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## SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS ACTIVITIES IN MADZIWA AREA OF ZIMBABWE

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### ABSTRACT

Different parts of a country are characterised by varied sustainable livelihoods activities (SLAs) that obtain there. These SLAs are pursued by people in search of means of survival. This was a qualitative ethnographic study which was informed by phenomenological research philosophy. One hundred and ten (110) participants namely, 30 parents, 30 primary and 30 secondary school pupils and 10 primary and 10 secondary school pupils were selected using quota sampling. The data generation methods were in-depth face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The key findings regarding the nature of SLAs undertaken in Madziwa area were based on farming, weaving and pottery. Through farming, people undertook market gardening, poultry rearing, pastoralism, irrigation farming, mushroom farming, and rabbit rearing. The researcher revealed that SLAs that people undertook together with their children were seasonal and diverse. Since most of the SLAs that obtained in Madziwa area revolved around farming, it can be concluded that they were seasonal. Therefore, people were more actively engaged in SLAs in summer than during dry season. The implication for this situation was the possibility of worsening poverty and a likelihood of raising the magnitude of violating children's rights when adults engage children in SLAs at home and in other people's areas as deliberate drive to attempt to conquer poverty. The people in Madziwa area need to diversify their SLAs instead of delimiting themselves to most agricultural activities. This would help boosting their chances to improve their quality of life, as well as that of working life, at the same time minding about how they could involve children in SLAs without infringing their rights. More similar studies ought to be conducted countrywide in order to determine the nature of SLAs that obtain in Zimbabwe's different areas for comparability's sake.

**Key Words:** Sustainable livelihoods, sustainable livelihoods activities

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Communities in different parts of the world have been involved in livelihoods to sustain themselves. Longley and Maxwell (2003) observed food economy approaches as part of sustainable livelihoods that communities can undertake. The food economy approach (FEA) is the focus of the paper by Boudreau and Coutts (2002) in Longley and Maxwell (2003), which illustrates how FEA links livelihood information to an analysis of the effects of political, economic and social change. The same scholars show how food economy analysis is particularly helpful in determining appropriate responses and targeting of both relief and development interventions.

In Zimbabwe, food economy analysis has been used to establish an urban baseline to monitor the effects of macro-economic shocks on households' access to food, cash income and basic services in relation to the current political crisis. Food economy assessments



carried out in the northern pastoral areas of Kenya have built up livelihood pictures to understand the inter-related causes of particular drought outcomes. Because the food economy framework is able to logically organise and structure different types and levels of information, the authors claim that it provides a powerful impetus for coordinated information gathering and analysis, helping to build consensus around findings and conclusions, leading to faster and more accurate decision-making (Boudreau and Coutts, 2002 in Longley and Maxwell ,2003).

Communities have been found to undertake different kinds of sustainable livelihoods (Farrington et al., 2002). These sustainable livelihoods activities are strategy-based. They have also been perceived to fall under urban and rural settings. Some of the different sustainable livelihoods activities are as indicated in the following Table 1.

**Table 1:** Possible sustainable livelihoods activities

Strategy	Mainly Urban	Urban and Rural
Income-enhancing /investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• domestic services-cleaning and childcare (esp. girls and women)</li> <li>• urban agriculture</li> <li>• renting out rooms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• home gardening</li> <li>• processing, hawking, vending</li> <li>• casual labour, piecework</li> <li>• special occupations (e.g. tinkering, food preparation, prostitution)</li> <li>• child labour</li> <li>• migration of seasonal work</li> <li>• begging</li> <li>• theft</li> </ul>
Expenditure-reducing/sacrifice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scavenging</li> <li>• cutting transport costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mortgaging and selling assets</li> <li>• selling children into bonded labour</li> <li>• changes in purchasing habits, e.g. frequent smaller quantities, not buying in bulk</li> <li>• buying less and/or cheaper goods and services</li> <li>• discrimination within the household (giving less to less powerful or less favoured household members)</li> </ul>
Collective support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communal kitchens</li> <li>• communal childcare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remittances from household members working</li> <li>• mutual loans or saving groups</li> <li>• putting out children for care in extended families</li> </ul>

**Source: Adapted from Chambers (1997), UNCHS (1996) and Moser (1998) in Farrington et al., 2002)**

In Zimbabwe, Muruvirwa et al. (2013) observed that political, economic (hyper-inflationary period), food insecurity, HIV and AIDS, and absolute poverty in Mubaira district of Mhondoro were among reasons why children were involved in sustainable livelihoods activities. People were left with no choice regarding either to pursue livelihoods or observe children's rights at the expense of their survival. In another Zimbabwean study, Chirau, Nkambule and Mupambwa (2014) came up with three findings. Their first finding was that gardening was done throughout the year. The second observation was that despite gardening which was necessitated by the availability of water bodies, fishing was also prevalent. Chirau et al. (2014) went on to indicate that gardening and fishing provided participants with money which enabled them to send their children to school, buy uniform, food and other communities.

