersome Rural District Development Committee; planning structures should be revisited with a view to streamlining their reporting structure, clarifying their roles and making them more responsive to their terms of reference. There is also need to find ways of making central government officials operating in the district more accountable to Council. The RDC must put in place a systematic staff development policy and some form of work-study needs to be carried out to establish true staff requirements.

ZIMBABWE AND DECENTRALISED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

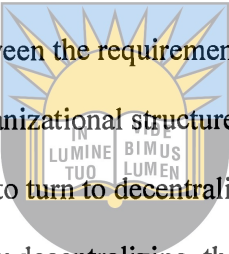
1.1 Introduction

Over the past few decades, governments have accorded considerable attention to Regional Development Planning. This is within the framework of decentralization policies. Such policies are expected to free central government institutions from overload and in some cases to mobilize localized development potentials and hence contribute to the realization of the national budget (Jenssen, 1992).

This is a departure from what obtained and still obtains in many African countries, where development planning has always been centralized. Such development planning dates back to the administration of the colonies where both decision-making and execution powers were concentrated in the center, which facilitated the acquisition of benefits for the colonizers (Weitz, 1980).

Developing countries have come to realize that in order to achieve their development goals, coordination between the various government ministries and agencies as well as the private sector is vital. However, the organizational structure of government agencies is almost always strictly vertical. Matters that are of local and regional significance and require inter-agency negotiations often end up being referred to the national head offices. At the same time, suggestions and ideas emanating from officials in the field have to go up the ladder within the ministry or agency until they reach the top, before cooperation is sought from other ministries or

agencies. Such procedure, which is bureaucratic, seems to be a drawback to swift action and hence to the speedy and successful implementation of development programmes. There are cases where officials are made directly responsible for regional projects but are not given sufficient decision-making authority while those who have such authority are based far away from the projects. Besides, different agencies and ministries often assign different priorities to projects and programmes leading to differences in the distribution of manpower and financial resources (Weitz, 1980).



The contradiction between the requirements of decentralized development action and the centralized organizational structure of government is what has prompted many governments to turn to decentralization as a possible way forward. Governments also hope that by decentralizing, the planning process will be better able to take into account localized constraints and potentials, as well as factoring in the interests of the people for whom development is intended by taking into account their prioritized needs. This similarly informs Zimbabwe's route to decentralization.

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When Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980, development of infrastructure became a priority of the government as large parts of the rural areas had insufficient infrastructure such as bridges, roads, schools, and clinics, most of which had been destroyed by war. National development planning was instituted in 1980 through the creation of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, as an instrument for the coordination of national development efforts. Development planning was still centralized. But then, centralized planning is understandable given the history of the country's colonial past. Between 1980 and 1990, Zimbabwe

operated under a mixed economy environment, but the basic orientation was towards a centrally planned economy with the planning environment emphasizing the primary role of the state through extensive state participation in the management and output of the economy. Centralization gave government the latitude to play a bigger role, not only in the development of the economy but also in redressing major socio-economic imbalances, by focusing on the provision of social and economic infrastructure especially in rural areas which had suffered neglect during the colonial era (National Economic Planning Commission [NEPC], 1996). To this end and the realization of rapid economic growth, short and medium-term development plans were formulated and implemented. (Short-term development plans cover a period of up to three years whereas medium-term development plans cover five years). The policy thrust was articulated in several plan documents such as the Economic Policy Statement – Growth With Equity (1981); the Transitional National Development Plan (1982/83 – 1984/85); the First Five Year National Development Plan (1986 –1990); and the Second Five Year Development Plan (1991 –1995).

Medium-term development plans and policies focused on social infrastructure and agrarian development programmes, as well as a commitment towards economic growth and redistribution of wealth. The short and medium term development plans seem to have been appropriate then because “the first decade of independence demanded rapid structural changes to stimulate progressive and balanced growth of the economy” (NEPC, 1996:4). Although, as revealed in the NEPC document, achievements in social development (education, health) and other economic infrastructure were outstanding, overall economic growth was not, fluctuating with weather patterns and developments in international commodity prices. The Public

Sector Investment Programme budget kept shrinking and the top-down approach to planning was not sufficiently responsive to people's priorities and localized realities (ibid, 1996).

Whereas Zimbabwe inherited a decentralized local government structure at independence, the structure was not participatory, being defined along ethnic lines and so structured as to improve the colonial government's ability to maintain law and order, collect taxes and generally benefit the settlers (Makumbe, 1996:39). At independence it became necessary to overhaul the local government system to make it more participatory and take cognizance of the changed socio-political environment in the development planning process.

To facilitate the decentralized development planning process in Zimbabwe, the following steps of restructuring government were taken in order to cater for the participation of local people in development activities:

- i. The creation of new Ministries and deconcentration of others – dispersing them spatially so that they would be represented at local levels.
- ii. Delegation of managerial and operational responsibilities to parastatal organizations, regional development agencies and specific project-implementation units.
- iii. Privatisation of some government responsibilities to allow voluntary organizations and private enterprises to undertake them under market conditions.
- iv. Devolution of power to sub-national units through legally and financially strengthening them. This was done through the establishment of participatory organizational structures to permit local participation in development planning, and the enactment of legal instruments and issuing of directives,

which sought to democratize and strengthen local government. The relevant enactments and directives' key features are presented below.

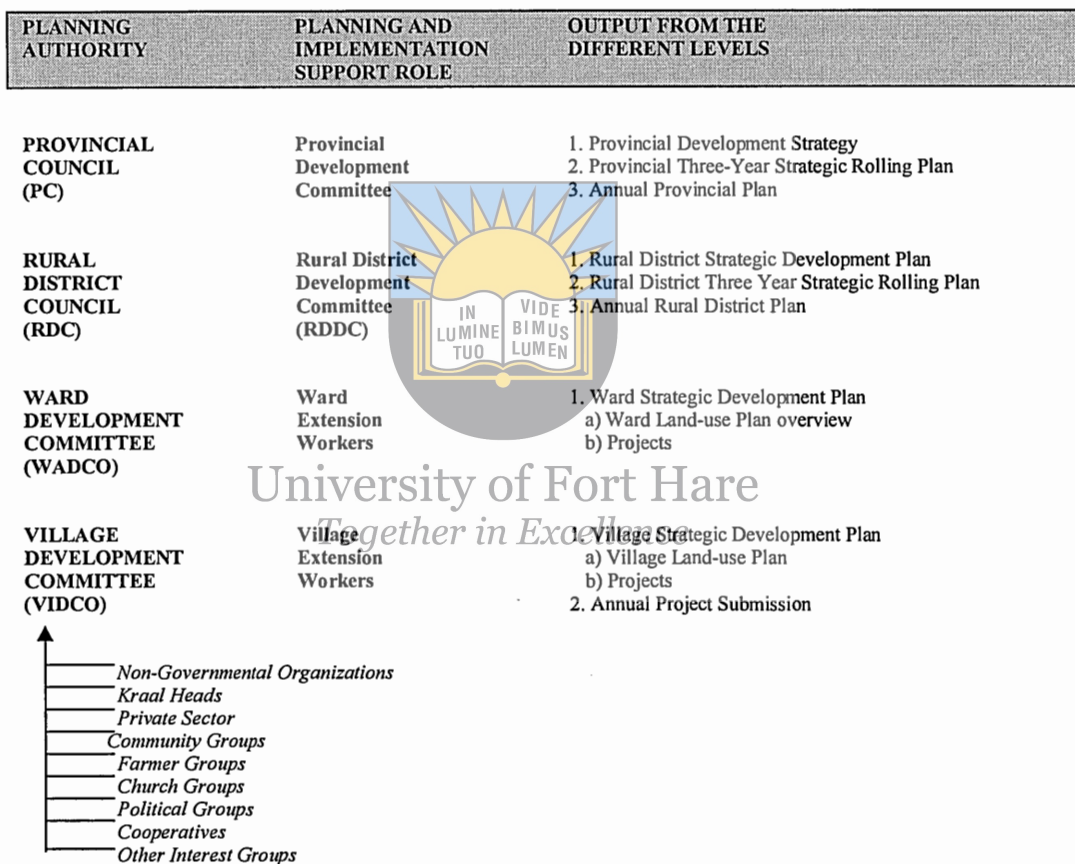
In 1980 the District Councils Act was enacted, and then subsequently amended in 1981 and 1982. The Act applied to communal lands, where it revived local government after the period of guerilla insurgency, consolidated previously fragmented authorities from 220 to 55, and democratized the system of local government to consist of predominantly elected members and those nominated under the District Councils Act. Councilors were to elect a member amongst themselves to the post of Council Chairman. The Councils were to be principal development and planning agencies within their jurisdictional zones. They were given limited powers of taxation, implementation of a variety of central government enactments, and provision of services. However, the structure had a basic weakness in that it did not specify roles for players in the development field. For example, it became unclear as to who was superior between the District Council's Chief Executive Officer and the District Administrator. The Prime Minister's Directives of 1984 and 1985 attempted to deal with such ambiguities and clarify the roles of all players in development planning.

The Prime Minister's Directive on Decentralization (1984 and 1985), outlined the organizational structures for popular participation in development planning and provides the basis for a hierarchy of representative bodies at the village, the ward, district and provincial levels (See figure 1 below).

Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) are elected bodies that define local needs of the village. The village head gets an automatic appointment to chair the VIDCO. Parties listed below the VIDCO also make their representations through the

Village Development Committees. Ward Development Committees (WADCs) cover about six villages and are made up of the representatives of VIDCOs. Each ward is chaired by an elected councilor. WADCs oversee the Ward's prioritized needs and forward them to the district council.

Figure 1 : Actors In The Decentralized Planning System

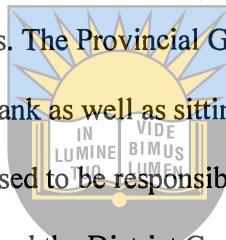


[Source: Land Use And Planning, 1992]

District Development Committees (DDCs) are planning and coordination committees composed of two local district councilors and representatives of central government sector ministries, representatives from the police, Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) and the army. The District Administrator (DA), a central government employee, chairs the District Development Committee. The DDC is a

committee of council and therefore is subordinate to it. The DDC allows for horizontal coordination of the activities of sector ministries and local authorities, as well as the submission of annual estimates of expenditure to the PSIP through the PDC.

The Provincial Councils Act of 1985 gave increased planning focus to the province. According to the Provincial Councils Act, the Provincial Council should be made up of district chairpersons and one other elected councilor selected by each Council, one member nominated by the ruling party and a representative of the Provincial Assembly of Chiefs. The Provincial Governor, who is appointed by the President and enjoys cabinet rank as well as sitting in parliament, chairs the Provincial Council. Governors are supposed to be responsible for the coordination of the activities of sector ministries and the District Councils, but the office lacks mandatory powers in respect of both local authorities and sector ministries.



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The PDC is composed of heads of sector ministries at provincial level, members representing the army, the police and the CIO, as well as the Provincial Planning Officer in the Department of Physical Planning. According to the Provincial Councils Act, leaders of commerce and industry operating within the province are to be co-opted as necessary. The Provincial Development Committee (PDC) is chaired by the Provincial Administrator, a central government employee, and is mainly responsible for the formulation of plans for coordinated development in the province. It produces short to long-term plans reflecting District Development Plans, provincial plans of ministries, and the PDC's own ideas and, where possible, major development plans of

private organizations. These are sent to the national level for compilation into the national plans. The province has no functional responsibilities and has no budget.

The Rural District Councils Act of 1988 purported to end the dual system of local government in rural Zimbabwe, through the amalgamation of Rural Councils and District Councils into 56 Rural District Councils (RDCs) so as to overcome the colonial legacy of separate development based on race, and permit a more equitable distribution of social services. For Rural District Development Planning (RDDP), “Attempts at implementation began in 1990 through the resolution of boundary disputes” (Stewart et al, 1994).



It is now more than ten years since that first attempt at implementation. I believe it is high time an effort was made to determine the strength and weaknesses of such a decentralized development planning process as they have revealed themselves so far. This study therefore sets out to review the planning process with a view to ascertaining the successes of the planning process at district level. The focus on the district level arises from the fact that of the decentralized structures only the district has a budget and so can implement its plans.

