

# Land Reform, Power and Participation

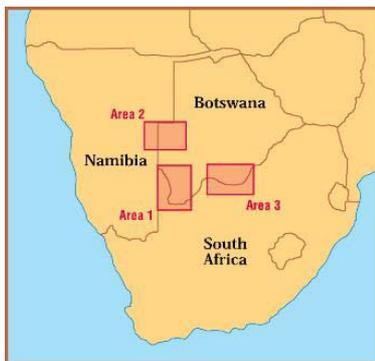
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## **PANRUSA Briefing Notes**

***PANRUSA, Poverty Policy and Natural Resource Use in Southern Africa. A DFID funded research project at the University of Sheffield UK.***

### Key points

- The inequitable distribution of land constitutes a major control on livelihoods
- 'Top-down' land reform policies limit community empowerment and the sustainability of livelihoods
- Land reform will only enhance livelihoods if accompanied by other policies aimed at their support



### Research areas:

1. **Arid southwest:**
  - a) Mier, South Africa
  - b) SW Kgalagadi, Botswana
2. **Semiarid northwest:**
  - a) Ghanzi Dist, Botswana
  - b) Omaheke, Namibia
3. **Dry sub-humid southeast:**
  - a) NW Province South Africa,
  - b) Barolong, Botswana

Within the PANRUSA cross-border study areas, a key policy challenge has been to respond to the legacy of colonial and subsequent apartheid land policies that have resulted in land shortages and pressured the livelihoods of the rural poor. In this briefing note, three very different approaches to land reform are examined. The implications and the challenges they represent for rural natural resource based livelihoods and for local empowerment in the study areas are discussed.

### Land reform

While the challenges presented by land shortages in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa are broadly the same, the policy responses to these challenges has been markedly different (see also BN 4).

#### ***Land restitution in South Africa***

Restitution of, or compensation for, land confiscated since 1913 is an integral part of South Africa's broader land reform programme. The process involves high levels of community participation, which have generated a huge backlog of cases. Emphasis is placed on justice and restitution foremost rather than economic viability and as a result, conflicts between different 'stakeholders' is not uncommon.

#### ***Land resettlement in Namibia***

Land policies have focused on the resettlement of those from crowded to less crowded communal areas thereby solving land shortages from within the communal sector and preserving the viability of commercial farming. Community participation in resettlement has been negligible and the process has been affected by tension and lack of co-operation between those who negotiate access to land and those who are responsible for livelihood provision after resettlement.

#### ***Land settlement in Botswana***

The Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) aims to provide centralised service centres to accommodate those displaced as a result of the ongoing privatisation of communal grazing land (see BN 11). Each centre was to be established around a reliable water source with sufficient land for grazing, hunting and gathering with fertile soils for crop and vegetable production. Agricultural and employment projects were created to provide the basis for sustainable income generation.

## Land policies and livelihood options

The following examples from the PANRUSA study areas highlight how land reform policies have affected livelihood options for rural populations.

### **Land restitution in NW Province (Study Area 3)**

In several cases, land restitution has involved land previously appropriated, or subsequently purchased, by government minimising potential conflicts. For example, the residents of Logageng have won a claim to return to their original lands in Mosita (32km south) appropriated for use as a military base in 1968. Logageng now has a developed infrastructure with considerable investments made in the land. The elders who made the claim have secure livelihoods there and are reluctant to move. Land shortages mean that younger generations will be able to move to Mosita securing access to new livelihood opportunities while the elders can re-establish cultural and emotional links. Crucial to the future is the implementation of agricultural reform to secure the viability of small-scale farming in these areas.

### **Land resettlement in Omaheke District, (Study Area 2)**

Purchase of land for resettlement in Namibia operates on a 'willing seller, willing buyer' basis causing delays that often result in resettlement onto existing communal lands. The Sees squatters comprise 115 families resettled in 1997 onto 4315ha of communal land at Varsdrai, Omaheke District. Up to three households share each of 36 paddocks placing pressure on grazing resources. Measures to assist the establishment of the community have been lacking, e.g. basic infrastructure such as water supplies and housing. External attitudes to those who have been relocated have reinforced images of destitution and dependency.

### **Land settlement in Kgalagadi District (Study Area 1)**

A key element of Botswana's RAD Programme has been the creation of settlements to centralise the provision of services. In Khawa Service centre, established in the early 1980s, many initial residents were displaced by the establishment of commercial farms in the area. The key issue for livelihoods here is the extent to which opportunities have been enhanced. Despite the introduction of various projects (smallstock, sewing, bakery, and bee-keeping) few have survived with the majority now dependent on drought relief projects and food rations. Recent attempts to introduce hunting quotas have resulted in some livelihood support and limited empowerment but the initiative has been affected by internal conflicts. Of concern is the in-migration of those seeking government support placing increasing pressure on scarce resources.

## Policy, participation and empowerment

Despite the post UNCED era of 'participation' and 'empowerment', land reform in Botswana and Namibia has been implemented from the top-down. In Botswana RADP has created planner-centred benefits: centralised service provision at reduced cost from negligible participation. The failure of livelihood support systems has created a situation of welfare dependency with the effect of disempowering local populations.

Resettlement in Namibia has been piecemeal and ill-planned. Community empowerment has been lost in a policy void as inter-ministerial conflicts and communication problems have failed to address the significance of land to the natural resource based livelihoods of the rural poor.

In South Africa policy responses have been community led and driven although such consultations have delayed the process creating a huge backlog of cases. The future viability of livelihoods on this the land is contingent on the successful implementation of policies aimed at supporting the small farmer which have hitherto been lacking.

## Outcomes

- **For livelihoods to be sustainable there needs to be both community empowerment and livelihood support**
- **Land reform will not enhance rural livelihoods unless access to capital assets is enhanced in the process**
- **Current land reform strategies aimed at preserving the viability of the commercial farming sector are exacerbating land shortages**

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