The findings above appeared to have been drawn from concept and working papers (e.g. Longley and Maxwell, 2003; Farrington et al., 2002) that were devoid of empirical findings. Moreso, previous research by Chambers (1997) and Moser (1998) in Farrington et al., (2002) indicate that the sustainable livelihoods are not of an African origin. They were also categorized under urban and urban and rural groups at the expense of the pure rural category. Moreover, the studies were conducted more than a decade ago. The focus of the current study was to examine how people in Madziwa area got involved in livelihoods in the wake of children's rights. The study of this magnitude would give an African flavour to the academic world. Above all, the present study would give new insights into the magnitude of violation of children's rights through involving children in sustainable livelihoods as it sought to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the studied area.



## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

I conducted this qualitative study against the background of phenomenological research philosophy with the intent to fully understand SLAs in Madziwa area, Zimbabwe. I employed an ethnographic research method to carry out the study. It allowed me to fully understand the culture of the people in Madziwa area because I had to stay with them for seven months. In other words, I was immersed in their culture since I attended in most of their societal functions such as 'nhimbe, hoka, majakwara, mapira and majanha' (communal tasks).

### Selection of participants

The research site was purposefully selected because it had farming and mining activities which provided sustainable livelihoods to Madziwa area people. For the research sites, the researcher selected one primary school out of six primary schools and one secondary school out three secondary schools, as well as one village out of the five villages that were close to the aforementioned schools in Madziwa area. The sites were chosen for five reasons. The first reason was their density characteristics. Their population was located in a rural area that had poverty experiences. The second reason was that they shared common broad livelihood sustaining activities such as farming, pastoralism, mining and fishing. The third reason for their choice was based on administrative and geographical characteristics. The population was located in Mashonaland Central Province which is well known for sound farming and mining activities. The fourth reason was on pre-existing vulnerabilities because the population was located in areas of high poverty and malnutrition despite the fact that the research site has good agro-ecological conditions. The fifth reason was that the selected village had pupils who were enrolled at the chosen primary and secondary schools. In this regard, quota sampling was used in this qualitative ethnographic study to identify and select information rich cases which were presumed for the most effective use of resources (Patton, 2002). In addition, Black (2010) supports the above by exhorting that quota sampling is a non-probability sampling that occurs when elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher. Since qualitative research does not work with predetermined samples (Berg, 2010), but the researcher entered the field with a kick of sample of 25 participants to enable the data generation to commence. The 25 participants comprised five primary school teachers, five secondary school teachers, five parents, five primary school children and five secondary school children. It therefore implied that the study's sample of 110 participants (30 parents, 10 primary school teachers, 10 secondary school teachers, 30 primary school pupils and 30 secondary school pupils) was determined when data generation reached data saturation. Data saturation occurred when the researcher and the research assistants when the sample reached 110 participants. It was at this point when the researcher and the research participants were no longer getting any new data from the same participants after administering repetitive interviews and focus group discussions on them. The participants were coded by means of open coding. The participants were coded as follows; primary school pupils (PSP1-30), primary school teachers (PST1-10), secondary school pupils (SSP1-30), secondary school teachers (SST1-10), and parents (P1-30).

The participants were selected by means of quota sampling which was then stratified in order for the researcher and the research participants to obtain data from participants in different age, socio-economic and power strata. It thus assisted researcher to compare and contrast experiences and perspectives of participants from different socio-economic backgrounds with respect to the phenomenon SLAs in Madziwa. The researcher used expert judgment to select participants who had research sought characteristics. Thus, the researcher uses judgment to choose cases that help answer the research questions or achieve research objectives (Black, 2010; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). Ten primary and 10 secondary school teachers were assumed to have knowledge in SLAs. This was because of the nature of SLAs that obtained in Madziwa area. As of six parents, six primary and six secondary school pupils, their purposive selection was plausible because of their involvement into SLAs. In this study, purposive sampling involved identifying and selecting individual participants and groups of participants that were knowledgeable about the phenomenon of SLAs in Madziwa area. Thirty parents, 30 primary school pupils and 30 secondary school pupils had experience and knowledge in SLAs in Madziwa. Ten primary and 10 secondary school teachers were relevant participants in this study because of their knowledge and experiences based on their observations of SLAs obtaining in Madziwa.