1.2 The Research Issue

The state, regardless of its institutional framework, must utilize scarce resources in the most efficient way towards the achievement of certain ends. Intrinsic to the concept of planning is the notion of attaching relative scarcity indices to

resources and prioritizing their use. It becomes necessary, therefore, to constantly review the planning process with regards to the adequacy of choices made, appropriateness of goals chosen, the prioritization of such goals and the degree to which the goals are achieved. Evaluation of the planning process becomes vital due to the consideration that while planning can produce outstanding results, we still need to know whether the choices made were indeed optimum. The research issue becomes one of ascertaining whether optimum choices were being made at each stage, whether goals are being achieved, as well as making comparisons between sacrifices and achievements or inputs and outputs. Critically, for this study, the research issue at the abstract level is one that seems to touch on human life and human development.



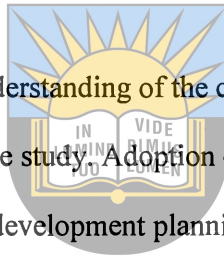
Aim

The study therefore attempts to establish the changes that have taken place since the inception of Rural District Development Planning (DDP) in Bikita Rural District since 1990. Its aim is to examine how the changes compare with the notions of sustainability and human development. According to Rubin (1995:36), “Evaluations should give an account of what the project has achieved, or not achieved, and compare this with expectations”.

Related to the above, the study was intended to reveal possible ways of improving the DDP process as a result of having exposed the reasons for the successes or failures. “It is important to know why things happened as they did, and analyze the factors which influenced the way the project progressed” (ibid: 36).

1.3 Methodology

The study is an evaluation study. It is qualitative in nature, designed to provide insights into the development planning process at district level. A more ambitious project that would have included impact evaluation had to be scaled down. Given the complexity and costs involved in carrying out an impact evaluation, which would have required more time and resources than I had at my disposal, I settled for evaluating the planning process.



In order to gain an understanding of the current process of DDP in Zimbabwe, Bikita RDC was used as a case study. Adoption of a case study approach was based on the consideration that the development planning process cannot be separated from the political and socio-economic environments as well as the attitudes of the population in the study area. In other words, “because the boundaries between the study phenomenon and the context is obscure, the context itself becomes part of the issues being studied” (Kombe 1994:53). According to Flyvberg (1991:2) who is quoted by Kombe (1994:53), the case study approach is a study of the concrete. He notes that methodologically, the science of the concrete places emphasis on “narratology before epistemology, context before theory, cases before samples, dialogue before final answers and questions of how before questions of why...” Yin (1984:14) also notes that “the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events...” such as organizational and managerial processes.

The choice of Bikita RDC as the case study area was influenced by the fact that I have worked in the district before, and considerations of time and monetary constraints made it desirable to select a study area with which I was already well acquainted.

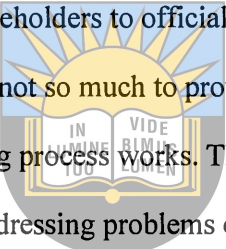
In order to ensure internal validity, i.e. to ensure that inferences made depict causalities and that explanations are not attributable to other factors or accidental, data collected from the various sources was corroborated and triangulated. To improve reliability, sources of the data used in the study including key informants, published and unpublished, are presented in the report.

Data required for analysis and assessment of issues relating to RDDP was on issues such as the nature and current trends in the context of decentralization, as well as opinions, attitudes and concerns at the RDC level. Whereas the research topic attracted many questions, the focus of this study was directed towards the following themes:

- Adequacy of institutional and legal frameworks for RDDP.
- Types of plans produced and how they are generated and implemented.
- The nature of interface and linkages with central government, NGOs and other stakeholders.
- Local financial resource flows.
- Level of commitment of citizens and local administrative and political personnel.
- Achievement of set goals and appropriateness of the goals.

Three methods were used in gathering requisite data for the study. Relevant information and data was extracted through content analysis of various documentary sources such as minutes of meetings of the RDC, RDDC and other committees, review reports and other internal documents, formal studies, organizational records and charts, district profiles, etc. I made an undertaking to return all borrowed materials and destroy photocopies made, after use.

Another source of information utilized, especially in trying to establish attitudes and behaviour of stakeholders to official policy, was the interview. The purpose of the interviews was not so much to provide a record of contemporary events as to describe how the planning process works. The advantage of verbal evaluations is that it can go a long way in addressing problems of misinterpretation because, "Points can be followed up, different opinions can be tested, and it is easier to be flexible" (Reilly 1979:101)

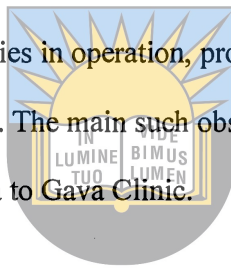


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The interviews in this study were free ranging and unstructured – i.e. open-ended questions were used, with subjects being asked for facts as well as opinions in order to gain insights into attitudes. More focused interviews were conducted with established institutions like the Department of Physical Planning. In all cases, the interviews were not structured and a checklist was used instead of structured questionnaires. The checklist used is attached as appendix 1. Thirty-one subjects were interviewed. Interviews were affected by such factors as the time interviewees had available, their disposition to talk, sensitivity of issues and problems with transport meant some interviews had to be rushed. I hope the interviews did not end up falsifying main tendencies.

A list of subjects interviewed is given as appendix 2. Purposive sampling was used to select subjects for interviews, i.e. the sample was assembled by intentionally seeking individuals or situations likely to yield new instances and greater understanding of the DDP process in the district.

Rapid district appraisal, otherwise called rapid assessment (or reconnaissance), and direct field observation were also employed as a method of data collection for the study. This was achieved through recording impressions gained in travels around the district, observation of activities in operation, projects and programmes at various stages of implementation, etc. The main such observation tour was one that cut right across the district from Nyika to Gava Clinic.



The data gathering process, which had been expected to last for about three months, ended up being compressed into only one month, from July 8 to August 9, 2003. Current fuel and transportation problems in the country necessitated making the best of whatever transport become available. In this respect extensive use was made of Council vehicles as officers went around on their official duties.

Classification categories used in the presented data were built on the strength of recurring phenomena. The narrative style has been used for the presentation of the results.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The process of planning and initiating socio-economic growth and change through the mobilization, motivation and coordination of human activities necessitates a constant review of methods and techniques used. Such reviews can be used as learning processes and ensure that mistakes do not recur (Jenssen , 1992:19). It is for this reason that this study seeks to evaluate DDP in Zimbabwe's Bikita RDC, focusing on the planning process.

Mutizwa-Mangiza and Helmsing (1991) did a study, an ex-ante evaluation, of the district but it mainly focused on problems that were likely to be encountered in the implementation of decentralized development planning. Another evaluative study was carried out by a team from the British Department for International Development but this was programme specific, focusing only on the British funded Integrated Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme. This study differs from the foregoing studies in that it is a concurrent evaluation of DDP and was meant to tease out lessons learnt to date and where applicable suggest ways the planning process could be improved.

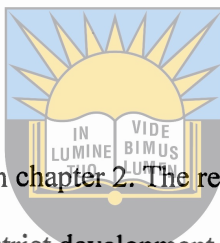
1.5 Limitations of the Study

The study has limitations that stem from the methodology used. The case study approach used means that findings cannot be generalized to all Zimbabwe districts, bearing in mind differences in factor endowments including managerial. That the fieldwork that had originally been planned to be done in three months ended up being compressed in a month might mean that the insights gained from the data are not as unbiased as expected. Furthermore there were few females holding offices interviewed which might introduce gender bias to the findings. The current

macroeconomic problems affecting the whole country may also have clouded the true picture of what is happening in Bikita.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The present chapter offers a short introduction to the thinking that has guided decentralization and the basis for Zimbabwe's adoption of decentralized development planning through the establishment of Rural District Councils. An evaluation of the process of decentralized development planning at district level through a case study of Bikita forms the core problem of the study. The methodology used for the study is described.



Literature is reviewed in chapter 2. The review is intended to create sharper insights into the meaning of district development planning and relate this to the concept of evaluation, which forms the basis of this study. An understanding of these concepts will provide directions and limits to indicators used in evaluating the development planning process.

Chapter 3 presents the results of the field study, whilst detailed discussion of the findings is done in chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents conclusions drawn and recommendations for the way forward.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The main objective of this study is the evaluation of District Development Planning, within the framework of decentralization. It becomes necessary therefore, that one discusses the key concepts. This would allow an understanding of the indicators used in evaluating the development process. What follows, therefore, is a discussion of the key concepts in this research: decentralization, district, development and development planning.



2.1 Decentralization

Litvack and others (1998:26), define decentralization as “dispensing fiscal, political, and administrative responsibilities across different tiers of government and between the public and private sectors”.

Bornstein (1989) sees two dimensions to the concept of decentralization. According to him, one dimension has to do with information whilst the other has to do with authority. A state is decentralized in terms of information to the extent that different people in it shape their activities on the basis of different information about the environment. A national plan only provides a set of informational signals to the economic and other social agents. Such signals have to be complemented by other information only available at the various levels. Bornstein (1989) argues that no national plan is ever based upon complete information even at the plan formulation stage, and as no single agent can ever have all the information. Central planning can therefore never be efficient. These limitations on information make it difficult for

planners at the center to determine whether a particular decision maker is providing correct information or following prescribed decision rules. Information decentralization, therefore, leads to a de facto decentralization of authority.

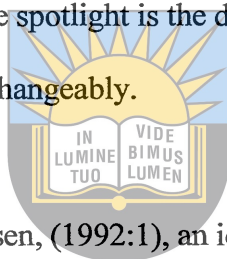
Centralization of authority refers to the extent to which agents are obliged to follow instructions from the center. Authority relations are of only two types: super-ordination and sub-ordination.

According to Cheema and Rondinelli (1983), the desire to adopt decentralization policies in developing countries arose from disappointment with centralized planning systems during the 1950s and 1960s, the need for organizational structures to facilitate more egalitarian policies and popular participation with the emergence of the “Growth with Equity” development policies in the 1970s, and the realization that decentralization might be a more effective and efficient way of planning and administering development activities (Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983:10).

Among the strategic choices that can be made when decentralizing, Pollitt and others (1998:7) give one choice as being between political decentralization and administrative decentralization. Political decentralization is where authority is decentralized to elected representatives whilst administrative decentralization is where authority is decentralized to managers or appointed bodies. Another choice is between internal decentralization, which involves empowerment of frontline staff, and devolution that entails the decentralization of authority to separate, legally established organizations. This study mostly concerns itself with the devolution of administrative authority from central government to the district. I therefore briefly look at what constitutes a district below.

2.2 The notion of district

Glasson (1974:36) notes, “Regions are seen as descriptive tools, defined according to particular criteria, for a particular purpose – there being as many regions as there are criteria to define them”. In general, a region is taken to mean a geographical area larger than a village, town or city but smaller than a nation (Schall, 1994). The region designates an area for functional purposes, e.g. police regions, planning regions, etcetera, whose boundaries are of an ad hoc nature. For the purpose of this study, the region under the spotlight is the district and unless otherwise stated the two words can be used interchangeably.



According to Bernd Jenssen, (1992:1), an ideal district is a community which regulates its own communal affairs and has established division of power and democratic structures. “Elected leaders are rooted in the district and address themselves to local needs and problems. Their success will be measured by their re-election”. A decentralized institutional framework serves political leaders, and clear regulations facilitate coordination and guarantee policy implementation. The local authority, i.e. the District Council, has a constitutional right to levy certain taxes and is entitled to a share of them, and also depends upon provincial and national grants to fulfill overall tasks. The local authorities are subject to legal control by the provincial and national levels, so they have to abide by the law and remain faithful to the national interests.

Given that Rural District Councils were created to be development-planning authorities within their geographic areas, there is need to examine the concept of development so as to gain some insights into what they are expected to do.

2.3 The Concept of Development

The concept of development has been changing over time in order to reflect new realities. I will here attempt a brief outline of these shifts in meaning from the end of the World War II. The object of the outline is to show how the shifting paradigms in the conceptualization of development affected development practice.



After World War II, development was mainly conceptualized as the achievement of economic growth. This gave priority, in development thinking, to increased commodity output rather than the welfare of the human beings involved in the production of the commodities. “Development was always measured in monetary terms’ usually by per capita income and Gross National Product (GNP)” (Schall, 1994:21). Growth in the GNP implied that there was an increase in the goods and services provided. This explains some prescriptions given to developing countries to concentrate on export production, either of agricultural raw materials or minerals, as a means of raising real output per capita and hopefully generate more surpluses to be invested in more export production and consumption goods.