After selecting participants using quota, they were then stratified in order to place them in specific groups that permitted the researcher and researchers to obtain perception diversity. The researcher identified and defined the population in Madziwa area. She then determined the desired sample size of 110 participants. Furthermore, she identified strata and classified all members of the population as members of one subgroup (30 parents, 10 secondary school teachers, 10 primary school teachers, 30 primary school pupils, and 30 secondary school pupils). These strata had different social status, economic standing, knowledge and experience levels regarding the participation and involvement of children in SLAs. Thus, quota sampling, according to Kombo and Tromp (2009) enables researchers to obtain data from different participants belonging to varied socio-cultural backgrounds. To be included in this study the participants



must have been staying in Madziwa rural community either intermittently or continuously for at least two (2) months. Special attention regarding the exploration of the subject under study was delimited to the SLAs obtaining in Madziwa area of Zimbabwe. As a result of the use of quota sampling techniques, the researcher and the research participants were impressed by the level of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner as noted by Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979).

## **Data generation**

Data generation in this study was done using the in-depth face-to-face interview guide and focus group discussion guide. The interview process enabled the researcher to gather the perspectives and experiences of children and thus made accessible to the researcher the voices of this marginalised social stratum (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Ten primary and 10 secondary school teachers were interviewed by the researcher and the four research assistants at least twice between 1 August 2017 and 15 October 2017. A total of 40 interviews was reached after each of the above two strata was interviewed twice. The interviews were recorded using a mobile phone by the researcher and the research assistants, with each interview lasting between one (1) hour and one (1) hour 30 minutes. The interviews were conducted, transcribed and analysed by the researcher. The interview guide contained two sections with questions for the bio-data of the research participants and the actual research findings. The first section of the interview asked questions about the primary and secondary school teacher participants' sex (this one was not asked as it was obvious and could embarrass the participants), age, marital status, grade/form taught, employment status, subject taught if secondary trained, and length of teaching experience, educational qualifications and length of stay in Madziwa area. These data enabled the researcher and the research assistants to select participants who had relative knowledge about the nature of SLAs in Madziwa. The second section of the interview guide contained five unstructured questions tailored to the research title.

Focus group discussions were used to generate data from 30 primary and 30 secondary school pupils. The researcher used two focus group schedules for 30 parents, 30 primary school teachers and 30 secondary school teacher. The researcher made sure that the child expert took part in all the 30 focus group discussions that involved primary and secondary school pupil participants. This move enabled the generation of consistent and credible data. Thirty focus group discussions were held between 1 August 2017 and 15 October 2017. Therefore, 30 focus group discussions were held parents and primary and secondary school pupils, that is, two per group same groups during separate days by the same researcher to ensure credibility of the findings. Each focus group had six participants, that is, six parents, six primary school children and six secondary school children were group interviewed twice by the same the researcher. These were conducted in Shona Language in order to obtain much more convincing data since the participants were not literate enough to enable them to effectively converse in English Language. The same instrument contained items written in English Language and Shona Language in brackets. The researcher prepared schedules two weeks before interview dates on 1 August 2017 and on 1 September 2017. The parents were organised with the assistance of the headman who was also a participant. In the schools, the head and teachers assisted with the facilitation of organising pupils into strata comprising pupils of equal number in terms of sex and different grade and form levels with the intent to obtain varied experiences regarding the effect of sustainable livelihoods on children's rights. They were useful in this study in three ways. First, they assisted the researcher to generate data in the shortest possible time (Gray, 2009; Flick, 2009). In this regard, focus group discussions enabled the researcher to interview five groups of six participants within the Madziwa area to obtain their perceptions with respect to the participation and involvement of children in SLAs. Each discussion occurred within a period of one hour or so, unlike in an interview session where a similar time actually lapsed while interviewing each individual participant.

## **Data presentation and analysis**

The data profiling the research participants were presented descriptively without tables and figures, but words under the section called demographic data of participants. The actual research findings were presented using direct quotes and excerpts summarising long quotes, relating to the SLAs in Madziwa. Use of direct quotes and excerpts from in-depth face-to-face interview data and focus group discussions in the form of explanatory, descriptive, analytical and evaluative narratives would give the readers the first hand information which affords them a sense of being present at the research sites during the data gathering process.

### **3. BIO-DATA OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

In this section, the research characteristics of the participants are going to be presented and described narratively in terms of number, strata, sex and age among other bio-data variables because they were selected by means of quota sampling. Altogether, 110 participants took part in this study. Thirty of them were parents, 30 were primary school pupils, and another 30 of the participants were



secondary school pupils. The other 10 participants were primary school teachers and the last group of participants was made up of 10 primary school teachers. Thus, the research participants were categorised in the foregoing five strata. Diverse opinions from these groups of participants were meant to explore SLAs in Madziwa area. Parents, primary and secondary school pupils were exposed to focus group discussions twice in five groups of sixes twice in each group by the researcher, children expert and four research assistants. Primary and secondary school teachers were interviewed twice individually by the research and the research assistants. The children's expert did not interview adult participants. Thus, 30 focus group discussions were conducted on parents, primary and secondary school pupils, while 40 interviews were conducted on the primary and secondary school teachers.

The first stratum had 30 parents. Fifteen out of 30 parents were male, while the other 15 out of 30 were female. This distribution of participants by sex was balanced and could give sex-sensitive perceptions on the SLAs in Madziwa area. Eighteen out of 30 parents were aged between 30 and 39 years, while 12 out of 30 parents were aged at least 40 years. Twenty-five out of 30 parents indicated that they were married, while three of them were divorced, and two of them were widowed. Twenty-one out of 30 parents indicated that they had children of primary school going age, while 11 out of 30 parents pointed out that they had children of secondary school going age, and nine out of 30 parents reported that they had children of both primary and secondary school going age. They all reported that they were involved in some form of SLAs. In that regard, the participants had some research sought experience in the area of sustainable livelihoods, although the participation and involvement of children in SLAs was yet to be known. The highest level of education among parents was Form 4. Three out of 30 parents were holders of an Ordinary level qualification. Twenty-seven out of 30 parents were holders of a Grade 7 qualification. In order to generate credible data from them, they were asked questions in Shona Language during the focus group discussion. Their level of literacy was not compatible with the English Language that was used as a medium of instruction in the focus group discussion guide.

The second stratum was made up of 30 primary school pupil participants. Fifteen out of 30 primary school pupils were male and another 15 out of 30 primary school pupils were female. Just as the case in parent participants, this distribution of participants by sex was balanced and could give sex-sensitive perceptions on the challenges associated with the participation and involvement of children in SLAs in Madziwa area. Ten out of 30 primary school pupils were aged 10 years, 14 out of 30 were aged 11 years, four out of 30 were aged 12 years, and two out of 30 were aged 13 years. Six out of 30 primary school pupils were in Grade 3, 12 out of 30 were in Grade 4, four out of 30 were in Grade 5, four out of 30 were in Grade 6, and four out of 30. These participants were relatively old enough to freely participate in the focus group discussions to air their opinions on the magnitude of violation of children's rights through sustainable livelihoods. In order to generate credible data from them, they were asked questions in Shona Language during the focus group discussion because their level of literacy did not match the level of English Language proficiency required during the focus group discussions.

The third stratum had 30 secondary school pupil participants. Fifteen out of 30 secondary school pupil participants were male and another 15 of them were female. Just as the case in parent and primary school pupil participants, this distribution of participants by sex was balanced and could give sex-sensitive perceptions on the children's participation and involvement in SLAs in Madziwa area. Six out of 30 secondary school pupils were aged 12 years, 12 out of 30 were aged 16 years, eight out of 30 were aged 17 years, and four out of 30 were aged 13 years. Eight out of 30 secondary school pupils were in Form 1, six out of 30 were in Form 2, 10 out of 30 were in Form 3, and six out of 30 were in Form 4. These participants were relatively old and mature enough to freely participate in the focus group discussions to air their opinions on the SLAs in Madziwa area. In order to generate credible data from them, they were asked questions in Shona Language during the focus group discussion. Just like the parents and primary school pupils, the secondary school pupils' level of literacy was not compatible with the English Language that was used as a medium of instruction in the focus group discussion guide.