Rostow (1960) published a book, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, in which he proposed that countries had to pass through five stages of economic growth. Economic growth would be a linear progression of stages from traditional society, preconditions for takeoff, the takeoff, the drive to maturity

and finally the age of high mass consumption. The achievement of takeoff required the doubling of productive investment, existence of at least one leading sector with substantial backward and forward linkages an institutional framework sufficiently developed to deliver an industrial revolution. Rostow's stages of growth were based on the notion that to achieve economic growth and therefore become developed, countries had to move away from being traditional and modernize by copying how western countries had achieved growth.

In the post-colonial era, many developing countries' attempts to reach the takeoff stage and the drive to maturity were thus based on the need for modernization through rapid industrialization, particularly through the large-scale industrial forms (Kitching, 1982).



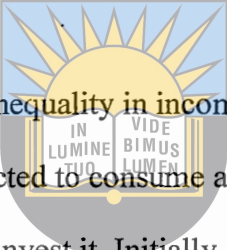
The “Widening Gap” theory, which argues that whilst Western industrialized countries were attaining ever better standards of living, Third World countries were getting even poorer, was used as justification for prescriptions and aid (designed along the lines of the Marshal plan) to these poor countries so as to narrow the widening gap (Mehmet 1978). No effort was made to take into cognizance the circumstances obtaining in the developing countries like the absorptive capacities of political and social institutions, ability to manage a sustained process of rapid change nor the capacity of government machinery to implement and monitor large-scale development projects. “It was as if there existed only one single constraint on industrial expansion: capital shortage” (Mehmet 1978:18). This is the rationale behind the “Big Push” theorists’ (led by Rosenstein-Rodan) conviction that in order to maximize the effect of scarce development funds, it was necessary to concentrate on industrialization. The assumption was that growth poles were to be found only in the

manufacturing and non-agricultural sectors, so income maximization through industrial modernization became the target of development planning.

In most post-colonial countries, however, this resulted in the formation of dual economies, with the export sector engaging a small proportion of the population but getting all the advantages of technological improvement and economic organisation. On the other hand, the traditional sector encompassed the majority of the people but remained dependent on inefficient or obsolete technology and outmoded organization. Further, the preoccupation of governments with industrialization to produce locally many of the consumer goods formerly imported did not yield desired results as many of these new industries were neo-colonial firms that used to import the goods and tended to depend on automated or semi-automated machinery. The raw materials needed for the machinery could not always be supplied from within the country so that very little interdependence developed between the industrial and the primary sectors of the economy. The hoped for “spread effects into other parts of the country and other industrial sectors did not materialize” (Schall, 1994:21). Still, output of such industries are recorded as growth in the economy and development for the country when all that has happened is that the country has provided a location for the local assembly for foreign goods and technology in return for wages and employment for a few skilled and unskilled workers.

A major weakness of thinking about economic growth as development is that it fails to address issues of distribution. In an essay “The Meaning of Development” Dudley Seers(1984:9) sees the challenge as “how to find measures of development to replace the national income, or, more precisely, to enable the income to be given its

true, somewhat limited, significance, as a measure of development potential”. He also notes that income figures published for most developing countries have very little meaning due to lack of data on farm output and the fact that when income distributions are skewed, prices lose meaning as weights in real income comparisons. The GNP per capita, as a measure of development, fails to reveal the levels of poverty, unemployment and inequality. Mehmet (1978: 18) suggests that issues to do with distribution were ignored, as “there was no point in becoming concerned about distribution when there was practically nothing to distribute”.



It was also assumed that inequality in income was desirable for economic growth as poor people were expected to consume any additional income they got, whereas the rich would save and invest it. Initially, the rich would get richer as they were investing, but the poor would start to benefit from trickle-down effects and the dualistic nature of the economy would be whittled away as growth became sufficiently rapid. Kuznets, (1955) formalized this into a theory and developed the ‘Kuznets curve’ where inequality in incomes is seen as both necessary for economic growth and a result of it. His suggestion that during the process of economic growth, income distribution might become more then less unequal has however met with mixed evidence, “varying with statistical methodology and the data set employed” (Crafts 2001:307).

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In the 1960s, efforts were made at reducing population growth rates, as a way of ensuring that gains made in economic growth would not simply be swallowed up by the rapidly growing population. As per capita GNP was used to assess changes in development, countries with rapid population growth like Zimbabwe (close to 4%),

would have to increase the GNP faster than this rate to achieve positive changes in per capita income. Schall (1994) notes that because many developing countries could not significantly increase their GNPs, they turned to the slowing down of population growth rates as a policy alternative. This met with limited success, as it became evident that both cultural and economic reasons played a part in determining population growth rates, with the poor continuing to use large families to hedge against old age and the new upper and middle classes reducing family sizes as they found that too many children were expensive to maintain. A relationship between family sizes and economic status thus emerged (Schall, 1994:21).

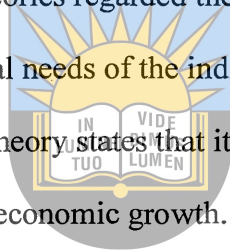


Focus therefore remained on achieving a high rate of economic growth, with the availability of capital and reduction of population growth being seen as the major constraints to development (Schall, 1994:22). However, dualism developed and the trickle-down effects that had been visualized by Arthur Lewes (1955) did not materialize. This led to some thinkers turning away from placing emphasis on raising GNP but rather focusing on factors that affect the individual's standard of living or quality of life. So it was that in the 1970s, focus finally moved to the need for a fairer distribution of the development cake and the concept of "Growth with Equity" dominated development discussions and literature.

An alternative to the standard theories of growth comes from the basic needs theory, which originated from the final document of the World Labour Conference, organised by ILO in 1975. The basic needs approach starts by recognizing that it is no longer acceptable, in human and political terms, to wait for many generations before the benefits of development reach the poorest groups. The strategy suggested for any

country, is to guarantee a minimum income to the poor. Such income must be able to cover the cost of primary needs of a family as regards food, housing, clothing and also those fundamental services like "the availability of drinking water, public sanitation, transports, medical care, other than an adequately paid job for whoever wished to work" (ILO, 1976).

Henceforth, attention shifted from the per capita income, to the condition of the individual, to avoid the risk of having large inequalities hidden behind total and average values. While growth theories regarded the improvement in social conditions and the fulfillment of fundamental needs of the individual as consequences of the growth process, the basic needs theory states that it is only through the fulfillment of human needs that we can favour economic growth.



The publication of the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report (1990)* and a variety of World Bank publications such as *Advancing Sustainable Development: The World Bank and Agenda 21 (1997)* and *The Role of Government and the Private Sector in Fighting Poverty (1997)* have focused more attention resources development and human progress.

Several reasons are advanced for this interest in human development as a desirable strategy. Human development is considered desirable in itself as it enriches people's lives and at the same time lays a foundation for them to become more productive. The focus on human development is also seen as favorable in efforts to reduce human reproduction and to protection of the environment due to increased awareness (Psacharopoulos and Nguyen, 1997). Human development is also seen as being able to contribute to a healthy civil society and democracy as well as promoting political stability. Channeling development efforts into human development can

therefore provide answers not only to issues of material production and distribution, but also such diverse issues as human rights and freedoms but ensuring sustainability at the same time.

Amartya Sen (1992) redefined concepts like poverty, inequality and well-being. He states, that the ideas of development and well-being must go further than simply indicating the possession of goods or availability of services, but should rather look at what they allow individuals to do. Goods, as well as income, are a means of reaching wealth but they are not an index of well-being. We must look at what people manage to do or to be, with the means and the capabilities they possess. To assess the well being of individuals and the development of countries, we must therefore look at this area comprising the achievements and the major goals of human life. Policy-wise, the people leading the economy should not only aim at compensating disadvantages, but they should also and mainly widen as much as possible the area comprising fundamental needs like food, clothing, medical care, education and also those fundamental needs connected to social networking, participation to community life, self-respect, freedoms, rights and so on. These are the same ideas covered under the human development approach.

Conyers and Hills (1984:28) puts the same ideas somewhat differently when they describe development as “conceived and measured not only in economic terms but also in terms of social well being, political structures and the quality of the physical environment.

In the next section I look at the idea of planning and endeavor to relate it to the concept of development.

2.4 The Idea of Planning

In general planning simply means defining ways of achieving particular objectives. To Hall (1975:3-4), “planning is concerned with deliberately achieving some objectives and, it proceeds by assembling action into some orderly sequence”. He also points out that “It may, but need not, include exact physical blueprints of objectives” (ibid: 6). This definition is silent on the issue of implementation, yet plans that never get implemented are of no good to anyone.

Hall’s definition is however general. For development planning, the “Systems Approach” advocated by Brian McLoughlin (1969) is more relevant. He notes that as planners deal with a system of human activities linked by communication, it resembles a network. The approach suggests that planners should place emphasis on human activities and the communications that link these in a specified space or environment (in this case, the district), rather than “concentrating only on the physical space and material view of the world” (Schall, 1994; 18). Planning is therefore visualized as a dynamic process providing a vision of the future and essential steps of development through which the district has to pass. Emphasis is therefore not only on the final product of the plan but rather on all stages of the process. The systems approach therefore looks at how an area, such as a district, develops over time rather than as a single final end product of having been developed. In other words, planning is seen not so much as an event, but a continuous process involving decisions or choices about alternative ways of using available resources with the aim of achieving specified goals in the future.

For the purposes of this study, rural district development planning is taken to mean an intervention mechanism designed to overcome problems and constraints in a functional territorial setting, namely the district, which relies on the participation of stakeholders, optimum utilization of resources to further endogenous development in the most effective way. The planning process goes beyond plan formulation to include coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process (Schall, 1994). Continuous reviews of the planning process will be necessitated by the need to incorporate new circumstances from experience or to adjust the implementation strategy if new dimensions and challenges emerge.



Conyers and Hills (1984:3) isolated the following four qualities of the planning process:

- ❖ Planning involves making choices (e.g. between courses of action).
- ❖ Planning is a means of allocating resources and prioritizing (e.g. what goals to pursue first).
- ❖ Planning is a means of achieving goals (the idea of the “best” use of resources depends on the goals to be achieved)
- ❖ Planning is for the future (i.e. it predicts outcomes of alternative courses of action and determines which to adopt, as well as the sequencing of future activities).

From the above, it is clear that goals that are vague, inadequately defined, unrealistic, conflicting, or goals that are not meaningful at all and goals that are contrary to the desires of the majority of stakeholders can and do cause difficulties in the planning process (Conyers and Hills, 1984). To guard against the above weaknesses in the planning process and make sure those goals are being achieved, there is need for

monitoring and evaluation of the planning process. I discuss evaluation in the next section.

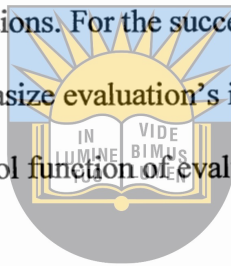
2.5 Planning and Evaluation

Evaluation simply means assessment. Evaluations makes it possible to assess whether an action is truly suited to the objectives set, and whether such objectives are truly appropriate, realistic and workable, if the actions were achieved, at what cost” (Directorate of Development of the European Community Commission [DDECC], 1992:145).



There are three types of evaluations. An ex ante or preliminary evaluation is done before a plan is executed or implemented. It is therefore an outlook evaluation done at the identification phase where questions of action viability are raised. A concurrent, or ongoing or process evaluation is done when the plan is underway or being implemented. Here, the process of questioning is extended during programming, when the chosen strategy has to be put into practice. Concern is on how the programme operates and therefore the main focus is on problems in service delivery. Concurrent evaluation takes place for the full duration of an action. There is also the ex post or impact evaluation, where assessment is made after the completion of implementation (Singh, 1986:371). An impact evaluation is intended to determine whether the programme had the desired effects on stakeholders and whether the effects are attributable to the programme intervention. Unintended consequences are also explored (Baker, 2000). Evaluation in the course of implementation or final evaluation upon completion is closely linked to monitoring, “which feeds it, and which is enhanced by it (DDECC 1992:146).