The fourth stratum was made up of 10 primary school teachers who comprised seven males and three females. Despite the small sample of 10 primary school teachers, the sex distribution appeared to be in favour of male teachers because most female teachers tend to be deployed in urban area primary schools where their spouses and families live. Eight out of 10 primary school teachers were aged between 30 and 39 years, while two out of 10 were aged at least forty years. All primary school teacher participants were married, although four out of ten teachers were not staying with their spouses. Six out of 10 primary school teachers had a teaching experience of at least 10 years, while four of 10 primary school teachers had a teaching experience of less than 10 years. Two out of 10 primary school teachers were teaching Grade 3 pupils, two out of 10 primary school teachers were teaching Grade 4 pupils, while Grades 5, 6 and 7 classes were taught by two primary school teachers, respectively. Three out of 10 primary school teachers were holders of first degrees namely, Bachelor of Education in Educational Management, Bachelor of Science in Special Education and Bachelor of Science in Physical Education. Seven out of 10 primary school teachers were holders of a Diploma in Education (Primary). These participants were interviewed in English Language since their literacy levels enabled them to understand and converse in English



Language well. The primary school teacher participants also indicated that they taught pupils who complemented their parents' efforts in undertaking SLAs. The last stratum consisted of 10 secondary school teacher participants. Six out ten secondary school teachers were male, while four out ten secondary school teachers were female. In spite of the small sample of 10 secondary school teachers, just like the case in the primary school teachers, the sex distribution appeared to be in favour of male teachers because most female teachers tend to be deployed in urban area secondary schools where their spouses and families live. Ten out of ten secondary school teacher participants were married, although two out ten teachers were not staying together with their spouses. One out of 10 secondary school teachers was teaching History and Geography to Form 1 classes. Three out 10 secondary school teachers were teaching Mathematics, Accounts and English Language to Forms 3 and 4 classes. Six out of 10 secondary school teachers were teaching Commerce, Shona, Bible Knowledge, Agriculture, English Literature and Fashion and Fabrics to O' Level classes. Five out 10 secondary school teachers were holders of first degrees such as Bachelor of Education in Science Education, Bachelor of Education in Shona, Bachelor of Education in Home Economics, Bachelor of Education in History, Bachelor of Education in Religious Studies, and Bachelor of Education in Mathematics. The other five out of 10 secondary school teachers were holders of a Diploma in Secondary Education. The foregoing qualifications are indicative of the degree to which the secondary school teacher participants were comfortable with being interviewed in English Language.

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The presentation, analysis and discussion of data shall be done simultaneously. Tables are going to be used to present analysed thematic participants excerpts drawn from research questions given in Chapter 1.

#### Nature of sustainable livelihoods activities undertaken in Madziwa area

**Table 2:** Participants' perceptions on the nature of sustainable livelihoods undertaken in Madziwa area

Theme	Sub-theme	Substantiation
1. Farming	Market gardening	1. People grow vegetables for sale (P1; P15; PSP8; SSP6; PST10)  2. People sustain their lives through growing and selling fresh vegetables (PST4; SST6; P13; SSP9; PSP7)
	Poultry rearing	1. People keep layers for the production of eggs (PSP2; SSP7; P15; SST8; PPT4).  2. People here keep broilers for sale on a regular basis (PSP11; SSP26; P30; PST7; SST3).  3. Some people now keep road runners along commercial lines (P28; PST1; SST6; PSP12; SSP13).
	Pastoralism	1. Other villagers are now keeping cattle for beef production (P2; PST5; SST8).  2. Some villagers are raising cows for milk production (P23; PST6; SST4).
	Irrigation farming	1. Recently, some members of the community are growing crops all year round as a result of irrigation (SST2; SST9; PST8; P3).
	Mushroom farming	1. People are now making mushroom composts for mushroom production (SST8; P19).
	Rabbit rearing	1. People are also rearing rabbits to raise income (P16; SST1; PPT5)



This section presents, analyses and discusses the five-fold participant perception on the nature of sustainable livelihoods undertaken in Madziwa area in Table 2. The first theme that emerged from the study is farming. It is well illustrated in Table 2 above.