Evaluation serves an internal support function by analyzing the past and orienting the future. Recommendations from evaluations are often used to restructure programming whilst the participative thought and discussion triggered by the evaluation is educational to stakeholders and helpful in assisting them reach agreement on implementing proposed changes as well as providing the necessary support and finance. In this case, evaluation functions as a management support tool. It can however also serve as a control tool. In this guise it includes auditing and the control of implementation of actions. For the successful attainment of objectives, efforts should be made to emphasize evaluation's internal support function rather than the control function as the control function of evaluation often alienates some stakeholders (DDRCC 1992).

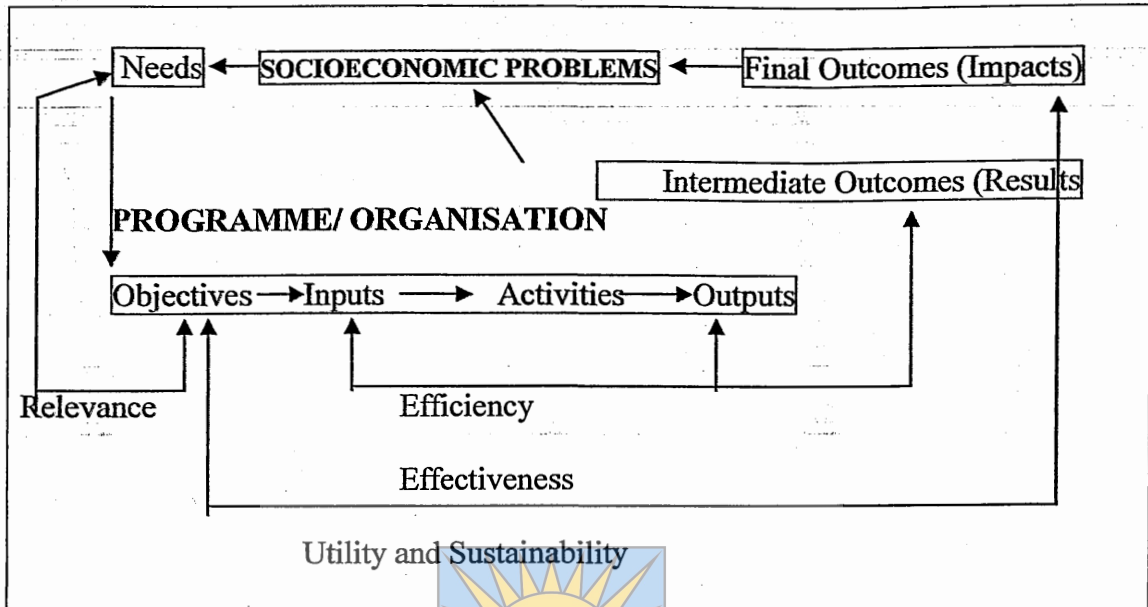


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The Programme Input –Output model (figure 2) below captures the relationship between programme components and evaluation components. Ex ante evaluation links needs with objectives and is shown as a relationship of relevance in the diagram. The relationship between intermediate programme outputs and the inputs is evaluated as an efficiency relationship, whilst the relationship that links the results and final outcomes or impacts to the objectives, is one of effectiveness and includes matters of utility and sustainability.

Figure 2 Programme Components and Evaluation Components Relationships



Adapted from Pollitt et.al (1998:11)



2.6 Planning Policy in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's planning policy since attaining independence in 1980 is informed by a desire "for development planning with, rather than for, the people" (Makumbe, 1996:35). This is evident in such planning policy statements as *Growth with Equity: An Economic Policy Statement* (1981); the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development's *Towards The Implementation of a Rural Development Policy: Strategy Paper* (1983); *First Five Year National Development Plan* (1986 – 1990); and *The Second Five Year National Development Plan* (1991 – 1995).

As mentioned earlier in this study, the move towards embracing people's participation in decision-making and development planning was expected to redress the imbalances of the colonial era by ensuring that the majority of Zimbabweans who live in rural areas would be provided with infrastructure and opportunities for development. Zimbabwe's socialist ideological outlook at independence should therefore be understood in the context of its political past: colonial rule and policies

did not allow room for active participation in development programmes and projects by the blacks (Makumbe, 1996).

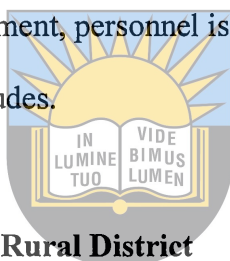
Enactments and directives such as The District Councils Act (1980), The Prime Minister's Directives (1984 and 1985), The Provincial Councils Act (1985) and The Rural District Councils Act (1988) were thus all designed to define a legal framework for participatory development planning. Planning is done by the Department of Physical Planning, whose mandate is to oversee spatial planning and set standards for the construction of physical structures; the National Economic Planning Commission which is concerned with socio-economic development; and the sector ministries which have sectoral plans. All major capital projects with national significance are funded through the Public Sector Investment Programme that is managed by NEPC. Projects of local significance are planned for and implemented by local authorities such as Rural District Councils, Town Councils and City Municipalities.

This study is only concerned with development planning as it applies to Rural District Councils. The specific area of interest is Bikita. A brief description of the study area is presented in the next chapter as well as the results of the study. In general, the study is an evaluation of the planning process in the district.

Chapter 3

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN BIKITA - FINDINGS

This chapter presents a brief description of the study area the key findings of the study, which involved one month of fieldwork in the Bikita district. The presentation will also cover such things as Bikita Rural District Council's main development goal, the legal framework, delineation of boundaries, organization of planning structures, the planning process and its management, personnel issues, budgetary matters and local development initiatives and attitudes.



3.1 The Research Area: Bikita Rural District

Bikita Rural District, with an area of 5 286.43 square kilometers, covers about 9,07% of Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. Situated in the eastern end of the province, Bikita district share its eastern border with Manicaland Province and has the Masvingo province districts of Gutu, Zaka and Chiredzi to the northwest, west and south. Nyika Growth Point, the district capital, is about 100km from the provincial capital of Masvingo.

The district falls into three agro-ecological regions, with almost half falling into agro-ecological region V (see figure 3 below). Rainfall is sporadic with long dry spells even in the rain seasons.

Figure 3: Table of Bikita's Agro-ecological Regions

Region	Area (hectare)	Percent (%)
Region III	82 604	15.7
Region IV	206 922	39.5
Region V	234 720	44.8

Source: Agro-ecological Regions Table (Bikita RDC Strategic Development Plan 2001-2005]

According to the information from the Central Statistics Office's 2002 census, the total human population of Bikita Rural District stood at 156 820, of which 71 067 were males and 85 753 were females. Comparable figures in the 1992 census were 154 377, 70 689 and 83 688. In the 1992 census, there were 28 895 households with the average household size being pegged at 5,31. By the 2002 census, the number of households had risen to 33 404 but the average household size had dropped to 4,7. The drop in the average household size can be attributed to the efforts of the Zimbabwe Family Planning Council, the effects of the aids pandemic and emigration from the district due to the current harsh economic climate. At the time of the 1992 population census the figure of the unemployed in Bikita district stood at 10 427, but the figure does not include communal farm workers. Whilst the Central Statistical Office still has to release unemployment figures for the 2002 census, by travelling through the district I got the impression that the figure will have risen significantly. Meanwhile, due to retrenchments and the ever-swelling army of school leavers, the situation cannot be expected to normalise soon.

Main human activities include communal farming and small-scale commercial agricultural production. Soils in the district are infertile and the carrying capacity is stretched. Many farmers expressed dissatisfaction with their land and were hopeful that the government would be able to resettle them in the ongoing land redistribution programme. As there are no commercial farms in the district, only a few people from the district have been resettled in other district so far, so little has been done to alleviate the shortage of land.

As mentioned above, rainfall is sporadic and unreliable. After two consecutive droughts, famine is raging in the district. Villagers have lamented the absence of dams that can be used for irrigation purposes. Lack of irrigation facilities means that farmers cannot practise market gardening in the dry season or have an alternative to fall back on in times of drought like the current one. Their livestock is also being wiped out by a combination of insufficient water and tick-borne diseases due to shortages of dipping chemicals.

The current inflationary climate in the national economy has put the prices of farm inputs beyond the reach of many. One farmer lamented that even if the rains came now there was nothing he could do because he has no seeds, fertiliser or draught power. Farmers also incur exorbitant costs both in the procurement of inputs and in marketing of their produce due to the large distances to the marketing centres.

Currently, most of the farmers who harvested nothing in the last farming season are forced to rely upon the Central Government's Food Relief and Public Works programmes for their sustenance. CARE International is also active in providing drought relief food in the district.

Mining for lithium is done at Bikita Minerals, but not on a very extensive scale. There is a wealth of wildlife in the Save conservancy whose potential is only beginning to be exploited by Council through sales of game meat. Commercial endeavors are mostly restricted to sole proprietor retailing shops.



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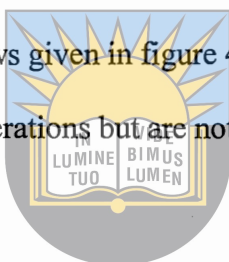
3.2 Main Development Goal *Together in Excellence*

Bikita RDC's main development planning goal is given as "to improve the quantitative and qualitative conditions of living of the people of Bikita District in a sustainable manner through their own evaluative preferences". The RDC expects to achieve that goal through:

- (i) Provision of good governance – establishment of policies and processes through popular participation that facilitate and support social and economic development initiatives by individual district residents, the private sector, the public sector and non-governmental organizations.
- (ii) Investment promotion – preparation of marketing information and dissemination of such information to potential investors.
- (iii) Natural resource conservation – promotion of natural resources conservation through popular participation by the private sector, chiefs, headmen, village heads and the district inhabitants in protecting forests, river sources and basins, wildlife and cultural sites of historical importance.
- (iv) Decongestion of overpopulated wards – resettlement of the district inhabitants in highly congested wards. [Bikita RDC Strategic Development Plan: 2001 – 2005]

3.3 Legal Framework

Whereas the composition, powers, responsibilities, functions and procedures that govern Rural District Councils are spelt out in the Rural District Councils Act (Chapter 29:13), I found out that there are a myriad of other enactments administered by different ministries that affect Council in the different spheres of their operations, and in most cases take precedence over the Rural District Councils Act. For example, currently there are more than 20 environmental laws that are administered by not less than eight different ministries. The environmental laws given in figure 4, below, are examples of pieces of legislation that affect Council operations but are not administered by the local authority:



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Figure 4: Environmental Laws and Government Ministries Responsible for Their Enforcement

Legislation	Responsible Authority
Mines and Minerals Act	<i>Ministry of Mines, Environment & Tourism</i>
Water Act	<i>Ministry of Rural Resources & Water Development</i>
Natural Resources Act	<i>Ministry of Mines, Environment & Tourism</i>
Forest Act	<i>Ministry of Mines, Environment & Tourism</i>
Communal Land Forest Produce Act	<i>Ministry of Mines, Environment & Tourism</i>
Parks and Wildlife Act	<i>Ministry of Mines, Environment & Tourism</i>
Trapping of Animals (Control) Act	<i>Ministry of Mines, Environment & Tourism</i>
Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act	<i>Ministry of Mines, Environment & Tourism</i>
Atmospheric Pollution Prevention Act	<i>Ministry of Health and Child Welfare</i>
Fertiliser, Farm Feeds & Remedies Act	<i>Ministry of Lands and Agriculture</i>
Hazardous Substances and Articles Act	<i>Ministry of Health and Child Welfare</i>
Regional Town&Country Planning Act	<i>Ministry of Local Government&National Housing</i>
Agricultural Land Settlement Act	<i>Ministry of Lands and Agriculture</i>
Agriculture & Rural Development Authority Act	<i>Ministry of Lands and Agriculture</i>
Land Acquisition Act	<i>Ministry of Rural Resources & Water Development</i>
Income Tax Act	<i>Ministry of Finance</i>
Factories and Works Act	<i>Ministry of Public Service Labour & Social Welfare</i>

[Source: Zimbabwe Environmental Law Reform, 1998:3]

3.4 Delineation of Boundaries

The procedure followed in the delineation of district and ward boundaries is set out in sections 6 and 8 of the Rural District Councils Act (Chapter 29:13). I noted,

however, that the subdivision of the wards is not functional due to the fact that they are mainly supposed to be election districts and should thus have roughly the same population size rather than the same size of geographical area. Some wards thus end up being much bigger than others. Councillors for such wards have to do a lot of travelling if they are to adequately represent their constituencies. This is not always possible and resultantly representation of the people in those wards suffers.

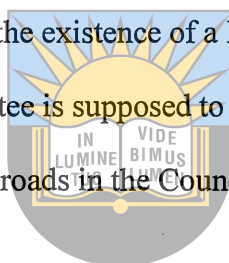
I also noticed that the problem of the functionality of delineation of the district extends to sector ministries and departments where areas of jurisdiction do not always coincide with district boundaries. The problem is further compounded by the fact that obtaining boundaries tend to cut through the boundaries of traditional leaders' jurisdictions throwing chunks into different districts or provinces. In Bikita's case, Council passed a resolution in April 2003, in which they were to petition the Minister of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing to change the administrative boundaries of the district to include some areas formerly controlled by Chiefs Marozva and Mabika during the pre-colonial era. If granted, this will inevitably cause changes in the delineation of areas for other purposes such as policing, electoral, etc.

3.5 Organisational Structure

The organogram for decentralised planning, as provided for in the Prime Minister's Directives of 1984 and 1985, was presented in figure 1 (Actors in Decentralised Planning). In Bikita, the RDC is made up of thirty councilors, who play a policy-making role in district development and management. Personnel from central government sector ministries, who provide technical input into the planning process at

that level, support the RDC. At lower levels, i.e. the ward and the village, ward and village community workers assist the communities during project cycle management. Traditional leaders like chiefs and headmen are also incorporated at the different levels.

At district level, the Rural District Councils Act (Chapter 29:13) makes it mandatory for every RDC to appoint a Finance Committee to regulate Council income and expenditure, and oversee overall financial affairs of Council and its committees (Section 55). In Bikita the committee is known as the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The Act also makes the existence of a Roads Committee mandatory. In terms of section 58, the Roads Committee is supposed to consider all matters relating to the construction and maintenance of roads in the Council area.

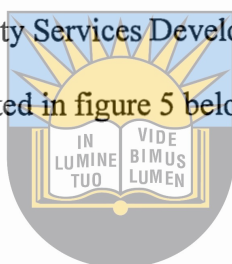


According to the Act, Council should also have a Rural District Development Committee whose mandate is the consideration of ward development plans, making recommendations on matters to be included in the annual and other development plans for the district within which the Council area is situated, preparation of annual plans for approval by Council and assisting in the preparation of long-term plans, investigation of the implementation of annual and other plans if so instructed by Council, i.e. monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of development plans (Section 60).

Bikita RDC also has a Natural Resources Conservation Committee that is charged with conservation work of natural resources in the district. There is also a Planning Committee in charge of overseeing all developments within any area of urban land within

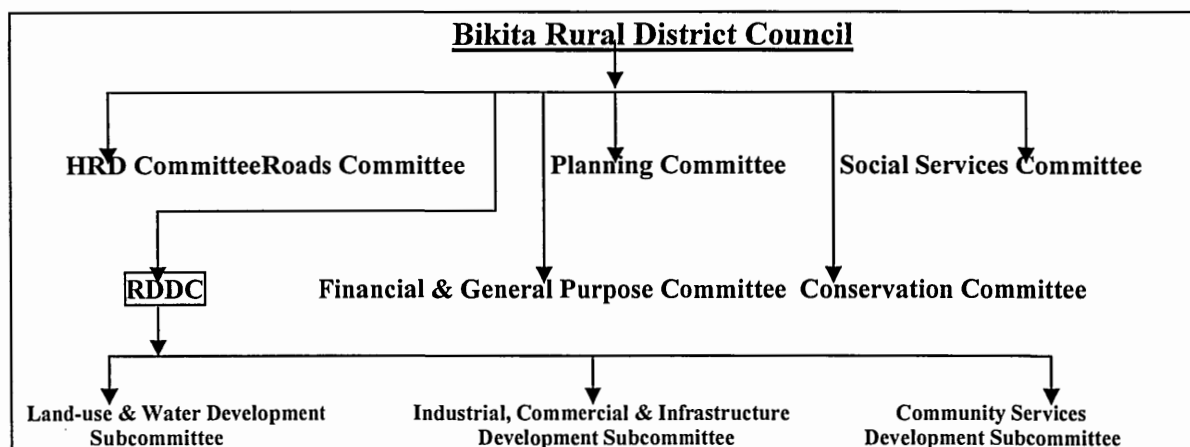
the Council area. There is also the Human Resources Development Committee, which deals with matters of personnel, and the Social Services Committee responsible for social services delivery.

Any of the committees mentioned above can appoint subcommittees from time to time to deal with specific issues. In Bikita I found no evidence of subcommittees in all committees but the RDDC. Subcommittees of the RDDC in Bikita include the Land-use and Water Development subcommittee; Industrial, Commercial and Infrastructure subcommittee; and the Community Services Development subcommittee. The organogram of Council is presented in figure 5 below:



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Figure 5: Committees and Subcommittees of Bikita RDC

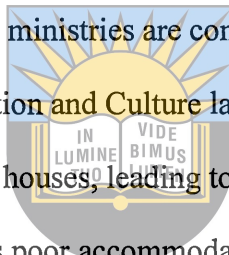


Source: Bikita RDC Charts

3.6 Central Government Institutions and Non Governmental Organizations

Central Government ministries that have staff in the district include Education Sports and Culture; Health and Child Welfare; Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs; Home Affairs (Zimbabwe Republic Police and Registrar General); Agriculture (Agritex); Transport and Energy; Development; Local Government and National Housing; District Development Fund; and Office of the President and Cabinet (Central Statistical Office and Security).

The personnel from these ministries are confronted with many problems. For example, The Ministry of Education and Culture lacks adequate accommodation so that many teachers are made to share houses, leading to low morale; the DDF supposed to take care of the road network has poor accommodation and lack both adequate personnel and equipment due to shrinking budgets; the Central Statistical Office has only one officer stationed in the district and the Office is slow in gathering and disseminating information which is often too aggregated to be useful to local planners; the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare lacks adequate medical staff such that some clinics have to run with a single trained nurse and there is a perennial shortage of drugs in the clinics; the Department of Agricultural Extension Services(Agritex) lacks accommodation, transport and adequate manpower. Departments like that of Physical Planning, Rural Resources and Water operate from the provincial capital. The parastatals Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) and Posts and Telecommunication Corporation (PTC) are also represented in the district.

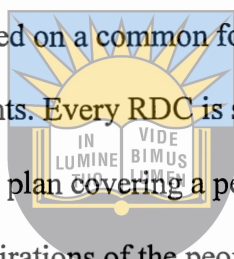


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Four non-governmental organisations are represented in the district. The British Department for International Development (DFID) is engaged in water and sanitation programmes; CARE International assists in small dam rehabilitation programmes and more recently in food relief exercises; whilst AZTREC and ZIRRCO assist in conservation related projects.

3.7 Planning and Implementation Management - Bikita

According to a planning officer in the Department of Physical Planning, all RDCs in Masvingo Province have agreed on a common format for the preparation and sequencing of planning documents. Every RDC is supposed to have a “District Vision”, which is a long-term perspective plan covering a period of up to twenty-five years. The District Vision spells out the aspirations of the people in the district and so gives direction to the planning process.

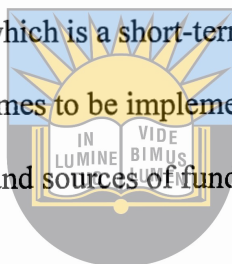


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All Rural Districts are expected to prepare “District Profiles” which are base line surveys of human, institutional, natural, capital and other resources available in the district. In coming up with District Profiles RDCs are expected to make use of Ward and Village Profiles. The data in the District Profile should enable planners to make an analysis of the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the district (known by development practitioners as SWOT analysis). Results of SWOT analysis enable planners to devise strategies for the exploitation of strength and opportunities or for mitigating the threats and weaknesses. The “District Development Strategic Plan” is a medium term plan containing prioritised strategies and hence prioritises development sectors and gives

possible sectoral programmes. The District Development Strategic Plan therefore maps out the intended district development trend and gives the rolling plans direction, whilst the District Vision informs it.

The “District Rolling Plan” is a medium-term plan covering a period of three years. It contains projects and programmes the district plans to undertake in the next three years. Its purpose is to show projects and programmes chosen to operationalize the District Vision and chosen strategies. Finally, there is a “District Annual Budget” or “District Annual Programme,” which is a short-term plan extracted from the rolling plan and shows projects and programmes to be implemented in the current year, implementation time schedules and sources of funding for each project and programme.

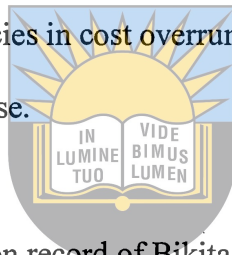


The Provincial Development Committee is supposed to supervise the RDDC through the Provincial Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (PPME) Subcommittee, but this subcommittee made up of heads of sector ministries does not have a budget. This seriously undermines its operations and effectiveness.

Whilst I found that Bikita RDC had a 5-year strategic plan, a 3-year rolling plan and an annual plan for 2003 in place, they had no comprehensive ward profiles. This raises questions as to how the data included in the district profile as part of the 5-year strategic plans was generated and it is doubtful that the district profile was used as the basis of project identification. Most of the necessary information about the district seems to be scattered in the various sector ministries and departments when it should have been

harmonised in the district profile. Personal interest and political interventions are alleged to still find sway as sources of projects.

There is evidence that ex ante evaluation or appraisal of projects is not being done as soon as projects are identified. This leads to situations where Council only realises that a project cannot be implemented or is not feasible at the last moment. Most of the projects in the annual plan had no project documents and so there was no basis for their appraisal. The Council also seems to have difficulties with the costing of projects. This manifests itself through frequencies in cost overruns. Council is evidently not enlisting the right expertise for that purpose.

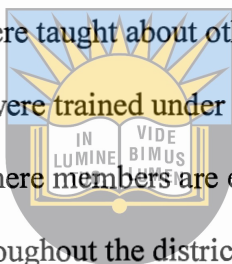


Whilst the implementation record of Bikita RDC is quite good, some projects have been unduly delayed due to difficulties in procurement of necessary inputs such as cement. High degrees of inflation and fuel shortages have also taken their toll.

Bikita RDC 's planning system seems to have achieved significant successes in the provision of social services. In the field of curative health, the district has exceeded the target, which was to ensure that people in the district would not need to travel more than 15km to get to the nearest clinic by the year 2000. According to an officer in the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, the average distance to the nearest clinic for all Bikita RDC citizens is now down to between 7 and 8km. However, Bikita RDC still does not have a district hospital so that serious cases sometimes have to be referred to Masvingo General Hospital in the City of Masvingo. This might involve distances of

anything between 100 to 200km depending on the location of the referring clinic in the district. Further, there is a serious shortage of drugs in all the clinics.

The provision of clean water and sanitary facilities has benefited much from the British funded water and sanitation programme. Through the programme, boreholes have been drilled and wells sunk in most wards of the district. The programme also trained local people, of both sexes, as pump minders to ensure the sustainability of the established infrastructure. Selected villagers were also given inputs for the construction of Blair toilets, whilst the rest were taught about other cheaper alternatives. Builders of Blair toilets, including women, were trained under the programme and provided with the necessary tools. Health clubs, where members are educated on health issues affecting them, have also been formed throughout the district.

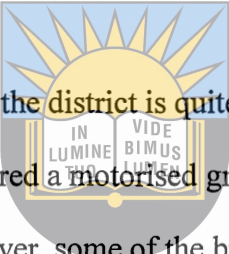


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Progress has also been made in the educational sector. Although current literacy figures are not available, the figure seems to have risen above the 77.04% of the 1992 census. There are adequate schools for education up to General Certificate in Education - Ordinary levels. There are however only three High Schools in the entire district. The three are not only too few to cater for the entire population of secondary school graduates wishing to proceed to General Certificate in Education - Advanced levels, but being private mission boarding institutions attract students from outside the district and province as well. More high schools are therefore required.

Whilst plans are in place to construct a community hall and a stadium at Nyika Growth Point, so far most of the available sporting and recreational facilities are only to be found at schools.