One of the sustainable livelihoods activities (SLAs) that obtained in Madziwa area of Zimbabwe is farming. The sub-themes that emerged from the study in connection with sustainable farming activities particular to Madziwa area were market gardening, poultry rearing, pastoralism, irrigation farming and mushroom farming. The preceding sub-themes are going to be expounded below under specific sub-headings.

## Market gardening

Regarding market gardening, the following excerpts show how different participants concurred on how market gardening is among (SLAs) in Madziwa area.

*People grow vegetables for sale (P1; P15; PSP8; SSP6; PST10). People grow enough vegetables to feed themselves and sell any surplus (P7). Villagers have resorted to all year production of perishable vegetables for sale to the nearest urban centres and growth points (PST6).*

What is emerging from the above findings is the fact that vegetables are now grown commercially. As a result of commercial production of vegetables, they are now grown in large quantities. An excerpt from the field notes indicates that children were largely involved in market gardening all year round in order to complement their parents and caregivers' efforts in sustaining their livelihoods. The findings are no longer consistent with Makore-Rukuni's (2006) observation that community gardens in Madziwa area are done only in off rainy season so there is no complete supply of vegetables, onions carrots and other garden nutritious crops throughout the year. On that basis, Madziwa area members must be encouraged do gardening throughout the year.

## Poultry rearing

With respect poultry rearing as part of (SLAs) in Madziwa, here is what varied participants had to say:

*People keep layers for the production of eggs (PSP2). Some raise at least 100 chicks every week or so (P15), while others contemplate going full time rearing of chickens for commercial egg production (SSP7). People here keep broilers for sale on a regular basis (SST8). Some villagers now earn a living from poultry production (PST4). Others keep a minimum of 100 chicks every two weeks (PSP11; SSP26)). Some people now keep road runners along commercial lines (P28) Road runners do not require special conditions to keep them (PSP12; SSP13). Road runners have better market value than broilers (PST1). Road runners are preferred to broilers and layers by customers of various backgrounds (SST6). Other villagers have embarked on mass production of guinea fowls (P5). Guinea fowls produce more eggs than chickens do (P30). Guinea fowls are sold at a higher price than that of chickens (PST7). The guinea fowls are more profitable than chickens (SST3).*

It appears from the above findings that poultry rearing was now among key sustainable livelihoods activities. Participants valued its use in Madziwa and it was a common practice among villages. These findings are giving new insights into the possible SLAs that rural communities could undertake in a bid to improve their quality of life and standards of living.

## Pastoralism

Although pastoralism seemed to be a traditional sustainable livelihoods activity, it tended to have a special place in the hearts of people in Madziwa area. The following excerpts are a demonstration of the degree to which pastoralism is valued as one of the sustainable livelihoods activities in Madziwa area:

*Other villagers are now keeping cattle for beef production (P2). There is a heifer scheme which is helping people to earn a living (PST5). Villagers are also given bulls to improve the quality of their livestock production (SST8). Some villagers are raising cows for milk production (P23). Other parents mix beef and milk production (PST6). Others are raising goats and sheep for sale as well (SST4).*

Pastoralism on the basis of the foregoing findings was among sustainable livelihoods farming activities that obtained in Madziwa area of Zimbabwe. It seems that villagers are no longer raising animals for the sake of raising them, but for the purposes of wealth creation



and earning a living. On the basis of the researcher's observations, pastoralism was threatened by limited pastures for grazing and wild fires that are caused by humans during the dry season. In that regard, pastoralism was only viable seasonally.

### **Irrigation farming**

In substantiating how irrigation farming was among (SLAs) in Madziwa area, some of the participants pointed out that:

*Recently, some members of the community are growing crops all year round as a result of irrigation (SST2). Wet farming throughout the year is available in some other people's gardens (SST9). People in wet lands have opportunities to grow vegetables all year round (PST8). A variety of crops are grown throughout the year (P3). My parents are able to grow vegetables every month (PSP9). In our family we work hard throughout the year so that we provide ourselves with basic needs (SSP12).*

Irrigation farming was environmental context-bound. Some villagers who lived in wet areas and close to dams, boreholes and rivers experienced perennial irrigation farming when compared to their counterparts in dry lands. Moreso, people with irrigation equipment found irrigation farming more pleasurable and profitable to pursue irrigable agriculture than those who did not have the equipment.

### **Mushroom farming**

With respect to mushroom farming as an example of (SLAs) in Madziwa area, selected participants indicated that:

*People are now making mushroom composts for mushroom production (SST8). People produce mushroom from organic manure (P19). Mushrooming farming is fast becoming a popular SLA because growers do not have to buy inorganic fertilizer and pesticides (PST3). I fetch dry leaves and grass from the terrain, forest and hills for use in mushroom farming (PSP27). Mushroom farming needs animal dung and rotten plant material for it to do well (SSP25).*

Mushroom farming among other sustainable livelihoods farming activities was beginning to establish itself among people in Madziwa area. It tended to be a new development for SLAs in the studied area. The researcher however observed that people still needed capacity building in mushroom farming. The preceding findings are consistent with Todaro's (1997) Human Capital Development which emphasises the need to equip people with the necessary skills so that they could become more productive. This perception equally applies to SLAs in Madziwa area.

### **Rabbits rearing**

One other sustainable livelihoods farming activity that was beginning to obtain in Madziwa was rabbit rearing. Three participants' opinions illustrate how rabbit rearing is among sustainable livelihoods activities in Madziwa area.

*People are also rearing rabbits to raise income (P16). Most people have rabbit pens which are an indication that they are benefitting from raising them (SST1). Rabbits are easily raised in warm areas like Madziwa (PPT5).*

Of particular interest to this dissertation was the researcher's observation that rabbit rearing was complementing the foregoing farming activities as sustainable livelihoods activities in Madziwa area. People were beginning to appreciate the role of rabbit rearing as an income generation project, although they had to be mindful about the need to minimise the possible magnitude of violating children's rights through compelling them to fetch food from the environment all the time.

### **Other SLAs in Madziwa area**

Table 3 shows other SLAs that people in Madziwa area undertake.



**Table 3:** Other sustainable livelihoods undertaken in Madziwa area

Theme	Sub-theme	Substantiation
Weaving	Mat weaving	1. Some people weave mats to earn a living (P24; PSP1; PST3)
Pottery	Basketry	1. People sustain their lives through making baskets (PST7; SST9)
	Pot making	1. Other people resort to the practice of making pots in a bid to eke a living (SST5; PST8)

Table 3 shows two other sustainable livelihoods activities in Madziwa area as weaving and pottery. These were specifically expounded under mat weaving, basketry and pot making by different participants.

### **Weaving: Mat weaving and basketry**

Regarding mat weaving, (P24; PSP1; PST3) concurred that some people in Madziwa area weaved mats in order for them to earn a living, although children were increasingly abused due to long working hours and provision of cheap labour. In terms of basketry, (PST7; SST9) were of the perception that people in Madziwa area sustained themselves through making baskets for sale, although children braved the carrying of baskets to customers.

From the above excerpt, it can be seen that children undertake SLAs through weaving mats and making baskets in search of a living. Children collaborate with adults in searching for materials to weave mats, as well as selling them, but their assistance should not be misused to such an extent that their rights would be infringed.

### **Pottery: Pot making**

It seemed that other people resorted to the practice of making pots for sale. These findings on weaving and pottery disconfirmed previous research findings by Kakhome and Kuombola (2008) who tended to confine sustainable livelihoods activities to tobacco farming despite the fact that they obtain in various forms. SLAs may be composed of, for example, year round or seasonal formal-sector employment, informal trading or sale of labour, home gardens and food processing, livestock production, cultivation or use of natural or common property resources, labour exchange among family or neighbours, contracted homework, borrowing, scavenging, stealing, and begging. In particular, SLAs can be both subsistent and commercial in outlook.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The researcher revealed that SLAs that people undertook together with their children were seasonal and diverse. Since most of the SLAs that obtained in Madziwa area revolved around farming, it can be concluded that they were seasonal. Therefore, people were more actively engaged in SLAs in summer than during dry season. The implication for this situation was the possibility of worsening poverty and a likelihood of raising the magnitude of violating children's rights when adults engage children in SLAs at home and in other people's areas as deliberate drive to attempt to conquer poverty. The people in Madziwa area need to diversify their SLAs instead of delimiting themselves to most agricultural activities. This would help boosting their chances to improve their quality of life, as well as that of working life, at the same time minding about how they could involve children in SLAs without infringing their rights. More similar studies ought to be conducted countrywide in order to determine the nature of SLAs that obtain in Zimbabwe's different areas for comparability's sake.

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