Conservation work such as galley reclamation, planting of trees and vativa grass to prevent soil erosion, etc is well organised by the communities. In addition, villages have elected conservation guards who get 20% of the fines paid by those caught in acts deemed degrading to the environment.



The condition of roads in the district is quite good when compared with other districts. That the RDC has acquired a motorised grader should lead to further improvements in this area. However, some of the bridges are too low, which should cause difficulties in times of floods. I also noticed that there are difficulties with inter-district projects. One road that passes from Bikita into Zaka then back into Bikita has both sides in Bikita well maintained whilst the stretch in Zaka is almost impassable. This points to a lack of cooperation between the districts.

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Through the Rural Electrification Programme, the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) is in the process of electrifying all schools, clinics and other public institutions in the district. A ZESA technician is already based at the Council offices to oversee the process. However, in the whole country, a lot of load shedding is being experienced, so one wonders how all the institutions being connected will be brought on to the grid. The PTC has one Post Office with Banking Hall facilities at Nyika but its

telephone network is not extensive being limited mostly to Nyika Groth Point and Bikita Office. No cellular network exists.

There are many Rural Service Centres strewn across the district but, as mentioned earlier, the businesses to be found there are retail general dealer shops, grinding mills and butcheries. Prices charged are usually exorbitant allegedly because of the high transport charges incurred in getting provisions.

3.8 Personnel Issues

Bikita RDC boasts reasonably well-motivated staffs, which gets competitive salaries, by Zimbabwean standards. An officer of Council has claimed that they get no assistance with salaries from central government whatsoever. Some executive posts are however vacant due to deaths. At the time I did my fieldwork, the Finance Executive Officer was on the verge of leaving for greener pastures abroad, and the position of internal auditor has never been filled. Having key posts vacant for prolonged periods of time tend to attract problems like the one of forgery involving a junior member of staff that went on for a long time without being detected. Had an internal auditor been in place, things might have been different.

Delays in filling executive posts are also caused by central government regulations that make it a requirement for RDCs to seek the approval of the Minister of Local Government and National Housing when filling such posts. According to section 67 of the Rural District Councils Act (Chapter 29:13), “the conditions of service of

officers and employees of a council shall be fixed by the council with the approval of the Minister given after consultation with the Public Service Commission and the Parastatals Commission". The need for such approval and consultations introduce rigidities and delays in taking decisive action in personnel matters, particularly when there is urgent need to hire or fire.

Although I observed that all staff members have job descriptions and that performance appraisals are being done on a regular basis, I felt that more can still be done in the way of streamlining recruitment and termination procedures which tend to be too lengthy and involved so leaving posts vacant for too long.



Whilst I noted that some members of staff have gone on training courses from time to time, there seems to be no clear manpower development policy. This is probably because no critical analysis has been done to determine the RDC's manpower needs and how the RDC can restructure to meet these needs. It has been alleged that the fear of the implications of restructuring are closely linked to political interference and nepotism that is alleged to be rife in the RDC's recruitment processes.

3.9 Budgetary Matters

Bikita RDC relies significantly on central government grants and grants from NGO donor community, e.g. the British Department for International Development, as well as non-tax revenue. Tax revenue's contribution is minimal due to a narrow tax base and difficulties in collection. It is difficult to collect development levy from people crying

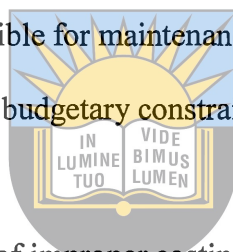
out for food aid. Besides, as the majority of the people are not gainfully employed, they should be expecting to get some form of social welfare benefit rather than being expected to pay taxes.

Council, however, is engaged in income generating projects such as quarrying at Pamushana, sales of game meat from the Save Conservancy, liquor sales throughout the district and the operation of accommodation chalets at Nyika. In addition, Council also hires out vehicles and rents out offices. Currently, they are in the process of constructing a shopping mall where shop space will be rented out to entrepreneurs.

Whilst improvements have been made in the preparation of accounts and getting them audited in time as well as involving stakeholders in the budgetary process through the use of activity-based, Committee Based Budgeting, I noted that there was some reticence to discuss matters of financial management. The fact that there has never been any case of diversion of either donor funds or funds from central government to meet unauthorised expenditures would however seem to indicate good financial management. There is also a tendering system in place which seems to function transparently in the awarding of contracts. All contracts of \$75 million or more are allocated on the basis of formal tenders.

I noted that depending on grants as a major source of revenue is problematic in that they are almost always programme specific so that there is no latitude for Council to use such funds in any other way. Even now, financial resources of some sector ministries

and departments continue to be under the control of their head offices. Most of their projects and programmes also continue to be identified, planned, financed and implemented from there. This often then causes problems of ownership of the development projects. The Rozva Dam and Irrigation project is a case in point. Farmers from the outset opposed the project that was established in 1994, as they felt that it had been imposed upon them by central government. The irrigation is fully government managed but has consistently performed poorly. The farmers on the scheme are drawn from different kraals and they have difficulties in working together. Further, AGRITEX, which is supposed to be responsible for maintenance, repairs and water management on the scheme, cannot do so due to budgetary constraints.



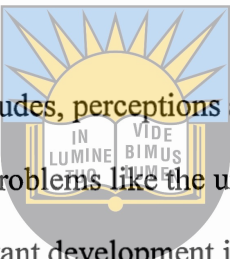
Another problem is that of improper costing of projects, which often leads to overloading of budgets. This can however be attributed mainly to ineffective coordination of technical support from sector ministries in the project-planning phase. As mentioned earlier, it must be acknowledged that such support is not always available at district level, as some ministries and departments are not even represented at that level. The current macro-economic environment in the country with volatile inflation shifts also make budgetary processes very difficult.

3.10 Local Development Initiatives and Attitudes

From what I observed as I went around the district, local development initiatives and entrepreneurial capacities to deal with development tasks are still very low. The only small businesses in the district are general dealer shops, a few supermarkets and hardware

shops at Nyika Growth Point, grinding mills, butcheries, welding shops and a few automotive repair shops. The capacity of these enterprises for employment generation is very limited.

I also noted the absence of small towns in the district. Such small towns would serve as counter-magnets or intervening opportunity centres for potential emigrants, who may target urban centres outside the district like the City of Masvingo, instead of focussing their potentials towards the development of their own district.



Entrenched interests, attitudes, perceptions and hostilities, both at individual and institutional levels have lead to problems like the unwillingness to decentralise financial power and monopolising of relevant development information in order to become indispensable in the decision making structures. Indeed, information deficits in terms of information flows to, from and within the district have often led to low cooperation both for intra and inter-district development.

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A review of the Rural District Council Capacity Building Programme in the year 2000 found stakeholders in the district hostile to criticism, displaying a flair for defending positions taken and generally lacking in trust. The locals' perceptions and attitudes like the lack of trust and overt suspicion is still evident. The inclination to treat strangers warily may have been reinforced by the ZANU-MDC rivalry in Bikita West, in the run up to the 2001 by elections, that turned the whole district into a miniature war zone. According to the same RDCCBP report, the lack of trust leads to fruitless discussions,

lack of improvement in the way services should be delivered and generally tends to derail the whole exercise of development planning to the detriment of those for whom development is intended.

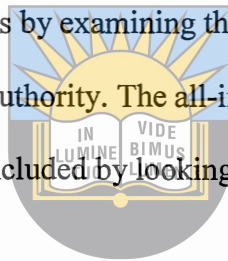


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Chapter 4

DISCUSSION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS - BIKITA

This chapter discusses the results of the DDP process as presented in the previous chapter. The discussion attempts to show the implications of the results on the sustainability of the process and the effects on human development. I begin by discussing the adequacy of decentralization measures taken by central government, institutional and legal frameworks, and follow this by examining the issue of coordination between ministries, NGOs and the local authority. The all-important question of resources is also discussed' and the chapter is concluded by looking at plan implementation and services delivery.



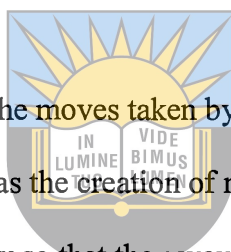
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4.1 Central Government and Decentralisation

The legal framework governing RDCs and their activities are provided for in the RDC Act Chapter 29:13. I have, however, mentioned the existence of many pieces of legislation that affect the operations of the RDC. Whilst appreciating that such laws might have come by as a result of specific needs at particular times in the country's history, it must also be appreciated that not only are some of the laws old, outdated or out of context with the obtaining socio-economic and political realities, but that the large number of laws and agencies involved tend to create overlap and duplication (Zimbabwe Environmental Law Reform, 1998:3). Such a legal framework becomes expensive to

implement and tends to rely heavily on central government administration and enforcement, so providing little opportunity for public involvement in decision-making.

Whilst such laws would be desirable if they enforced standards of efficiency in resource mobilisation and use in local development and the provision of basic needs, I am of the opinion that the current situation is harmful in that the various uncoordinated pieces of legislation tend to introduce confusion and waste in their enforcement. It also detracts from decentralisation by concentrating enforcement powers with central government institutions.



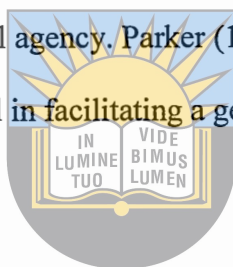
As noted earlier, one of the moves taken by central government to effect decentralisation in Zimbabwe was the creation of new Ministries and deconcentration of others – dispersing them spatially so that they would be represented at local levels.

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In Bikita there is a situation where sector ministries have deconcentrated to the district but the personnel remain accountable only to persons higher up in their ministries. Although the RDC Act purports to give responsibility and authority for planning and implementation decisions to the RDC, the RDC lacks the legal ‘teeth’ to control the activities of sector agencies and their personnel. This tends to negate the concept of decentralization in that it enables central government to penetrate the local authority without increasing the influence of the local authority. “The central government is not giving up authority. It is simply relocating its officers at different levels or points in the national territory” (Manor, 1999:5). As field staff implement decisions taken at the center without having authority to change them and the center retains overall decision making

and budgetary responsibilities, it means the center is very much in control or very little has occurred in the way of decentralization (Bamberger et.al., 1996:60).

Available evidence points to the obvious importance of water resources in Bikita District. According to the Bikita RDC Strategic Development Plan: 2001 - 2005 (p. 24), the number one strategic policy area of the district is water supply improvement. Whilst the district has received a major boost in this direction from the British funded Integrated Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Programme, I note that central government has privatised the Department of Water Development (DWD) to form the Zimbabwe Water Authority (ZINWA), a parastatal agency. Parker (1995), cited by Manor (1999:5) has noted that parastatals tend to fail in facilitating a genuine decentralisation of decision-making.

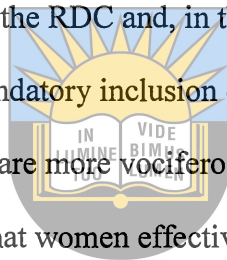


4.2 Institutional Framework and Local Leadership

Whilst the 1984 Prime minister's Directive is very clear on the establishment of planning structures from village level to national level, it appears that not enough thought went into the reporting structure of the lower tier organs like VIDCOs and WADCOs. It is not clear as to which between the Rural District Council (RDC) and the Rural District Development Committee (RDDC) should be responsible for the functionality of these structures. There is thus a problem in terms of how information should flow from the lower tier structures to the district level structures. In the majority of cases, there are no minutes for VIDCO and WADCO meetings casting doubt on how often they are held or whether they are held at all. Such a scenario might leave councillors at liberty to present their own viewpoints as the outputs from their wards. I am pleased to note, however, that

participation of the Bikita people in the planning process is facilitated in the following three ways: all are free to attend and contribute to deliberations of their VIDCOs; the people participate in electing their representatives to the WADCOs and the RDC; and they can actively participate in the implementation of projects like the construction of Mutikizizi clinic mentioned above.

Participation is an aspect that has received a great deal of attention in development discourse but in Bikita the participation of women is rather low. There is not a single female councillor in the RDC and, in the lower structures women seem to be only represented through the mandatory inclusion of one members of the Women's League. As ladies of that league are more vociferous about women's rights than development matters, it means that women effectively lack adequate representation in development matters.



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Earlier, I mentioned that problems to do with coordination of sector ministries and NGOs' information flows can be seen as emanating from poor staff compliments and the overemphasis on vertical linkages. An undesirable element is therefore introduced to the institutional setting by the tendency of sector ministries and departments to initiate plans and implement development projects individually. Although heads of these sector agencies occasionally brief the RDDC about their operations, it detracts from how the networks in the system were visualised and provided for in section 74 of the RDC Act (Chapter 29:13), where Council is the institution mandated to prepare and implement development plans within the council area.

In terms of development planning theory, the scenario where sector ministries and departments plan and implement projects or programmes then report progress to the RDDC, leads to a situation where the coherent total corresponding to 'development' is not defined because the goals of the sector agencies will not necessarily be related to each other. Furthermore, according to McGranahan (1972), development as progress towards a collection of desiderata, defined sectorally, raises questions about whether such a planning process can be objective enough to exclude certain impractical goals and adopt changes necessary for progress – something difficult to do when officers take the stance of protecting their turf by assuming roles that will ensure that they are seen as indispensable. As the scope of public involvement offered by such a planning arrangement is limited, projects with low priority status end up being implemented leading to an inefficient use of resources.



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Whilst I have noted the existence of all structures as called for in the Prime Minister's Directives of 1984 and 1985, I also noted that some members of the committees like VIDCOs and WADCOs do not have a clear conception of their roles and duties. They seem to be convinced that their business consists in explaining their needs and circumstances, and asking for help from the Government. It is even doubtful whether some of the office bearers have the necessary abilities or integrity to be leaders in the development process. In the majority of cases, elected representatives turned out to be people already privileged in terms of wealth and education. Such people often tend to

manipulate local institutions for personal advantage to the increasing detriment of the poor. A few examples will suffice.

Some villagers have complained about government food aid failing to get to them, free agricultural input from the Government being allegedly sold by the leaders, etc. Three years ago, the then Council chairman was forced to step down after a vote of no confidence emanating from what other councillors viewed as abuse of office for personal advantage. Recently, councillors passed a resolution to increase their monthly allowances at a time they resolved staff salaries could not be increased due to insufficient funds. Such insensitivity has negative implications for staff morale and hence impacts negatively on service delivery.

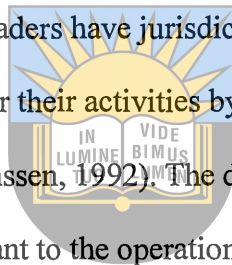


Elsewhere in this report I mentioned the absence of a long-term perspective plan, the District Vision, for Bikita RDC. This is not so much an oversight as a mere corollary to the fact that councillors are elected for four-year terms (RDC Act: Chapter 29:13 Section 33). Each councillor, therefore, tends to be more preoccupied with what they can be seen to have achieved within that period so as to win the next elections rather than concern themselves with overall development of the district or devising initiatives extending over lengthy periods which might only benefit successors in office (Manor, 1999:71).

On the main, however, there is evidence of good co-operation between the RDDC and the RDC, manifesting itself through regular meetings between the two bodies. This is an important development as it then takes care of problems to do with ownership of both

the process and output of development planning. Actors in the district seem to be clear that the RDDC is a committee of Council and is therefore subordinate to it rather than a competitor in development planning. The role of the RDDC with respect to the RDC is complimentary and advisory.

That the delineation of boundaries in the district is not functional makes for problems in division of power and as some leaders like some heads of ministries are not rooted in the district, it becomes difficult for them to address themselves to local needs and problems. As some of the leaders have jurisdiction stretching over more than one district or provinces, control over their activities by the provincial or national level becomes extremely difficult (Jenssen, 1992). The delineation of boundaries based on technical criteria might be relevant to the operation of individual services agencies, but end up causing problems with “internal cohesion, co-ordination, teamwork and the pooling of resources” (Smith, 1967:35).



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4.3 Coordination of Ministries and NGOs

Of concern is the apathy in the attendance of committees and subcommittees, especially by personnel from sector ministries and departments. This can be attributed to lack of commitment on the part of provincial heads that fail to highlight the need for coordination through committee structures. Further, in the staff performance appraisal attendance of meetings is not considered a key result area so district staff often focuses on their core business than waste time on committee and subcommittee business. There is also the consideration that personnel from some sector ministries are required to take part

in too many committees or subcommittees, which leaves little room for their core business so forcing them to absent themselves from some of them. Lastly, it must be noted that staff in sector ministries is transferred at the pleasure of that particular ministry without consultations with the RDC, which tends to play havoc with membership of the committees and subcommittees.

Officers operating from the provincial capital mostly only avail themselves for business at district level when they are paid travel and subsistence allowances. As central government has been trying to effect cuts in recurrent expenditure, this means that development is also being constrained by shortfalls in the central government's operational budget.



4.4 The Question of Resources

James Manor (1999:7) observes, “Democratic authorities at lower levels in political systems will founder if they lack powers and resources – meaning both financial resources and the administrative resources to implement development projects”. Let us consider Bikita's resources situation.

From available evidence it would appear that the planning process is failing to utilise endogenous potentials. I have noted that there is insufficient land for the growing population and that unemployment is swelling. However, as Weaver (1981:73) puts it, “Where there is much to be done there is much potential work”. A lot of jobs can


therefore be created in Bikita district by activating local skills and resources to meet local development needs.

The planning process' position will remain precarious until local resource relationships with central government are revised to give Council the maximum possible autonomy to mobilise local initiatives and give local populations a sense of responsible participation in local affairs. This can only happen if Council is "assured of the needed resources and given the freedom to make the best use of those resources" (Report of The Commission of Enquiry Into Taxation, 1986:341). The current system of programme specific grants fails to meet this criterion. The above report suggests that central government could address the problem by clarifying the division of responsibilities between itself and local authorities and matching these with sources of funding. According to Burki and others (1999:39), "a firm allocation of expenditure responsibilities is critical for establishing a hard budget constraint for sub national governments". They emphasise the importance of matching delegated functions with delegated revenue sources as well as basing transfers on clear rules, even charging that "National government has crippled local government ability to perform newly decentralised functions by failing to decentralise key management controls"(ibid: 33). (Manor (1999:28) offers words of caution, however:

It is widely understood that it makes sense to decentralise those responsibilities in which economies of scale cannot be achieved. We also note...that it is unwise to devolve responsibility for complex development projects into local-level authorities because they tend to lack the inclination, the sophistication and the administrative capacity to implement them. It also makes sense to avoid devolving the control of projects which extent spatially beyond a single local arena onto authorities in such arenas.

The case of the road that covers both Bikita and Zaka territories sited earlier is a good example of how not to devolve control of projects. Resources for such projects should be provided by central government.

The move that has been taken by Council to introduce Committee Based Budgeting is a step in the right direction. If successfully implemented, the device will facilitate more efficient implementation of development plans and also act as a means of financial control and management, provide data on basic decisions taken and provide for accountability and transparency to the people (see Waterston, 1965:221).

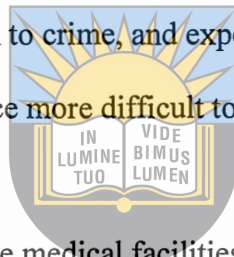


Much still has to be done in encouraging attitudes conducive to development to the general public in Bikita. Tinbergen (1967:26) sees the need for changes in attitude in such things as “an interest in material well-being, ...techniques and innovation, an ability to look ahead and willingness to take risks, perseverance, and an ability to collaborate with other people and observe certain rules’ as an important resource in development efforts. Asher (1970:40) reinforces the argument when he declares “The essence of the [development] process is the inculcation of new attitudes and ideas, of states of mind eager for progress, hospitable to change, capable of applying scientific approaches to an ever wider range of problems”.

4.5 Plan Implementation and Services Delivery

Available evidence shows that Bikita RDC has come pretty far in the provision of social services like clean water and sanitation facilities, curative health facilities and

educational facilities. I am however left with W. H. Auden's dilemma of being unable to tell if "far be forward or astray". In both the Systems Model of development and the Input-Output Model, we are often faced with the problem of imperfect knowledge of the effect of different factors on each other. Especially irksome are the contradictions and discordances wherein growth in certain factors produce negative cross-effects instead of positive ones. For example, I have already mentioned the increased unemployment in Bikita resulting from the extension of education. The education system turns out graduates who have certain expectations and get frustrated when their dreams fail to materialise. As a result they turn to crime, and experience shows that educated criminals are more sophisticated, and hence more difficult to deal with.



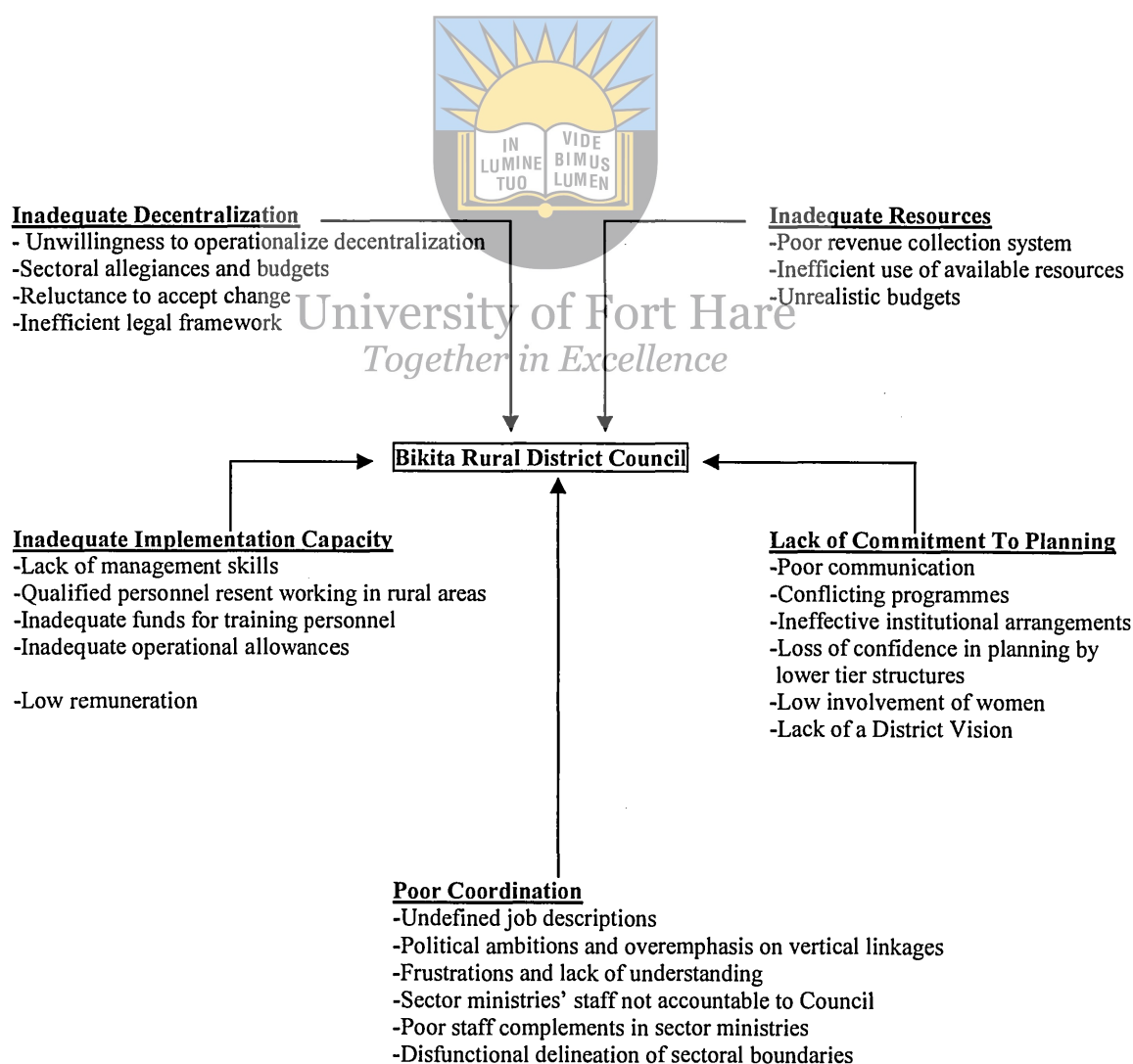
The expansion in curative medical facilities was ill conceived. No adequate planning went into conceptualising the expansion with training of medical staff and the budget for the procurement of drugs and salaries. Consequently, the district is now strewn with numerous clinics offering substandard services.

The expansion in educational facilities has benefited greatly from the establishment of School Development Committees, which are responsible for sourcing and managing resources for their local schools. The strength of the system is that it increases the influence of the locals over the running of the schools.

All in all, development planning seems to be doing well in Bikita. Project completion rates have gone up and prioritisation of projects more or less reflects the felt

needs of the people. There is an increased awareness by citizen as to what they should expect from Council and they demand those services. It would be safe therefore to suggest that inspite of the problems that have been discussed and summarised below as figure 6 the current system allows for greater participation of the people in the planning process.

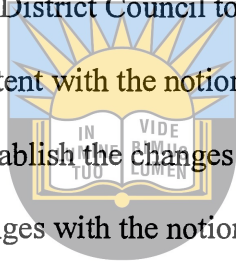
Figure 6 Problems of RDDP in Bikita: A Summary



Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I have already mentioned that Zimbabwe's decentralization of the development planning system which saw the creation of the Rural District Councils was informed by a desire to make the system more participatory and therefore take into account localized potentials and people's felt needs. The object of this study became one of evaluating the planning process in Bikita Rural District Council to ascertain whether such a planning process is sustainable and consistent with the notion of planning for human development. The study therefore sought to establish the changes that have taken place in that district since 1990 and compare the changes with the notions of sustainability and human development.



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The study was done through a month of fieldwork that involved observation, interviews and content analysis of Bikita RDC's planning documents.

Although the study found that participation in and awareness of development issues had increased in the district, the level of communication was still poor and there was inadequate coordination of players in the development field. Furthermore, the RDC had insufficient personnel, financial and other resources. The government does not seem to have done enough to ensure real decentralization.

Whilst the Government of Zimbabwe has developed an outline decentralization strategy for decentralized planning through efforts in establishing planning structures and legal framework, as well as the deconcentration of sector ministries, implementation remains limited. This study found that even with the support invested by central government into making district development planning a reality, the RDDP process in Bikita is bedeviled by such problems as inadequate decentralization; inadequate revenue raising powers or, in some cases, failure to fully utilize the available revenue raising powers; inadequate attention to planning of local resources and over dependency on central government hand outs; inadequate human resources; sectoral plans taking precedence over Council plans; and lack of commitment to planning which manifests itself through poor attendance of Council and committee meetings, poor coordination of stakeholders and too many projects appearing in rolling plans without having been appraised for feasibility or viability.

It has often been argued that communication has the power to move mountains. In Bikita, there is need to look into ways of enhancing communication with all stakeholders. Such improved communication would reduce levels of apathy, hopelessness, cynicism, public inefficiency and corruption. It would also create positive attitudes towards development including commitment, enterprise and coordination of actions amongst all stakeholders.

There is need for all stakeholders in DDP process to have a common database. In the preparation of such a database, it will be necessary for stakeholders to be made aware of the exact nature of information required from them so as to avoid gaps and

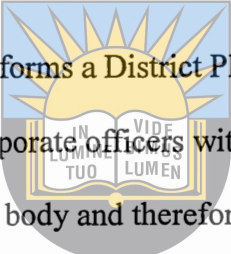
inaccuracies. Guidelines that could be used for the preparation of such a database have already been prepared by NEPC. The sustainability of such a database will depend largely on the issue of ownership. If the need for the database is seen as externally driven, its full utilization will not materialize nor will there be commitment to keeping the information up to date or checking the validity of such information.

It is conceivable that central government might play a role in improving coordinated action planning in the RDC. One way of achieving this is that central government has to establish a mechanism that will insure that staff from sector ministries operating at district and provincial level is accountable to the local authorities in the performance of their daily duties. There is also need for clarification and allocation of roles and responsibilities between central government and local authorities. Such allocation of roles and responsibilities should be coupled with equivalent control of appropriate resources, including personnel.

As far as the RDC is concerned, a systematic and comprehensive staff development policy should be established. A proper work-study should be carried out so that Council can establish its true staff requirements, off load excess baggage and provide training appropriate to requirements. No meaningful evaluation of training initiatives undertaken so far has been done nor is there evidence of adequate consultations in the identification of training needs. There is therefore need to raise awareness of the synergy between training and operations of Council so that resources are not wasted in unnecessary or inappropriate training. Officers otherwise end up using Council resources

for training that benefits them individually rather than for training that impacts on the institution's development.

As there is an obvious deficit in skills and technical capacity in the preparation of plans and project documents amongst Council staff, it becomes very necessary to improve coordination, involvement and commitment of sector ministries' staff so as to augment available skills.



It is important that the RDC forms a District Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Subcommittee which can then incorporate officers with requisite skills rather than using the entire RDDC, which is too big a body and therefore cumbersome and expensive to use efficiently for monitoring and evaluation purposes. It is also necessary to improve on the regularity of field visits to projects and the compilation of formal monitoring and evaluation reports to Council. Development of a comprehensive project database and the development of reliable indicators are necessary to make the monitoring and evaluation process more meaningful. Monitoring and evaluation is a management tool and its use should, among other things, ensure that mistakes do not recur.

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A frequent shortcoming in the planning process has been in the selection of the best projects. There is lack of uniformity in the criteria applied by different ministries and even by departments in the same ministry. There is therefore need to look into the production of a uniform method of determining priorities – maybe by the production of

common guidelines –so that the proposed projects become easier to compare. Ministries should not be allowed to override Council priorities.

Central government is evidently failing in its traditional role of being provider of resources. There is need for it to take the more comfortable role of creator of an enabling environment and leave the Council to get on with development planning in its area. This, whilst not suggesting that central government weans RDCs off grants altogether, would mean that emphasis should be placed on local authorities activating local potentials for development. Central government's role then becomes one of ensuring that Council has capacity to achieve its goals. This, of course, would entail that an inventory of the District's resources is established so that both the RDC and central government know exactly what local resources Council can exploit and what additional resources have to be availed by central government. The keeping of well up-to-date village, ward and district profiles would provide such an inventory.


Council needs to put in place a clear revenue raising policy that will ensure that available resources are exploited to optimum levels. In this regard, the point of departure should be a thorough analysis focusing on the RDC's capacity to collect budgeted revenue. Such an analysis would ensure that uncollectable items do not clutter budgets. This would make for more realistic budgets.

It is essential that Council find ways to curb the tendencies of some ministries, e.g. MoHCW, to decentralize without adequate preparation, leading to unfunded and

unwieldy expansion as mentioned earlier. The resources issue must be kept in focus and caution exercised lest functions are decentralized to the RDC which are beyond its capacity or which will be under funded and become burdensome to Council.

There is also a necessity to revisit the organizational structure of all the planning organs in the district with a view to revitalizing them, clarifying their roles and reporting structure and generally making them more functional.

Whilst the planning process in Bikita RDC is still far from perfect, the right seeds have been sown: The people of Bikita are now participating in the development planning process. According to Kasperson, in Sewell and Coppock (1997:190),



Participation once established is not easily controlled or manipulated. As a learned and cumulative activity, participation once begun tends to snowball, to become self-sustaining. As participants accumulate participatory skills and self-confidence, they tend to demand progressively larger roles in governance. Once larger roles have been won, there is generally an unwillingness to return to less authority. Participation, in short, is not something which can be 'given' and 'withdrawn'.

If Kasperson is right, we can only expect the RDDP process in Bikita to gather momentum and refine itself as people learn from experience. Already, that poor, previously excluded people can come together and decide what they want and how best to obtain it is a success for the planning process. Political awareness of development issues has increased and demands for greater accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness are on the increase. The rate of projects completion has gone up and that those completed have not turned into white elephants indicates that their choice was appropriate.

Appendix 1: Checklist for DDP Review

The following items were accorded attention in the data-gathering phase of the evaluation of the district development planning process in Bikita.

Institutional Setting

- ❖ Adequacy of statutory instruments for district development planning.
- ❖ Responsibility for the enforcement of such instruments.
- ❖ Existence of conflicting statutes, if any, and the RDC's way of dealing with these.
- ❖ The relationships between the RDC, line ministries and other stakeholders with respect to the formulation of policies, strategic planning, the choice, definition and prioritization of projects and programs, plus the allocation of funds and other resources for the implementation of such projects and programs.
- ❖ The allocation and monitoring of budgets, auditing and financial management, and monitoring and evaluating performance of resource use.
- ❖ The relationship between the RDC and independent oversight agencies such as the Auditor General and Comptroller's office, or the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament.
- ❖ The legal and regulatory basis underpinning the above relationships, including the role of the Public Service Commission, and other relevant official bodies.
- ❖ The relationship with local traditional leadership authorities and politicians.

Financial Administration and Management

Consider the following:

- ❖ System of financial administration and management of central government
- ❖ Expenditure responsibilities, financial resources and powers allocated to the RDC
- ❖ Revenue administration
- ❖ Allocation of funds across functions and activities
- ❖ Budget design and skills
- ❖ Problems And Potentials

Programme/Project Formulation For District Development

It will be necessary to check the amount of attention paid to the following issues in the programme/project formulation and assessment/appraisal process:

- ❖ Preselection criteria
- ❖ Development of local potential
- ❖ Affordability and cost effectiveness
- ❖ Sustainability considerations
- ❖ Replicability
- ❖ Learning from experiences and avoiding duplication
- ❖ Ecological considerations.



Implementation Management

Data required on this crucial aspect of development planning will include:

- ❖ Comparison of planned activities vis-à-vis actually completed activities
- ❖ Comparison of physical rates of completion vis-à-vis financial completion
- ❖ Observation of planned time schedules
- ❖ Adequacy and timeliness of financial disbursements
- ❖ Adequacy and timeliness of the provision of personnel, machinery and equipment inputs
- ❖ Sources of expertise in the appraisal and implementation of projects and programmes.
- ❖ Training of workers and staff turnover.

Attitudes

Check the following:

- ❖ What institutions are important to the people according to their own ratings?
- ❖ Do they feel they have control or influence over these institutions

Appendix 2: List of Subjects Contacted During The Study Fieldwork

At District

Date	Name	Designation	Location
08/07/03	Mr. J Mupamhadzi	CEO - Bikita RDC	Nyika Growth Point
08/07/03	Mr. M Machote	EO- Planning & Works	"
09/07/03	Mr. Sibanda	EHT-MoHCW	"
09/07/03	Mr.L Hwata	Agricultural Extension Officer -Agritex	Ward (Matsvange)
10/07/03	R Gambakwe	Villager	"
10/07/03	Mr.R Bharara	"	"
10/07/03	Chief Mazungunye	Local Traditional Leader	"
10/07/03	Mrs. L Chimedza	Villager	"
14/07/03	Mr. T Chitevere	"	"
14/07/03	Mr. R Mandandi	"	"
15/07/03	Mr. J Nyika	"	"
15/07/03	Mrs. P Paguti	"	"
15/07/03	Mrs. L Mutembedza	"	"
15/07/03	Mrs. N Bingudza	"	"
16/07/03	Mr.R Nyamande "	"	Ward 19(Maregere)
16/07/03	Mr.C Mashanda "	"	"
16/07/03	Mr. M Mupaikwa"	"	"
16/07/03	Mr. E Chivhenge "	"	"
16/07/03	Mr. M Bawa	"	"
21/07/03	Mr. Chitokovera	Councillor	"
21/07/03	Mrs. Ziki	Nurse-In-Charge (Mutikizizi Clinic)	"
21/07/03	Mr. A Chitake	Teacher- Mutikizizi Secondaary School	Ward 19 (Mutikizizi)
21/07/03	Mr. Mupfavi	Headmaster- "	"

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22/07/03	Mr. Ganyani	Council Chairman- Bikita RDC	"
22/07/03	Mr. P Musiza	Councillor- (Finance Committee Member)	"

At Province

28/07/03	Mr. D Manjengwa	Provincial Head- Central Statistics Office	"
28/07/03	Mr. C Gwature	Economist- Rural Development Fund	"
05/08/03	Mr. A Chikurira	Provincial Administrator- Masvingo	City of Masvingo
05/08/03	Mr. Murapa	Principal Administrative Officer-PA's Office"	
05/08/03	Mr. Chimowa	Chief Planning Officer- DPP	"
08/08/03	Mr Madhuku	Water Technician- ZINWA	"

**Nyika Growth Point is Ward 11*



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